

Kudzai Biri

# AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM, THE BIBLE, AND CULTURAL RESILIENCE

The Case of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa



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In cooperation with  
Ezra Chitando and Nisbert Taringa (†)

Exploring Religion in Africa 3

# **African Pentecostalism, the Bible, and Cultural Resilience**

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Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ezra Chitando

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# Dedication

To  
my  
children

Tawana, Ano and Mufaro



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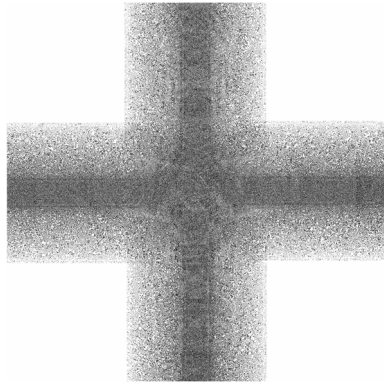
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## Abstract

The study investigates the resilience of Shona religion and culture among ZAOGA Pentecostal Christians. It endeavours to establish whether the Pentecostal Christians in Zimbabwe, through a case study of ZAOGA, have embraced aspects of Shona traditional religion and culture. Through an application of phenomenological-comparative approach as well as fieldwork, the study confirms continuity, change and adaptation of indigenous beliefs and practices in a contemporary Pentecostal movement. Whereas the Pentecostal ideology suggests that 'old things' have passed away, it appears that 'old things' continue to have significance for the 'new'. It demonstrates how belief in avenging spirits, witches and witchcraft, value of words spoken prior to death, the role, status and significance of women, belief in unnatural events, liturgy and salvation have remained relevant to the lives of ZAOGA Shona converts. The patterns of continuity, discontinuity, extension, collaboration, contradiction, re-interpretation and rejection between Shona traditional religion and culture and ZAOGA are explored, challenging the framing of African Pentecostalism as a poor imitation and parroting of theological constructions from North America. Although Ezekiel Guti (the founder and central figure in the study) does appropriate ideas and concepts from North American Pentecostalism, he displays remarkable sensitivity to Shona religion and culture. In order to meet the requirements and purpose of this study, themes have been selected on the basis of their degree of comparison. These themes are; words spoken prior to/on death bed, belief in avenging spirits, the role, status and significance of women, belief in unnatural events, belief in witches and witchcraft, liturgy and salvation. The study narrowed down to an officially structured organized whole in order to give a deeper understanding of the orientation of ZAOGA. An African womanist is framework is adapted to challenge ZAOGA to promote the well being of women. The resilience of Shona religion and culture, serve to fill the gap of published material on the Shona and Pentecostalism, breaking new ground by exploring Shona religious and cultural aspects that have displayed remarkable resilience within the Pentecostal fraternity. My conclusion is that while ZAOGA self-consciously presents itself as a sophisticated, trans-national and progressive Pentecostal movement, members continue to wrestle with Shona indigenous beliefs and practices.



## 1 | General Introduction to the Study

Pentecostalism has emerged as one of the most vibrant forms of religious expression in the contemporary world. In particular, African Pentecostalism has demonstrated remarkable vitality.<sup>1</sup> In Zimbabwe, Pentecostalism has attracted millions of followers, especially since the 1990s. However, scholarship on Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, especially as it relates to indigenous beliefs and practices, remains in its infancy. The book seeks to examine the resilience of African Traditional Religion (here after ATR) and culture and its survival among African Pentecostals in Zimbabwe, in particular the Shona (the dominant ethnic group). Using the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God, Africa (ZAOGA) as a case study, it investigates factors that facilitate the continuation, re-packaging, vitality and renewal (which the study construes as resilience of ATR and culture) in ZAOGA.

Other scholars such as David Maxwell (see Maxwell 1999, 2000 & 2005<sup>2</sup>) have studied ZAOGA and have considered some of the themes that have a bearing on the topic under investigation. This study probes the key themes found in Shona traditional religion and culture and ZAOGA, with emphasis on locating patterns of change and continuity. The book also adopts an African womanist framework to challenge ZAOGA to promote the wellbeing of women. Focusing on resilience of Shona religion and culture, serve to fill the gap of published material on the Shona and Pentecostalism. The book concludes that while ZAOGA self-consciously presents itself as a sophisticated, trans-national and progressive Pentecostal movement, its members continue to wrestle with Shona indigenous beliefs and practices.

This study is informed by the observation that ZAOGA generally adopts an adversarial stance because of the negative impression it has on ATR and Shona culture. ZAOGA maintains that ATR belongs to “the past” that must be overcome as one becomes a new member of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g., Afe Adogame, ed, *Who is Afraid of the Holy Ghost?: Pentecostalism and Globalization in Africa and Beyond*, Trenton, Africa World Pr., 2011.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., D. Maxwell, *Christian and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of Hwesa People 1870s-1990s*, International African Library, Edinburgh Univ. Pr., 1999, “In Defense of African Creativity”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30, 4, 2000, 468-481, “The Durawall of Faith: Pentecostal Spirituality in neo-Liberal Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 35, 1, 2005, 4-32.

However, if key aspects of ATR persist in ZAOGA, therefore it's rational to make some strategic conclusions regarding the interface between Pentecostalism and African religions and culture. The study interrogates the rhetoric of ZAOGA against the practice of ZAOGA members. It seeks to analyse whether converts to ZAOGA, including its leading theologians, in fact succeed in "making a complete break with the past".<sup>3</sup> ZAOGA is one of the Pentecostal churches that command notable numerical strength in Zimbabwe. Although there are many Pentecostal churches in the country, with some emerging within the last five years and becoming quite popular, ZAOGA merits close attention due to its tenacity and growth. In the last few decades, it has extended its missionary outreach to many countries in Africa and beyond. It celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grand Jubilee in 2010 and has been established in one hundred and six nations.<sup>4</sup> Apart from this, many emerging Pentecostal denominations and ministries are either directly or indirectly linked to ZAOGA.

Since the focus of this book is on the resilience of aspects of Shona traditional religion and culture, there is need to establish the meaning of resilience. The resilience approach focuses on the dynamic interplay between periods of gradual and sudden change and how to adapt to and shape change. "Through modern changes the traditional religion and culture cannot remain intact, but has by no means become extinct".<sup>5</sup> Resilience means the capacity of a system to continually change and adapt, yet remain within critical thresholds.<sup>6</sup> It is a long term capacity of a system to deal with change and continuing to develop. This resilience might be in overt or camouflaged form. In other words, sometimes it is clear that a system has managed to withstand external threats, while on other occasions there is need to probe the issue of resilience in order to identify its occurrence.

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<sup>3</sup> Birgit Meyer, "Make a Complete Break with the Past": Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28, 3, 1998, 318.

<sup>4</sup> ZAOGA's Secretary General, Washington Rupapa announced this at ZAOGA Grand Jubilee Celebrations at the Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium on 23 Aug. 2010.

<sup>5</sup> J. Awolalu, "What is African traditional Religion?", *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 10, 2, 1976, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Folke, <http://www.stockholmresilience.org>. Accessed 22-6-2012.

The focus of analysis is on the ways in which the selected themes display or challenge the resilience of ATR. It is important to examine the different modes of expression. This is because resilience takes many forms, such as gradual change, sudden changes, challenges and vulnerability.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is imperative to examine whether, how and to what extent Shona religion and culture has been able to display tenacity in its essential cultural identity and worldview in a church that advocates an uncompromising stance against it. It achieved this through selecting key religious beliefs and practices from Shona religion and culture and engaged in a critical analysis of how ZAOGA has responded to them.

Several themes have been selected and these themes relate to *ngozi* (avenging spirit/s), witchcraft, unnatural events, significance of words prior/on death bed, gender, music and dance, and liturgy and salvation for closer analysis relating to their occurrence in Shona religion and culture and ZAOGA. This probing enabled the study to demonstrate the persistence and tenacity of ATR within African Pentecostalism. By examining ZAOGA's response to the themes in Shona religion and culture, the study contends that the indigenous religion of Zimbabwe has not been totally wiped out by Pentecostalism, despite Pentecostalism's rhetoric of 'making a complete break with the past,'<sup>8</sup> (a controversial claim dealt with in Chapter 4). Shona converts to Pentecostalism continue to be influenced by indigenous beliefs and practices. In fact, ZAOGA enables the construction of a peculiar African Christian identity as converts negotiate new Pentecostal teachings and ATR.

I noted the validity of observations made by scholars of Pentecostalism in Africa, such as Maxwell, Afe Adogame (2003, 2008), Ogbu U. Kalu (1998, 2008) and others whose works have been utilised in chapter two. These scholars have maintained that there is a constant interaction between the 'old' and the 'new' in African Pentecostalism. This book, inspired by the insights of Maxwell on ZAOGA, carries further inquiry on some of the themes, engaging some of the themes that Maxwell has treated before in a more sustained way. Also, in view of the changing patterns within ZAOGA, there is need to re-engage some of these key themes that are crucial and controversial in Pentecostal theology. The

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<sup>7</sup> Awolalu, "What is African Traditional Religion?", 3.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g., Birgit Meyer, "Make a Complete Break with the Past", 316-349, and Lovemore Togarasei, "Cursed be the Past: Tradition and Modernity among Modern Pentecostals in Zimbabwe and Botswana", *BOLESWA* 1, 2, 2006, 114-132.



overall goal is to establish how indigenous beliefs and practices continue to influence the new Pentecostal identity expressed by Shona converts to ZAOGA. While some beliefs are discounted, others are re-interpreted or given a new Pentecostal outlook. The insights of Turner on the interaction of the traditional religions and culture with Christianity have been informative in this investigation. He says:

If Christianity is accepted, much of it may be taken as another version of something already familiar. In this way there is a kind of immediate adaptation. Christianity can also be received through a process of compartmentalisation, that is, its full implications do not manifest immediately because the new elements are locked up in tight mental compartments and become operative only in certain situations, usually ones in which traditional wisdom has nothing to say or in which it had been deemed inferior... as time passes, the newness in Christianity become more and more difficult to identify with the wisdom of the past or to lock up in compartments, it either radically modifies or destroys much of what went before.<sup>9</sup>

Turner's words show that the interaction of indigenous religions and cultures with Christianity results either in destruction or modification. I take modification as a form of vitality and resilience of the indigenous religions and cultures as they respond to external pressure. This vitality and resilience is a result of re-appropriation of traditional symbols in the Christian faith.<sup>10</sup> The tenacity of the indigenous spiritual worldview became clear when analyzing how Ezekiel Guti, ZAOGA's foremost theologian, has refused to write off Zimbabwean indigenous beliefs and practices. The teachings of Guti and his wife Eunor are central in this book because they are the "nodal power points"<sup>11</sup> that deploy evangelical guidelines for leaders in ZAOGA that are shared to the members of the church. The way a church regards its centre figure can reveal important

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<sup>9</sup> Phillip Turner, "The Wisdom of the Fathers and the Gospel of Christ": Some Notes on Christian Adaptation in Africa, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 4, 1971, 46.

<sup>10</sup> Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1985, 265.

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to Obgu Kalu for this phrase see *African Pentecostalism*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008.

facets about its understanding of the Christian faith<sup>12</sup> and this insight should be applied to ZAOGA.

From the onset, I need to acknowledge the challenges that accompany efforts to focus on ATR and Pentecostalism. I am aware of the contestation that riddles the relationship between religion and culture (religion-culture debate), the label 'ATRs' and its application to the indigenous religions of Africa. Also, the singular-plural debate of the designation of indigenous religions needs not to be overlooked in studies pertaining to the indigenous religions and cultures. The question is: how accurate is it to refer to Shona religion and culture as ATR? For example, Fainos Mangena, a Zimbabwean philosopher, does not subscribe to the term because it is not applied to Western religions.<sup>13</sup> While I appreciate the post-colonial challenges of naming indigenous religions, my argument is that one can refer to ATRs as long as one guards against a static and reified reading of the term. My contention is that, after all, every religion is traditional in one sense or the other. I subscribe to the view of Ezra Chitando that we can continue to use the term but in a positive sense.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the spirit in which one applies the label is very significant. The inter-connectedness of religion and culture can be addressed through acculturation which assumes that elements of religion and culture may inform one another in the practical manifestation of belief.<sup>15</sup>

This book explored beliefs, teachings and practices of ZAOGA in the context of Shona traditional religion and culture. The assumption is that culture is an aspect of religion, hence exploring the phenomenon of ZAOGA's dual worldview is of utmost importance. I endeavoured to investigate ZAOGA Pentecostal theology and practices based on Christian orthodox tradition and sought to ascertain whether and to what extent ZAOGA's adversarial stance towards traditional beliefs and practices is upheld in practice. This enables a critical analysis to establish whether the notions of 'conversion' and 'a complete break from the past'

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<sup>12</sup> Harold Turner, *African Independent Church: The Life and Church of the Lord (Aladura)*, Oxford, Clarendon Pr., 1995, 285.

<sup>13</sup> Fainos Mangena, discussion on labels applied to indigenous religions held on 3-03-2012, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, UZ.

<sup>14</sup> Ezra Chitando, "Theology from the Underside: The Case of African Christian Names in Zimbabwe", *Journal of Religion for Theology for Southern Africa*, 101, 1998, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Jewel Amoah, "Religion versus Culture: Striking the Right Balance in the Context of African Traditional Religions in the New South Africa", *Traditional African Religions in South African Law*, ed. T W Bennett, Cape Town, Univ. of Cape Town Pr., 2011, 37-62.

are practical or theoretical. ATR is explored as it is part of a cultural heritage that determines the spontaneous and subconscious reactions of people and their interpretations of reality in order to assess whether or not the Shona religion and culture has continued to influence and shape the worldview of ZAOGA believers. Establishing the status of some aspects Shona religion and culture in the lives of Pentecostal Christian believers was very crucial. The central questions include the following:

- Does the conversion of the Shona people to Christianity mean the abandonment of Shona traditional religion and culture?
- What is the role of Shona traditional religion and culture in the dynamic development of ZAOGA as an expression of Pentecostalism in post-colonial Zimbabwe?
- Which aspects of Shona religion and culture have been incorporated in ZAOGA?

The contention, based on field of study of a specific Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe, is that these churches have taken Christian forms, but have retained the traditional beliefs and practices in different ways. ZAOGA's teachings, methods, message and approach are examined to establish whether they have continued to be influenced by aspects of Shona traditional religion and culture.

The global significance of gender studies in particular, contemporary Africa has also influenced the detailed attention given to the role, status and significance of women in ZAOGA against the background of women in Shona religion and culture. I set out to establish whether or not ZAOGA has made a difference. I focus particularly on the theological motifs of singlehood and marriage in ZAOGA in order develop a systematic critique of the effects of the gender discourse in ZAOGA, particularly the male bias on the symbols and norms of Christian faith, using patriarchy as the key concept of analyzing relations of oppression.

There are some points that need to be clear. First, there is limited material on how ZAOGA interacts with indigenous beliefs and practices with particular reference to the theme of resilience. The study endeavours to fill this void. Second, some studies on Pentecostalism have tended to emphasize the dependence of Pentecostals in Africa on Western countries like the United States of America in terms of the gospel message and practice. However, closer analysis of Pentecostal denominations in Africa shows that they did not discard the African traditional worldview in spite of the interactions with external forces. Although, new forms of

Pentecostalism that are ‘independent’ from earlier Pentecostal manifestations have emerged and developed, they are still anchored in the traditional African milieu.<sup>16</sup> This is very significant in post-colonial Africa, where most Pentecostal leaders are increasingly tapping into the political discourses and promoting African nationalism. These political discourses are generally anti-West, negate the superiority of the white race and elevate the black race and Mother Africa.<sup>17</sup> These shifting paradigms as espoused in Pentecostal theology are significant and show part of the creativity and dynamic nature of African Pentecostalism. It is against these paradigms and the dynamic nature of African Pentecostalism that Africa in recent years has become the hotbed of contemporary Pentecostals.<sup>18</sup> Third, ‘outsider’ perspectives have dominated the study of African Pentecostalism. As a member of ZAOGA (‘insider’), I have been motivated to undertake a critical study of my own faith tradition. Familiarity with ZAOGA and its teachings prompted the quest for a deeper engagement in order to interrogate how the church responds to indigenious beliefs and practices. I elaborate on these themes below.

Previous studies on Pentecostalism have emphasized how it has destroyed the traditional communalistic ideology through creating an isolated class of ‘themselves’ (believers) against ‘them’ (non-believers) and condemning ATRs. This inevitably led to the shunning of close relatives, especially the extended family, in favour of those who are members of the church.<sup>19</sup> This has led to conflicts and promoting the spirit of individualism, threatening the very social fabric of African society which rests on the bedrock of communalism. However, this requires further exploration on the basis of new empirical data in order to establish whether or not Zimbabwean Pentecostals have created other positive avenues which foster versions of the traditional relationships (see below

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<sup>16</sup> Allan. H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Asmara, African World Pr., 2001, 68.

<sup>17</sup> Kudzai Biri, “Migration, Trans-nationalism and the Shaping of Zimbabwean Pentecostal Spirituality”, *Journal of African Diaspora*, 7, 2014, 139-164.

<sup>18</sup> I refer to ‘Pentecostals’ because in Africa, there has emerged a variety of controversial forms of Pentecostal ministries and denominations, particularly West Africa and Zimbabwe and South Africa in Southern Africa.

<sup>19</sup> See e.g., Rijk van Dijk, “Time and Trans-cultural Technologies of the Self in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora”, *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* ed. by Andre Corten & Ruth Marshall Fratani, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2001, 224.

on Theology of Pentecostals). Moreover, the history and development of white Pentecostals in North America has been taken to represent the Pentecostal manifestation in Africa. While it is true that many Pentecostals in Africa have links with their overseas counterparts and are influenced by them at different levels, it seems unfair to claim that their history and development is the same. As pointed out by Gerrie ter Haar, the spread of Pentecostalism throughout the African continent has often been analysed in such a way as to suggest that Africans are mere consumers, imitators or recipients of trends whose origins lie outside the continent. However, African Pentecostalism shares origin, but developed separately and is now of necessity operating within the same space.<sup>20</sup> Kalu has useful insights on this theme. He observes that Africa is vast, hence, we should pay attention to methodologies, biases, ideologies and locations of interpreters because African Pentecostalism has responded to various ecosystems in different ways.<sup>21</sup>

Hence, there is need to take note of the variations within Pentecostalism, diverse social and political significance and their shifting importance over time and attempt to be alert to the variations.<sup>22</sup> This is because African Pentecostals responded differently to various ecosystems.<sup>23</sup> I acknowledged this insight and explored how ZAOGA has defended and promoted the integrity of some aspects of Shona religion and culture (consciously or unconsciously), although there have been strong links with white Pentecostal Christians overseas. In this respect, this book endeavoured to contribute to new knowledge which shows that;

- Studies have emphasized economic and political orientation of Pentecostals at the expense of Pentecostal beliefs and practices vis-à-vis African religious and cultural beliefs. Therefore, it is my contention that an officially structured, multifaceted and church such as ZAOGA provides the most suitable case study for an analysis of the resilience of the indigenous worldview among Zimbabwean Pentecostals. Also, these findings are generalizable on many ATRs that relate with Pentecostalism.

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<sup>20</sup> Gerrie ter Haar, *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe*, Cardiff, Cardiff Academic Pr., 1998, 98.

<sup>21</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 2008, ix.

<sup>22</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, ix.

<sup>23</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, ix.

- The part played by Pentecostals (ZAOGA) in creating avenues for survival and continuation of aspects of Shona traditional religions and promote its integrity has been overlooked. It is argued that the Zimbabwean-founded Pentecostal movement falls within the new variety of Pentecostalism sympathetic to ATRs (whether or not they are aware of it). This brand of Pentecostalism distinguishes itself from earlier Pentecostal manifestations and deserves a multifaceted and critical approach in examining how they relate to indigenous beliefs and practices.
- North American Pentecostalism has been wrongly used as a yardstick to judge the developments within African Pentecostalism. Some scholars have put too much emphasis on the role of American Pentecostalism to the extent that the role of African Pentecostal leaders and their churches has been downplayed and not given due attention.

In the light of the above, this book is necessary as it provides valuable new insights into the study of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. It examines Pentecostal teachings vis-a-vis some selected Shona traditional beliefs and practices and examines the role that ZAOGA has played in promoting the persistence of these traditional beliefs and practices. It employs an 'insider perspective' to probe the tenacity of indigenous spirituality in the movement that constructs itself as 'modern' in outlook and 'radically new' in orientation.

## **A Brief Analysis of the Methodological Approaches**

Methodologically, several approaches have been used. In the first instance the phenomenological approach helped us to locate the resilience of selected aspects of Shona religion and culture among Pentecostal Christians, even as they are influenced by historical, cultural and socio-political and economic contexts. The phenomenological approach with specific reference to phenomenology of religion was employed in this study, but mainly focusing on the comparative method. A unanimously agreed upon, exhaustive definition of phenomenology of religion is not practical because of several implications of the word.<sup>24</sup> Discussing the

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<sup>24</sup> See e.g. James L. Cox, *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, NY, Continuum International Publ. Group, 2010, 10-12.

definitional problems relating to phenomenology is beyond the scope of this study. Phenomenology enabled a detailed understanding and identification of aspects of Shona religion and culture resilient among Pentecostal Christians in ZAOGA. Chitando points out that phenomenology seek to cultivate objectivity and to eliminate personal biases that tend to be irrational.<sup>25</sup> It involves an application of *epoche*. *Epoche* is derived from the Greek word *epecho* which means 'I hold back' and implies bracketing out presumptions in order to cultivate better knowledge of other religious traditions.<sup>26</sup> The key phenomenological idea is respecting the believer's view by treating him or her as the last court of appeal whenever the researcher is in a dilemma. This means that approaching religions phenomenologically implies taking the views of the believer's point of view seriously.<sup>27</sup> This dimension is of utmost importance to this study. The method endeavours to establish the religious traditions of both the Pentecostals and the Shona in a non-evaluative manner as one abstains from value judgements and practices empathy. There are issues that have been raised in criticism of the method. One of the major criticisms levelled against the phenomenological method is that it is not practical. Thus:

...phenomenologists invariably neglect to explain how to practice it. To prescribe the suspension of bias is one thing. To achieve it is another. Until the actual means of riding oneself of all biases gets explained, the *epoche* must remain only a forlorn ideal.<sup>28</sup>

Another challenge relates to not questioning the truth and value of the religion under study and the emphasis on the believer as the final court of appeal. These give the impression that phenomenology is in fact theology in disguise. Furthermore, neutrality is difficult to achieve as the researcher might evaluate religious phenomenon.<sup>29</sup> The challenges facing phenomenology of religion require a separate narrative, although

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<sup>25</sup> Chitando, "The Phenomenological Method in a Zimbabwean Context", 99.

<sup>26</sup> Eric. J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*, London, Duckworth Com., 1986, 224.

<sup>27</sup> Chitando, "The Phenomenological Method in a Zimbabwean Context", 99.

<sup>28</sup> Robert. A. Segal, *Religion and the Social Sciences: Essays on the Confrontation*, Atlanta, Georgia, Scholars Pr., 1989, 22.

<sup>29</sup> See Chitando, "Insiders and Outsider in the Study of African Traditional Religions: One More Time", *Missionalia*, 15, "The Phenomenological Method in a Zimbabwean Context", 1998, 105, Chitando, "Phenomenological Approach To Study of Religion in Africa: A Critical Appraisal", *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 11, 2, 1997, 5.

I have highlighted the key ones in the foregoing section. Despite the challenges, phenomenology of religion remains relevant and useful to the study of religion. For instance, bracketing is a noble intention, particularly in the study of ATR or indigenous religions that have been marginalised for a long time. It is useful in countering the negative images ATR has endured, mainly from the Western scholars.<sup>30</sup>

In studying religions one needs to strive to 'bracket' pre-conceived ideas. Although it is generally regarded as impossible to 'bracket' pre-conceived ideas, in this study I sought to uphold this concept, especially because of my insider position. It remains noble for researchers to strive to uphold the integrity of the believers of the religions they are studying. Phenomenology of religion is a viable method that calls for descriptive accuracy and scholarly neutrality in order to allow unfettered quest for knowledge, objectivity and systematic discussion of the facts concerning a particular religion. This is over and against other methodologies that generally compartmentalise religion to one aspect of life, such as psychology or sociology. Also, because of the radically plural religious climate of Zimbabwe, the method holds greater promise, perhaps more than any other method.<sup>31</sup>

I focused on empathetic understanding of information to establish ways in which aspects of Shona religion and culture have found avenues of expression in ZAOGA. I sought to avoid premature judgements or reducing the religions to other disciplines as this is contrary to the believers' understanding of their religions. Wrede B. Kristensen expressed this by also noting that:

“Let us never forget that there exists no other reality than the faith of the believer. If we really want to understand religion, we must refer exclusively to the believer's testimony. What we believe from our point of view, about the nature and value of religions is a reliable testimony to our own faith, or to our own understanding of religious faith:...but if our opinion about another religion differs from the opinion and evaluations of believers, then we are no longer talking

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<sup>30</sup> Chitando, “The Phenomenological Method”, 105.

<sup>31</sup> Chitando, “The Phenomenological Method”, 113.



about their religion. We have turned aside from historical reality and are concerned only about ourselves”.<sup>32</sup>

While this is an acceptable remark to guard against reducing religion of others to purely sociological, psychological or other disciplines, there is also need to realise that religion is multi-dimensional. Apart from the experiential dimension, other dimensions justify the need for multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of religion. This is so, especially when we make an inquiry into ATRs which are complex traditions in their own right. The matter becomes more challenging when one tries to establish the relationship between aspects of Shona religion and culture and how these aspects and ideas are diffused in the Christian tradition.<sup>33</sup> Despite the challenges surrounding the phenomenology of religion (such as for example, the difficulty in upholding *epoche*, problems in appreciating the believers’ point of view and cultivating empathy), the method enabled this study to proceed effectively by employing participant observation. Furthermore, colleagues were asked questions on their findings to cross check with the researcher’s findings. In most cases, we discovered that we had similar observations. Therefore, phenomenological principles equipped the researcher to minimise bias and to treat ZAOGA members with respect. Phenomenology of religion’s emphasis on the testimony of the believer also enabled me to focus on the experiences of women. Although women tend to be marginalised in both traditional religions and Pentecostalism, the method facilitated an enquiry into their perceptions regarding religion.

## The Phenomenology of Religion and Women’s Experiences

The study took advantage of the emerging interest in linking the phenomenology of religion to women’s studies. As pointed out by Katherine Young, women, especially those pursuing graduate studies, gradually became aware that something ever so basic was amiss in the study of

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<sup>32</sup> Wrede, B. Kristensen, quoted by A. Sharma, “What is Reductionism?”, Thomas A. Idinopulos & Edward A. Yonan, *Religion and Reductionism: Essays on Eliade, Segal and the Challenge of Social Sciences for the Study of Religion*, Leiden, Brill, 1994, 132.

<sup>33</sup> Jesse N. K. Mugambi, *African Christian Theology: An Introduction*, London, Heinemann, 1989, 63.

religion: where were the women in this scholarship and why was universalism and human nature represented explicitly as male?<sup>34</sup> Young adds that phenomenology and feminism mean activism to improve the status of women (feminism) and analysis of women's marginalisation or invisibility in the historical record (based on textual studies) and expanding the design of the research by documenting women's real religious lives (based on ethnographies, oral histories and interviews).<sup>35</sup>

In this respect, the study engaged the phenomenology of religion in a critical way in relation to capturing women's religious experiences. This is because of the need for researchers to pay particular attention to the extent to which men and women might experience the same religion differently. I discovered that, if used critically, the phenomenology of religion has the capacity to capture women's religious experiences.

The data collection methods which were employed were: participant observation, formal and informal interviews with members of ZAOGA. Participant observation combines participation in the lives of people under study with maintaining a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data, observations related to noting pattern of continuity between traditional religions and Christianity. Kim Knott points out that it can influence the people one is supposed to be observing.<sup>36</sup> Hence, informal interviews were held mainly because some members of the church felt uncomfortable to be interviewed because of the charge that they should not entertain interviews from researchers. ZAOGA is strict on people who want to get information because of its sensitivity regarding some previous publications on the church. That is why in order to protect the identity of interviewees the study does not disclose some of the names, especially those of leaders. Participant observation also entailed attending and listening to the sermons at church, open air crusades (evangelistic in nature) and "Deliverance Explosions" (crusades that are held mainly to deliver people from various spirits perceived to be distracting the progress of believers) and women's fel-

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<sup>34</sup> Katherine Young, "Introduction", *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies*, ed. by Arvind Sharma, Albany, State Univ. of NY, 2002, ix-x.

<sup>35</sup> Katherine K. Young, "From Phenomenology of Religion to Feminism", *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies*, ed. by Arvind Sharma, Albany, State Univ. of NY Pr., 2002, 30-31.

<sup>36</sup> Kim Knott, "Insider/Outsider Perspectives", *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. by John Hinnells, London, Routledge, 2009, 250.

lowships. Hence, the researcher as an ‘insider’ was exposed to a lot of information and had ‘power’ in the presentation of religious groups under study.<sup>37</sup> The data obtained from these observations and interviews were supplemented by material acquired from the libraries and ZAOGA archival material. Guti could not be interviewed as he has become less accessible to academic researchers following some earlier publications on ZAOGA. The leadership announced that ZAOGA would no longer entertain interviews from academics.<sup>38</sup> An effort to interview Guti at the headquarters was futile because the researcher was told “it disturbs *baba* and *baba vakura*.” (Father is aged). Efforts to interview Eunor, the wife of Guti, through close pastors were also futile because the researcher was told that she is always busy and doing better things than being interviewed.<sup>39</sup> However, that did not deter the researcher from carrying out investigations because as a leader in the church, the researcher got the privilege of attending leadership meetings in which the themes in this study were addressed by Guti himself. This included attending leadership meetings such as ‘Deeper Life’ Conferences and District Council meetings and acquiring information from some prominent bishops, elders and pastors in the church.

This interaction with strategic leaders of the church ensured that the researcher was able to access valuable information on ZAOGA’s attitude towards indigenous beliefs and practices. Attending key meetings also enabled the researcher to accumulate data relating to ZAOGA’s teachings on the selected aspects of Shona religion and culture.

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<sup>37</sup> Knott, “Insiders/Outsiders”, 250.

<sup>38</sup> There was announcement made to all ZAOGA churches in 2006 not to entertain interviews from people especially academics because many people were publishing information about the church. The district that the researcher goes to (Marlborough district) made the same announcement on several occasions in 2007. The researcher also investigated several assemblies in Harare and Chitungwiza and found out that the same announcement had been made.

<sup>39</sup> The researcher made several efforts to interview Eunor but she was told by Getrude Rupapa and Joyce Gadzika that Eunor is ever busy and on one of the occasions (8-5-2012) she was told that since she is a member of the church she knows what Eunor teaches-“Don’t you attend Gracious Woman meetings? What *amai* (Eunor) teaches is exactly what she is going to tell you!”.

## Shona Oral Literature

Shona oral literature was also employed, with specific reference to proverbial sayings and idioms as another source of data that is relevant to the study. These show the beliefs of the Shona with reference to the selected themes. As members of the Shona linguistic community, there are common sayings and idioms that help to clarify indigenous beliefs and practices. Ruth Finnegan notes the significance of oral literature in African societies. She cites riddles, proverbs, religious poetry (dominated by incantations), praise poetry, time old stories and songs among others as very authoritative among Africans.<sup>40</sup> John Mbiti writes that African traditional religions have no written creeds but the creed is in the hearts and minds of the adherence.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the researcher had an advantage, born from African blood, nourished by her Christian faith, informed by theological and liturgical experiences and empowered by active research.

## Sampling Method

A method of description and subsequent analysis was pursued. The selection process of respondents was based on purposive and random sampling in both urban and rural areas in order to ensure representation in terms of gender, age, marital status and level of education. Sampling enables one to get information without measuring every member<sup>42</sup>. Both purposive and random sampling helped to get views from across the board and as pointed out by Matikiti, it minimizes bias as views from smaller groups are also captured.<sup>43</sup> However, I could not cover the whole of Zimbabwe, but selected rural areas which cover Shona dialects. Harare and Chitungwiza were the major areas covered in detail as Guti and his senior leaders operate mainly within these cities. Kariba, a town in the Western part of Zimbabwe was also covered in part. Interviews were conducted in both urban and rural areas that in-

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<sup>40</sup> Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 1976, 391-442.

<sup>41</sup> See John.S Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Matikiti, *Christian Theological Perspectives on Political Violence in Zimbabwe: The Case of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe*, Unpublished Dphil Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, UZ, 2012, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Matikiti, 15.

clude Harare, Chitungwiza, Chinhoyi, Shurugwi, Rusape and the Eastern Highlands, Honde Valley and Tsonzo (although not all are captured in the references).

The study utilised many direct encounters with Guti, in which he taught on and explained the themes that are examined in this book, as well as his writings. It must be noted that Guti has taken his time to address the major themes and challenges relating to the interface between Shona religion and culture and ZAOGA raised in this book. Sometimes he has done this in response to the questions raised during Bible studies in different congregations. For example, in 2004, the Eastern Highlands church elders raised the issue of *ngozi* because different pastors that came to pastor in the district expressed different conflicting opinions (see Chapter five on avenging spirits). This was taken to Guti to address the issue at the leadership meeting. He has also addressed church leaders and general members on the selected themes, as well as publishing his views on them. There is need to note that Guti and his wife are the most prominent personalities in the teachings in ZAOGA. Their teachings are central to ZAOGA's theology.

In spite of being an insider, the process of data collection was not easy. It became clear that it is difficult to penetrate the believer's point of view. There were challenges relating to accessing the inner thoughts of Shona converts to ZAOGA. This confirmed the saying:

"You never understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it"<sup>44</sup> Again, in the light of the dual demands of membership, one may ask, 'did membership hurt or distort the research and its possible 'objectivity?'. Being a member of ZAOGA had its advantages and disadvantages. As indicated earlier, this enabled the researcher to gain access to most of the senior leaders of the movement and to attend strategic meetings. Yet, in moving from one situation to another, it was often possible for the researcher to manage a shift in perspective with relative ease. This captures the problem of the insider/outsider debate in the study of human behaviour and institutions in the academic study of religion.<sup>45</sup> Several questions might be raised on the contribution of African Chris-

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<sup>44</sup> A. Finch, quoted by R.T. McCutcheon, ed, *The Insider and Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*, London, Cassell, 1999, 1.

<sup>45</sup> See e.g. Russell T. McCutcheon, ed, *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*, NY, Cassell, 1999.

tian scholars, such as the researcher, to the study of ATR and Pentecostalism. Have they done justice to the indigenous traditions and not allowed their Christian faith to colour their descriptions on the pre-Christian African religious past?<sup>46</sup> Other African scholars point out that ATRs cannot easily be studied by non Africans.<sup>47</sup> This question raises the debate of who is better positioned to study ATR and African Pentecostalism. While it is true that it might be difficult for outsiders to study ATR and African Pentecostalism, we cannot dismiss the diverse rich contributions by the so called ‘outsiders’. Besides, the other questions at the heart of this debate are: can a scholar manage to come up with scientific knowledge about religion? Is it possible for a researcher to access religious data? Afe Adogame has provided illumination on this theme:

The negotiation and navigation of boundaries is usually a very delicate and controversial venture because it often has cultural, religious, political and other undertones. The Insider or Outsider positions are much more complicated than they may appear due to their tendency towards exclusivity and inclusivity. Does the mere fact that one belongs to a religious tradition or group automatically make(s) him/her an insider?<sup>48</sup>

Every religious tradition, by its very existence and regardless of its claims to universality, divides the world in to insiders and outsiders.<sup>49</sup> The researcher had to participate in the lives of the people under study, also as a member of the church who knew the ‘language’ and patterns of behaviour over. As pointed out by Karla Poewe, the language of faith is created and anyone who wants to communicate effectively with members of ‘new religions’ must enter their thought.<sup>50</sup> Ideally, this means that the researcher had internalised the basic beliefs, fears, hopes and expecta-

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<sup>46</sup> Ezra Chitando, “African Christian Scholars and the Study of African Traditional Religions: A Re-evaluation”, *Religion*, 2000, 30 (391-397), 391.

<sup>47</sup> J. Awolalu, “What is African Traditional Religion?” *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 10, 2, 1976, 10.

<sup>48</sup> Afe Adogame, “To be or not to be? Politics of Belonging and African Christian Communities in Germany”, Afe Adogame & Cordula Weissköppel, eds, *Religion in the Context of African Migration*, Bayreuth, Bayreuth African Studies, 2005 (95-112), 96.

<sup>49</sup> N. Ross Reat, “Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of Religious Traditions”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LI/3, 51, 1983, 459-476.

<sup>50</sup> Karla Poewe & Irving Hexham, *Understanding Cults and New Religions*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B Eerdmans Publ., 1986, 15.

tions of the people under study.<sup>51</sup> The unwritten ‘rules’ governing interactions were observed and there was need to employ the phenomenological techniques. The question that might be asked is, how feasible is ‘withdrawal’ from inclusion once an ‘insider’? Comparing and contrasting findings with those of colleagues helped a lot (as indicated above). As a member of ZAOGA, I had to bracket my previous knowledge and assumptions about the church and its teachings about ATR. At the same time, I had to employ empathy in order to get into the life experiences of the believers. Although an ‘insider’ by virtue of being a member of the church under study, I also had to distance myself in order to get a fresh perspective on the issues under investigation and tried to view it as an academic discipline, unlike the believer who does not ordinarily distance him/herself from the faith traditions.

Apart from this technique, I had to be critical of the reactions and answers that I got from the interviewees because of varied critical and uncritical responses from believers. This is the same challenge that I also had to guard against as a member of the church. Without engaging in such a process, the danger was real that the research would come out with unscientific results. It was feasible for me as an ‘insider’ to ‘withdraw’. Many people confuse the study of religion with the practice of religion; the study of religion is not a religious act.<sup>52</sup> The uniqueness of this study is that it is done by a self styled “Pentecostal” and her knowledge is both academic and experiential as an ‘insider’, even if subjected to the rigours of academic discipline.

Being Shona means I can lay claim to Shona beliefs and practices. African Christian scholars should be understood as drawing on their sense of belonging within Christian tradition and using categories which to them describe their understanding of their pre-Christian heritage.<sup>53</sup> To this extent, it proved quite helpful that the researcher is an indigenous Shona speaker, who is not African because she is born in Africa but because Africa is born within her. Hence, the factor of being distant is

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<sup>51</sup> Robert Mbe Akoko, “Ask and you shall be given”: Pentecostalism and the Economic Crisis in Cameroon, *African Studies Centre*, Leiden, 2007, 42.

<sup>52</sup> James, L. Cox, *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, NY, Continuum Publ. Group, 2010, Preface.

<sup>53</sup> Jesse. K.N Mugambi, “Theological Method in African Christianity”, *Theology and the Transformation of Africa* ed. by The Department of Systematic Theology Tangaza College, *Tangaza Occasional Papers*, 10, Nairobi, Pauline Publ. Africa, 2000, 88.

minimised. As pointed out by Hollenweger, young Pentecostal scholars have become bilingual, because they speak the language of the university, the language of concepts and also the oral language of Pentecostalism which is an extremely important part of their success.<sup>54</sup>

## Interphase with Previous Studies

I have pointed out that some of the themes that are dealt with have been considered by Maxwell. I take Maxwell's findings on the three aspects on gender, witches and witchcraft and avenging spirits as the starting point. However, some of the themes were related to churches such as Topia, Mugodhi, Chibarirwe, Zviratidzo, Rudjeko, Samanga and Borngaes. This study classifies these churches under AICs, the *Vapositioni*, despite the fact that they display Pentecostal traits. In "Witches and Prophets", Maxwell illustrates the patterned nature of religious change amongst Shona peoples of North eastern Zimbabwe.<sup>55</sup> The focus of this study is establishing the resilience of selected themes with exclusive focus on ZAOGA.

On gender, Maxwell focuses on Pentecostals' overt challenge to patriarchal religion through the idiom of exorcism and its capability to reformulate social relationships.<sup>56</sup> He also describes their contest with male dominated ancestor cults in a detailed way, as well as showing how and why women and youth benefit from this contest with male ancestor religion.<sup>57</sup> This study goes further to examine teachings in Gracious Woman and ZAOGA literature on gender. Following some female scholars who have explored day to day experiences of women in AICs in other settings,<sup>58</sup> this study explores the day to day experiences of women through critiquing rituals, symbols and teachings that liberate or restraint women in ZAOGA. On *ngozi*, Maxwell says the host and the traditional healer are in a position to mediate between the two families to

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<sup>54</sup> See Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, London, SCM 1972.

<sup>55</sup> Maxwell, "Witches and Prophets", 309.

<sup>56</sup> Maxwell, "Witches and Prophets", 334.

<sup>57</sup> Maxwell, "Witches and Prophets", 318-319.

<sup>58</sup> See e.g., Helen D. Crumbley, *Spirit, Structure and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria (Africa and Diaspora)*, Univ. of Wisconsin Pr., 2008.



bring about reconciliation and restitution.<sup>59</sup> This study goes further to unravel how ZAOGA negotiates reconciliation and restitution, in a bid to establish forms of resilience.

Guti's teachings on *ngozi* are examined in relation to ZAOGA's quest for health and long life. This book utilises Maxwell's observations and fills the gap of examining the ways and forms that some of the aspects have taken, including some aspects that he did not consider (for example, the significance of words prior to death/on death bed). Maxwell did not dwell on Guti's life in Mutema Ngaone village, his rural home and birthplace in Chipinge and also Guti's experiences such as the claimed divine visitations in Vumba which have shaped ZAOGA theology. Yet, Guti's background in Mutema Ngaone largely influences the theological orientation of ZAOGA. This study also accounts for those co-founders who parted ways with Guti, founded their own churches and continue to acknowledge him as spiritual father. In addition, the study adopts a comparative approach with regards to the naming system in ZAOGA teachings and practices which appear to be influenced by trends in American Pentecostalism and at the same time display the resilience of the traditional religion and culture. In short, although some earlier researchers have addressed the interface between Pentecostalism and ATR in Zimbabwe, this study breaks new ground by extending the scope of the analysis. It analyses patterns of continuity and change in concepts found in ZAOGA and Shona traditional religion and culture. The study builds on the insights of earlier writers but proceeds to employ the concept of resilience as an analytical tool for understanding the interface between ZAOGA and Shona traditional religion. Its major contribution lies in its probing of the persistence of indigenous beliefs and practices among Shona converts to ZAOGA.

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<sup>59</sup> Maxwell, "Witches and Prophets", 328.

## Clarification of Concepts

At this stage, it is vital to clarify some of the concepts that are central to this book.

### ***African Traditional Religion***

It is important to highlight that ATR shall be addressed in the singular when referring to the Shona. I am very much aware of the diversities and complexities within the Shona Traditional Religion and the singular-plural debate that riddles the study of African traditional religions.<sup>60</sup> Imasojie writes that Africa is wide and no one can be so presumptuous to claim to describe African religions and worldviews in the singular.<sup>61</sup> However, I take comfort in the view that Mugambi has aired, namely that the recognition of diversity must not be used to overlook the reality of the aspiration for a commonality and homogeneity<sup>62</sup> in the Shona experience. The assumption being made is that there is a commonality that runs through the themes that have been identified in this study. This commonality is manifest in the Shona underlying philosophy and worldview. Regardless of different dialects that make up the Shona, there are deep underlying affinities running through these cultures. That is my justification for addressing them in the singular. First, the focus is on the term, “African Traditional Religion” (ATR). There is a perennial problem of definition and applicability because of the three problematic terms that have been coined together. Africa is a vast continent and there are debates over who and what qualifies to be classified as “African.” Second, the term, “traditional” is problematic:

Traditions evolve and religions are not static entities. Tradition in ordinary parlance is the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends and customs from generation to generation so it is the collec-

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<sup>60</sup> I am aware of the debate on terminology, with the term, ‘indigenous religions’ gaining currency. See e.g., James L. Cox, *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, NY, Continuum Intern. Publ. Group, 2010.

<sup>61</sup> Osadolor Imasojie, *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa: Theological Perspectives in Africa*, Achimota, African Christian Pr., 1993, 53.

<sup>62</sup> Jesse N. K. Mugambi, *African Christian Theology: An Introduction*, London, Heinemann, 1989, 5.

tive and shared worldviews, practices, morals and the generally accepted life of people.<sup>63</sup>

Awolalu points out that it means indigenous, that which is aboriginal or fundamental and handed down from generation to generation, upheld and practiced by Africans, connecting the past and the present.<sup>64</sup> Third, religion is difficult to define, especially in the African context where it is intertwined with culture. The term has been defined from various perspectives, such as sociology, psychology and philosophy by scholars.<sup>65</sup> The term as an imposition from the West means it excludes what might be regarded as religion in an African context. Consequently, there are difficulties of language, culture and translation. Many scholars have pointed out that the term was unknown to many African languages, hence the difficulty of unpacking the African cosmology, segregating religious aspects of it and translating in a Western idiom.<sup>66</sup> Since the early days of history the African continent has been subject to the influences of different religious trends, to the extent that by now it would be misleading to picture these as completely alien because they have assumed a local image which completely reflects their own particular African context.<sup>67</sup> In this respect, it appears the term should have gained elasticity to include these so called ‘foreign religions’. However, in this study, I define religion broadly to include various traditional, cultural and customary institutions and practices.

Religion refers to identifiable communities which base their acts of believing and their resulting communal experiences on postulated non-falsifiable alternate realities of a tradition that they legitimate by

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<sup>63</sup> E. M. Uka, “Theology of African Traditional Religion: An Overview”, *Readings in African Traditional Religions: Structure, Meaning, Relevance, Future*, ed. by E. M. Uka, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1991, 158.

<sup>64</sup> Awolalu, “What is African Traditional Religion?”, 1976, 10.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, the seventeen definitions given by Ferguson in James L. Cox, *Expressing the Sacred: An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, Harare, UZ Publ., 1992.

<sup>66</sup> See e.g., Mukau Mutua, “Returning to my Roots”: African Religions and the State”, *Religion Human Rights and Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa*, ed. by Ahmed An-Naim Abdullah, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1999, 169, (169-190), John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1970, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Gerrie ter Haar, *Faith of Our Fathers; Studies on Religious Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Utrecht, Univ. of Utrecht, 1990, 57.

appealing to the its authoritative transmission from generation to generation.<sup>68</sup>

Togarasei points out that the use of the term is revolutionary because African Biblical scholars have realised that missionaries who condemned African religion were influenced by their cultures and their interpretation of the Bible made Christianity the same as Western culture.<sup>69</sup> Hence, the use of the term in the study is the realisation that even if Christianity is a universal religion, it should be understood within one's own culture. Therefore, by African traditional religion and culture, the study refers to the religious beliefs and practices prior to coming of Christianity and Islam in Africa (Zimbabwe) but that have continued to exist side by side with other religions (the so called foreign religions).

### **Culture**

The element of culture is important since it would seek to clarify and render intelligible, indigenous African beliefs and traditions which have tended to be distorted, discredited or even destroyed due to the pervading impact of Christianity and Islamic religions.<sup>70</sup> According to Tylor, culture is the complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by a person as a member of society.<sup>71</sup> Some scholars have dismissed Tylor's definition as static<sup>72</sup>, yet they do not provide alternative definitions. It is prudent to uphold Taylor's definition and add that ATR is the cumulative product of people's activities in all aspects of life in their endeavour to cope with the social and natural environment. Its components include politics, economics, ethics, aesthetics and religion. However, it should

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<sup>68</sup> Cox, *Introduction to Phenomenology of Religion*, 21.

<sup>69</sup> Lovemore Togarasei, "ATRs in the study of the New Testament in Africa", *African Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa* ed. by A. Adogame, E. Chitando & B. Bateye, Aldershot, Ashgate Publ. house, 2012, 207.

<sup>70</sup> E. M. Uka, "Theology of African Traditional Religion: An Overview", E. M. Uka, ed, *Readings in African Traditional Religions: Structure, Meaning, Relevance, Future*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1991, 159.

<sup>71</sup> Edward B. Taylor, *The Origins of Culture, Part 1*, NY, Harper Collins & Row, 1958, 1.

<sup>72</sup> See e.g., Jewel Amoah, "Religion vs Culture: Striking the Right Balance in the Context of Africa Traditional Religions in New South Africa", *Traditional Religions in South African Law* ed, T. W Bennett, Cape Town, Univ. of Cape Town Pr., 2011, 39-40, Madhavi Sunder, "Cultural Dissent", 2001, 54, *Stanford Law Review*, 495, 511-512.

be pointed out that apart from the culture-religion debate raised before, proposing an adequate definition of culture and giving specificity to content has become increasingly difficult in modern times because of the impact of globalisation and global harmony that has eroded cultural distinctions.<sup>73</sup> In spite of this, the significance of culture is captured by Mugambi when he says: “it is traditional in the sense that it is handed down, it binds the group of people together with a sense of continuity by keeping a continuity of values”.<sup>74</sup>

Although, religion is intertwined with culture and while it might be difficult to mark a clear boundary between the two, I subscribe to Mugambi’s view that religion is a component of culture and that it has always blended with culture.<sup>75</sup> Religion provides the worldview which synthesises everything that is cherished by individuals as corporate members of the community.<sup>76</sup> It appears that ZAOGA Christians are not expected to publicly declare their faithfulness to culture, in spite of the fact that some aspects of the faith are grounded in the respective indigenous cultures. The plague of Pentecostal Christianity is how to negotiate the ‘old’. It appears Christianity has become one of the means of re-creation after destruction of traditional patterns, hence, Pentecostalism is regarded as the driving force of the renaissance of Shona traditional culture.<sup>77</sup> The question of the role of culture in the appropriation of faith and the contradictions that characterise some elements in Christianity has led to pleas of acculturation, indigenisation and contextualisation, terms that are significant in this study. The terrain is further complicated by the fact that cultures change and there is plurality within culture and this means that individuals choose among many ways of living within a culture.

### ***Pentecostalism***

The terminological and conceptual confusion is so pervasive in discussions of Pentecostalism. The term itself is misleading, since it is often

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<sup>73</sup> Amoah, “Religion vs Culture”, 2011, 39.

<sup>74</sup> Jesse. N. K Mugambi, *The Church and Liberation in Africa*, Eldoret, Gaba Publ., 1976, 18.

<sup>75</sup> Jesse N. K Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*, Nairobi, East African Publ., 1995, 17, 107.

<sup>76</sup> Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 1995, 17.

<sup>77</sup> Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 1995, 154,163.

rejected by believers themselves, for example, followers of Christian Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy in Zimbabwe. Also, researchers do not agree on the terminology that has been applied on various phenomena. For example, as pointed out by Hackett, in Ghana, it applies to older churches of Western provenance and in Nigeria it is commonly used as a form of self designation for these revivalist movements connoting the centrality of the Holy Spirit in all church affairs.<sup>78</sup> This variation is significant because it points to “not only the artificial appellation, but the multiplicity and diversity of religious practice that runs through”.<sup>79</sup> The term refers to a wide variety of movements scattered throughout the world, ranging from fundamentalist and white middle class mega-churches to indigenous movements.<sup>80</sup> One of Pentecostalism’s central tenets is baptism in the Holy Spirit and its sign of speaking in tongues. It is derived from Acts 2:4, with emphasis on the practice of spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, it has to be pointed out that Pentecostalism is dynamic and innovative. It defies static definitions and at times the definitions require qualification. For example, AICs can be qualified as Pentecostals by virtue of their theological roots and connection to Zionism. Yet, within the context of classical Pentecostalism, one needs to qualify them if they are to be included within the rubric of Pentecostalism. In Zimbabwe, the doctrinal innovation and their outlook has created a ‘gulf’ with the so-called classical or new(er) Pentecostals such that this study does not include AICs (commonly known as white gowned churches or *vapositori*) under the classification of Pentecostals, in spite of the centrality of the Holy Spirit in their beliefs and practices.

### ***African Pentecostalism***

African Pentecostalism refers to diverse movements that acknowledge the centrality and gifts of the Holy Spirit but in which indigenous elements (from African religion and culture) have been incorporated. This distinguishes it from Western Pentecostalism and indicates that this movement has doctrinal innovation that has broken American hegemo-

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<sup>78</sup> Rosalind Hackett, “Radical Christian Revivalism in Nigeria and Ghana”, *Religion, Human Rights and Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa* ed, Abdullah, Ahmed An-Naim, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 1999, 249, (246-267).

<sup>79</sup> Andre Corten & Ruth Marshall Fratani, “Introduction”, *Between Babel and Pentecost*, 2001, 4.

<sup>80</sup> Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost; The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*, Pretoria, Univ. of South Africa, 2000, 24.

ny.<sup>81</sup> In its actual manifestation, African Pentecostalism is also concerned primarily with the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts. However, it does not ignore the cultural and religious traditions of the people of Africa (although it is selective in only upholding elements that are deemed worthy of preservation).

African Pentecostal churches are associated with AICs because they have been founded by Africans. However, in style they often look to the West and to Western Pentecostalism and to urban society than to African rural traditions and have no foreign or financial and ecclesiastical control.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore:

They have not distinguished themselves doctrinally from historical Christianity but they have brought in new characteristics and doctrinal positions that are superimposed upon the doctrinal tenets of early Pentecostalism.<sup>83</sup>

They are not geographically confined to the continent of Africa because their evangelistic nature has seen them establishing churches in the Diaspora. Some even include white congregations. However, this study limits itself to Zimbabwe. This delimitation is important because of the specificity of Africa as a marginalised continent, where there is revitalisation of traditional religion, in spite of the desire to enter into the global order and expressing a desire for modernity.<sup>84</sup> African Pentecostals have retained an African ethos and their ideology has a distinctively African flavour.<sup>85</sup> However, it is important to highlight that African Pentecostalism is dynamic, not rigid, fixed or stagnant. For example, Celebration Ministries International in Zimbabwe was found by Tom Deuschle, an American who came to Zimbabwe in 1979. The church has a mixed congregation in terms of race and also the style of worship and church structures have distinctive traits that are different from churches like ZAOGA and the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. Thus, there

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<sup>81</sup> Andre Corten & Ruth Marshall Fratani, "Introduction", *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2001, 6.

<sup>82</sup> Philomena Mwaura, "African Instituted Churches in East Africa", *Studies in World Christianity*, 10, 2, 2004, 164-5.

<sup>83</sup> Mwaura, "African Instituted Churches in east Africa", 2004, 4.

<sup>84</sup> Paul Gifford, "Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity", *Religion*, 20, Oct. 1990, 373-388.

<sup>85</sup> Mwaura, "African Instituted Churches in East Africa", 161.

might be challenges in the designation “African Pentecostalism”. This is one reason it is difficult to have a settled definition and it means there is need for constant review of definitions. The multiplicity and diversity of Pentecostalism that is manifest in Zimbabwe requires an overview of the forms of Pentecostalism. Therefore, these typologies are provided in one of the sections below.

### ***Patriarchy***

Patriarchy generally refers to an ideology promoting male dominance. It is also the subordination and exploitation of women who are differently located on the patriarchal pyramid of intermeshed structural oppressions.<sup>86</sup> The focus here is on the religious and cultural teachings that uphold and reinforce the notion of male dominance and supremacy that lead to female powerlessness.<sup>87</sup>

### ***Feminism***

Feminism is a mode of apprehending the meaning of oppression. The feminist approach focuses on experiences of women. It has its origins in the struggle for women’s rights. Feminism is concerned with females, not just as a biological category, but the female gender as a social category and shares the view that women’s oppression is tied to their sexuality. It focuses on women’s experiences and highlights various forms of oppression which female gender is subjected to in society.<sup>88</sup> Feminism proceeds with a threefold process, a systematic critique of male bias on symbols and norms of Christian faith, seeks alternative traditions that provide more inclusive images of women and re-visioning the basic

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<sup>86</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Method in Women’s Studies in Religion”, *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women’s Studies* ed, Arvind Sharma, NY, State Univ. of NY, 2002, 210.

<sup>87</sup> Adriaan S. van Klinken, “*The Need for Circumcised Men*”: *The Quest for Transformed Masculinities in African Christianity in the Context of HIV Epidemic*, Utrecht, Univ. of Utrecht, 2001, 8-9.

<sup>88</sup> Sotunsa Mobolanle Ebuloluwa, “Feminism: The Quest for an African Variant”, *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3, 1, Sep. 2009, 227-228.



symbols of faith that will undo male bias.<sup>89</sup> However, due to its inadequacy, it birthed womanism, an African American variant.<sup>90</sup>

### **Womanism**

Although the study approaches women's issues within the context of phenomenology, it utilises some insights from womanism. Womanism is a theory of feminism which tends to embrace traditional African cultural aesthetics, the family and community with a primary focus on the individual, but also taking into account communal needs. The agenda of the woman as "second class citizen" is of critical import but the needs of the entire community constitute the central focus of her struggle.<sup>91</sup> Womanism defines the experiences of Blacks in the Diaspora as well as those residing in Africa. Therefore, womanism in turn purports to interpret black female experiences globally.<sup>92</sup> Although there is contestation around the applicability of womanism in an African context,<sup>93</sup> womanism can help to clarify the indigenous African women's experiences, worldviews and perceptions. However, most members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (Circle) subscribe to African womanism. At the heart of the struggles, there is the centrality of partnership between men and women, which dates back to pre-colonial times. The aspect of the need for partnership between men and women is maintained in the struggles against patriarchy and all its forms of expression.

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<sup>89</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Methodologies in Women's Studies and Feminist Theology", *Methodologies in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies*, Albany, State Univ. of NY, 2002, 179.

<sup>90</sup> Sotunsa Mobolanle Ebinoluwa, "Feminism: The Quest for an African Variant", *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3, no.1, Sep. 2009, 229.

<sup>91</sup> Linda Strong-Leek, "Emerging Womanism in the Works of Zimbabwean Women Writers", *Indigenous Knowledge in African and Diasporan Communities: A Multi-disciplinary Approach*, eds. E. M. Chiwome & Z. Mguni, Lawrenceville, NJ, Africa World Pr., 1998, 531.

<sup>92</sup> Sheilla D. Collins, "Feminism: A Necessary ground from Liberation", *Cross Currents: A Quarterly Review* "The Church We Want", xxvi, 1, Spring 1976, 33-47.

<sup>93</sup> Sontusa Mobolane Ebinoluwa, "Feminism: The Quest for an African Variant", *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3, 1, Sep. 2009, 230.

### ***Re-vitalisation***

This represents a cultural attempt to re-sacralise dominant traditional symbols through preserving customary notions of community and conventional expressive symbols.<sup>94</sup> New religious concepts are used to renew older traditional ones. Re-vitalisation also refers to putting on new strength or power into something and the ultimate outcome envisaged is that new forms of identities emerge which combine African and Western elements.<sup>95</sup> The vitality of religion is a result of re-appropriation of traditional symbols.<sup>96</sup> Driven underground by being forbidden, it is revitalised and appears<sup>97</sup> and continues albeit in a changed and modified form. Asonzeh Ukah's insights into religious vitality in Nigeria are significant and I appreciate the applicability to this study. I take the vitality of ATR to mean increased vigour, enthusiasm and intensified energy directed towards a broadly defined domain, and distinguishes under-surface and manifest vitality.<sup>98</sup> Under-surface vitality is not clearly visible to public inspection. It occurred because of the confrontational attitude by Western missionaries. Africans secretly carried out rituals and practices. Manifest vitality refers to the more visible forms, namely, those that are subject to public glare.<sup>99</sup>

Shona religion and culture has put on new strength in various ways, despite pressures against it. I examined ways in which Shona culture has continued to find new forms of expression in the face of a confrontational Christian (Pentecostal) gospel in Zimbabwe and studying the processes whereby Shona religion and culture have remained a formidable cultural and religious force. This explains the 'resilience' in the title of this book. There have been considerable changes in the religious arena and past findings and conclusions about African Pentecostalism do not seem to resonate with contemporary experiences as reflected by post-

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<sup>94</sup> Jules Rossette, "Tradition and Continuity in African Traditional Religions", 1991, 156-7.

<sup>95</sup> Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century*, Asmara, Africa World Pr., 2001, 209.

<sup>96</sup> Hastings, *A History of Christianity, 1950-1975*, 1975, 265.

<sup>97</sup> Bengt Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London, Oxford Univ. Pr., 1961, 261.

<sup>98</sup> Asonzeh Ukah, "Religious Vitality and the Expansion of Pentecostalism in Nigeria: The Case of the Redeemed Church of God" (RCCG), Bayreuth, Univ. of Bayreuth, May 30-June 2002, 3.

<sup>99</sup> Ukah, "Religious Vitality and Expansion", 2002, 3.

colonial Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. There has been a tendency to suggest that African Pentecostals actually succeed in cutting off all links with indigenous cultures. However, some African Pentecostal leaders have challenged the wholesale condemnation of African beliefs and practices. This state of affairs has awakened religious leaders, giving them a strong awareness of self-reliance, co-responsibility, cultural adaptation and the great value of African cultures.<sup>100</sup> These remarks proceed from the observation that it has been well and convincingly documented in the history of Christianity in Africa that ATR has been subjected to serious attacks, denigration and demonization by many Christians. Yet, there appears to be double standards or inconsistencies generally displayed by many Christians who, on the one hand attack ATR and on the other hand continue to practice the indigenous religion and culture. Verstraelen points out that local Christians (in Zimbabwe) are of course aware of the persistence of ATR even in their own circles, if not in themselves.<sup>101</sup> That ATR has continued to influence the lives of many Christian believers is confirmed by those who visit the rural areas and practice ATR in the rural areas at specific periods of the year, during crisis moments or those who practice it in the 'dark'.

The question raised is whether or not there is the problem of dialogue between Shona traditional religion and culture and Christianity. Cross-examination from a historical perspective has shown that, a large number of Christians was not tolerant towards African culture. There have been efforts to destroy, alter, subdue, and suppress African culture in many different ways and to varying degrees during different historical epochs. In response to the adversarial stance, we witness, in some cases, contextualisation and acculturation in a bid to make the gospel relevant to the local situation that has resulted in re-vitalisation of indigenous beliefs. This confirms the resilience of ATR. Yet, ATR should have been destroyed in the light of all those pressures from within and without, but history seems to show continuation, revitalisation and marked dynamism,<sup>102</sup> partly because of confusion and a result of decades of double mindedness emanating from the deleterious hegemonic Western influ-

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<sup>100</sup> Charles Nyamiti, "Approaches to African Theology", *Emergent Gospel: Theology from a Developing World*, London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1978, 3.

<sup>101</sup> Frans J. Verstraelen, *Zimbabwean Realities and Christian Responses: Contemporary Aspects of Christianity in Zimbabwe*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1998, 28.

<sup>102</sup> John.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969, 75.

ence on ATR/culture<sup>103</sup>. Gerdien Verstraelen-Gilhuis says Africa's traditional history was described as a static entity and that it had the vitality to adapt itself to changing circumstances was not considered possible.<sup>104</sup> Thus, it generated an impetus to investigate the resilience of Shona religion and culture in the lives of Pentecostals.

### ***Spirituality***

By spirituality, the study refers to:

The total appropriation of the Christian faith as portrayed in the Bible and denominationally introduced in to Africa by individuals and communities in the context of their cultural and religious heritage and also in the framework of their colonial and post-colonial experiences.<sup>105</sup>

In this study, the description of the indigenous Shona and Pentecostal spirituality is not exhaustive. Instead, I have adopted a selective approach in order to do justice to the themes that have been isolated.

### ***Acculturation***

The term acculturation was coined by Catholic theologians to explain the process by which the Catholic Church becomes rooted in every culture without destroying Catholic ecclesiastical identity, tradition and history. Mugambi points out that:

As a sociological concept, it refers to the process through which people of one culture absorb and internalise the norms of another culture during the period of encounter between the two cultures.<sup>106</sup>

In this case, the encounter between Shona traditional religion and culture and ZAOGA is examined as to understand and establish the extent to which indigenous beliefs and practices have persisted within ZAOGA.

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<sup>103</sup> Byang H. Kato, *Biblical Christianity in Africa: Theological Perspectives*, Africa Christian Pr., 1985, 29.

<sup>104</sup> Gerdien Verstraelen-Gilhuis, *A New Look at Christianity in Africa: Essays on Apartheid African Education and A New History*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1992, 79.

<sup>105</sup> Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 1995, 141.

<sup>106</sup> Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 1995, 7.

## **Contextualisation**

Contextualisation has been defined as:

...an adaptation that, while displaying parallels with traditional religion, essentially implies a continuing confrontation with and creative transformation of traditional religion and values.<sup>107</sup>

It means to make the message meaningful, relevant, persuasive and effective within the respondent culture. The word contextualisation might be considered the best way of describing the process that has also been called acculturation and indigenisation of the gospel. This means that the term includes all that is implied in indigenisation and acculturation but also seeks to include the realities of contemporary secularity, technology and the struggle for human justice.<sup>108</sup> Sundkler has made observations on South African AICs that are applicable to Pentecostals, in relation to contextualisation. For him, contextualisation means presenting Christianity in terms that the people understand or understand Christianity in terms of traditional African thought hence old beliefs are blended in to the new religion.<sup>109</sup> They selectively re-interpret African tradition in the light of their radical reformation.<sup>110</sup> Although the focus of the book is not on contextualisation but on the resilience of aspects of Shona religion and culture, it benefits from scholarly reflections on contextualisation as the concepts are closely related. My argument is that resilience is a result of contextualisation. It is therefore important to consider briefly the models of contextualisation since they emerge out of the way that theology combines teachings in different cultures. The consideration of the models is not exhaustive therefore I do not dwell on them at length as they have been explored in detail elsewhere (see Bevans 1992 and Pobeë 1992).<sup>111</sup> The models are:

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<sup>107</sup> Martinus Daneel, "Exorcism as a means of Combating Wizardry", *Missionalia*, 18:1, 1990, 56.

<sup>108</sup> Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Cultures*, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 1992, 21.

<sup>109</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 208.

<sup>110</sup> Martinus Daneel, *Old and New in Shona Independent Churches*, 2, The Hague, Mouton, 1974, 251.

<sup>111</sup> John.S Pobeë, *Skenosis: Christian Faith in an African Context*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1992.

### ***The Translation Model***

The translation model takes into account culture and cultural change. According to this model, words carry meaning and are a vehicle of cultural connotations as well. The model emphasises fidelity to the content of scripture and tradition. The pre-supposition is that the Christian message is supra-cultural and the message has to be separated from a culturally bound mode of expression. Therefore, the first step is contextualising a particular Christian doctrine is to strip it of its cultural wrappings.<sup>112</sup> The significance of this model lies in its emphasis on the significance of words and language as vehicles of cultural connotation. Therefore, words that are used in ZAOGA are examined in order to unravel whether they are imported from the Bible or sourced from the traditional paradigm.

### ***The Anthropological Model***

The anthropological model tries to understand the web of human relationships and meanings that make up human culture. It focuses on the value and goodness of human cultural identity and its relevance for theology, more than scripture or tradition. It considers scripture as important but contends that it is a product of culturally relative theologies that have been hammered out in every particular context. It is in the study of a people's culture that one finds symbols and concepts with which to construct an adequate articulation of faith.<sup>113</sup>

The challenge that this model brings out concern relationships related to gender issues. They are also spelt out by Magesa when he argues that in the anthropological sphere, the task is to re-imagine cultural perceptions with regards to feminine and masculine, the theological language, images and symbols.<sup>114</sup> This model is important because it acknowledges the significance of scripture as a product of culturally relative theologies. Acknowledging the influence of culture in the articulation of the gospel gives the rationale to investigate the influence of culture in Afri-

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<sup>112</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 1992, 31- 49.

<sup>113</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 1992, 47-49.

<sup>114</sup> Laurenti Magesa, "The Challenge of African Woman Defined Theology for the Twenty First Century", *Challenges and prospects for the Church in Africa : theological reflections for the 21st century; The Ecumenical Symposium of Eastern Africa Theologians (ESEAT)*, ed. N. W. Ndungu, Nairobi, Paulines Publ., 2005, 93.

can Christianity through an examination of the articulation of faith in ZAOGA, with specific reference to the selected themes.

***The Praxis Model***

The praxis model is concerned with the importance of social change in the articulation of faith. It focuses on the identity of Christians within a culture, as that culture is understood within social change. It pre-supposes the importance of culture in developing and understanding of faith. Hence, it reaches out to the resources of other cultures and other theological expressions for both the method and content. It also pre-supposes that every culture or context has elements that are unique to it and elements that are held in common with other cultures or context.<sup>115</sup> The praxis model is significant to this study as it helps us to examine how ZAOGA has ‘reached out’ and sourced from Shona traditional religion and culture in articulating the gospel. Social changes that have occurred against the background of both the Shona and the Christian religion are examined in an attempt to show cultural resilience in ZAOGA.

***The Transcendental Model***

This model of contextualisation is concerned with one’s own religious experience. The pre-supposition is transcendental and concerned with the experience of one’s self, the notion of divine revelation within human experience. It also pre-supposes that human culture is good, holy and valuable and that God is found in revelation.<sup>116</sup> This model is significant as it focuses on individual experiences. Guti’s claimed ‘divine visitations and call’ and how it influences the church’s teachings are critically examined.

***The Synthetic Model***

This model keeps each of the four elements in perfect balance. It synthesises all the models.<sup>117</sup> Using models is a way of dealing with complex and highly differentiated reality. A combination of these models can help to explain the complex and different ways in which ZAOGA has interacted with Shona religion and culture, as a result of relating the

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<sup>115</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 63-83.

<sup>116</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 98.

<sup>117</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 97.

gospel to the concrete life of the people.<sup>118</sup> Herve Carrier adds that the task of contextualisation must have two dimensions, on one hand appreciating the historical past of Africa and on the other hand aspire to be relevant vis-à-vis modern trends.<sup>119</sup> To understand ZAOGA as having contextualised the Christian faith is to assert that something both new and traditional exists. The underlying philosophy and worldview of ATR have by no means declined.<sup>120</sup> This contextualisation has influenced the expression of faith and also has served as a vehicle of creating avenues for the resilience of aspects of Shona religion and culture in ZAOGA. Having defined the key terms and analysed the models of contextualisation, the following section examined the various forms of Christianity in Zimbabwe in order to appreciate Pentecostalism and ZAOGA in its context.

## Various Forms of Christianity in Zimbabwe

The study does not seek to detail the history of ‘Christianities’ in Zimbabwe, as a number of effective studies already exist, for example C. J. M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe*<sup>121</sup>. The main aim is to highlight that there are other forms of Christianity that co-exist with Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe’s religious arena. These earlier versions of Christianity, in one way or the other, ‘tilled’ and softened ground for Pentecostalism or at least exerted some degree of influence. Although Pentecostalism unquestionably dominates the religious landscape during the contemporary period, other forms of Christianity deserve to be mentioned.

Frans J. Verstraelen has come up with four categories on the basis of their associations or organizations. For him, the only possible way to give an impression of the bewildering Christian presence in present-day Zimbabwe is to describe the main streams, as they find a more or less

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<sup>118</sup> Rhodian G. Munyenembe, *Christianity and Socio-Cultural Issues: The Charismatic Movement and Contextualisation in Malawi*, Zomba, Kachere Series, 2011, 29.

<sup>119</sup> Herve Carrier, *Evangelising the Culture of Modernity*, NY, Orbis Books, 1993, 89.

<sup>120</sup> Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology, Inculturation and Liberation*, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 1994, 39.

<sup>121</sup> C.J. M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe in Zimbabwe 1890-1939*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1996.



collective expression in clusters: the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (for mainline Protestant churches), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (for the Catholic Church), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (for Pentecostal and Evangelical churches) and the group of AICs, with other New Religious Movements. This is a recent phenomenon which reflects views espoused by the American Religious Right in the United States of America, which began in 1982.<sup>122</sup> The following section highlights each of these strands.

### ***Mainline Churches***

There are pioneering Western, Protestant, Evangelical and Catholic missionaries and mission societies which led to the formation of what is known as mainline, mission found, historic or mainstream churches. ‘Mainline churches’ refer to the churches that have missionary historical roots. These came to Zimbabwe through the work of foreign and mainly Western missionaries.<sup>123</sup> Several scholars have already studied the mainline churches in detail and these include Canaan Banana on the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and Paul Gundani on the Catholic Church<sup>124</sup>.

### ***African Independent Churches***

Another category is that of African Independent/Indigenous/ Instituted/Initiated Churches (AICs). There are several AICs, “viewed by scholars as a manifestation of independency and innovation”<sup>125</sup> that have incorporated certain aspects of African traditions and practices in their worship.<sup>126</sup> With reference to AICs, again there is problem of definition and categorization that riddle the study of this phenomenon and these problems amplify critical questions. The problem has been fuelled by certain tendencies that are present in both AICs and Pentecostal church-

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<sup>122</sup> Verstraelen, *Zimbabwean Realities and Christian Responses*, 1998, 4-8.

<sup>123</sup> Ezra Chitando & Lovemore Togarasei, “Introduction”, *Faith in the City: The Role and Place of Religion in Harare* (eds), Lovemore Togarasei & Ezra Chitando, Uppsala, Swedish Science Pr., 2010, 12.

<sup>124</sup> See e.g., Paul Gundani, “The Catholic Church and National development in Independent Zimbabwe”, Hallencreutz & Moyo, eds, *Church and State*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1991; Canaan Banana, *The Church in the Struggle for Zimbabwe*, Uppsala, Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1996.

<sup>125</sup> Mwaura, “African Instituted Churches in East Africa”, 161.

<sup>126</sup> Chitando & Togarasei, “Introduction”, *Faith in the City*, 2010, 12.

es. These include; speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, exorcism, deliverance from disturbing behaviours, testimony sharing, visions and revelations, fervent and ecstatic prayers and dynamic worship, all attributed to the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>127</sup> Pentecostalism is sometimes classified under the category of AICs due to the African initiative, just as AICS can be referred to as Pentecostals, but, as pointed out by Daneel, we need to qualify the label because there have been some shifts over decades.<sup>128</sup>

The classification of religious movements is not easy because, as pointed out by Pobe on the typology of AICs, they are dynamic and under constant change.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, one so called type may embrace varied elements from other ‘types’.<sup>130</sup> These AICs and Pentecostals in Zimbabwe are independent because they are usually free of Western control and indigenous on account of their coming into being through African initiatives led by local charismatic figures.<sup>131</sup> However, for the purposes of clear distinction in this study, the term AICs is confined to older groups of churches. By AICs, the study is strictly referring to those AICs which pioneered a breakaway from the mission churches and are referred to by Daneel as ‘*makereke omweya*’ (churches of the spirit) in Zimbabwe.<sup>132</sup> Shoko calls them ‘healing churches’ because they seem centred on the theme of healing due to their interest in health.<sup>133</sup> Daneel in *Fambidzano*, distinguishes Shona independent churches as spirit-type churches but with strong Pentecostal traits. They can further be classified as Zionist churches or African Apostolic (*Vapositori*), although there are a lot of splinter groups.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Tabona Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe: Health and Well-Being*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publ. House, 2007, 110.

<sup>128</sup> See Daneel, *Old and New*, 3.

<sup>129</sup> Mwaura, “African Instituted Churches” quotes Pobe, 162.

<sup>130</sup> Anderson, *African Reformation*, 2001, 94.

<sup>131</sup> Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “From Prophetism to Pentecostalism”, 163.

<sup>132</sup> Marthinus L. Daneel, “Shona Independent Churches in a Rural Society”, *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, (ed), Anthony Dachs, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1973, 10.

<sup>133</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 2007, 104.

<sup>134</sup> Marthinus L. Daneel, *Fambidzano: Ecumenical Movement of Zimbabwe Independent Churches*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1989, 17.

Kalu notes that the rise of AICs in Africa was necessitated by the need to recover cultural identity through religious power.<sup>135</sup> Daneel endorses the same view when he points out that social, cultural and economic, political and above all, religious factors are the causative factors for the sprouting of the Shona Zion churches. They are a sign of theological protest caused by doctrinal interpretation in the mainline Christian churches.<sup>136</sup> Shoko adds that these churches are founded by Africans without reference to mission churches and they combine traditional African worldviews with Christianity. They are dynamic and are also marked by schisms and splinters, creating new parameters of perception.<sup>137</sup> The diminishing physical presence of older AICs has not erased their unique contribution to African Christianity and theology, putting an emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit, thus bridging the gap between primal spirituality and Christianity.<sup>138</sup> Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu's concluding remarks show the significance of AICs, but most significantly their influence on Pentecostalism:

The AICs became popular in African countries because they affirmed the reality of God through the power of the Holy Spirit and other supernatural entities within the cultural context in which they worked. Destructive and malevolent powers seeking to destroy people and angels representing the Christian equivalent of transcendent benevolent powers both feature prominently in the worldview of the typical AICs. In the twenty first century some of these dimensions have been sustained in contemporary African Pentecostal theology and seem to have become characteristic of the African church shows how seriously African Christians consider an understanding of salvation that is based on the work of the Holy Spirit among God's people.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 2008, 2.

<sup>136</sup> Marthinus L Daneel, *Zionism and Faith Healing in Rhodesia: Aspects of African Independent Churches*, The Hague, Mouton, 1970, 105.

<sup>137</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 2007, 104.

<sup>138</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, "From Prophetism to Pentecostalism: Religious Innovation in Africa and African Religious Scholarship", *African Traditional Religions in the Study of Religion in Africa* ed. by, A. Adogame, E. Chitando & B Bateye, Aldershot, Ashgate Publ. House, 2012, 71.

<sup>139</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, "From Prophetism to Pentecostalism", 2012, 171.

### ***Pentecostal/Evangelical Churches***

The other category is that of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. Although they are not synonymous, they have one umbrella body which is the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe because of the salient differences. I have outlined their characteristics in the preceding paragraphs. These emphasise the place of the Holy Spirit and its accompanying features of speaking in tongues and faith healing. More details relating to these churches are provided in the typology of Pentecostals below. Therefore, the rise of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism and its various affiliations is part and parcel of the entire history of the establishment and expansion of Christianity in Zimbabwe. The history of the incursion of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe, particularly ZAOGA, forms our basis of understanding Pentecostalism and its trajectories as it is one of the pioneering Pentecostal churches after the Apostolic Faith Mission (now AFM in Zimbabwe). However, diversities of African cultures require us to examine independent groups and denominations in their own right to assess their Pentecostal thrust. Pentecostalism has been accused of lacking inter-faith, and inter-religious dialogue. Gifford sees Pentecostals as a threat to a pluralist environment required for national development and Hastings characterises the movement as retrogression from the creativity achieved on the culture-gospel interface by the AICs.<sup>140</sup> This work examines ZAOGA's stance on Shona culture and assesses whether or not it adapts inclusivism, exclusivism, dialogue, or vacillates<sup>141</sup> on beliefs in African concepts of *ngozi*, witchcraft, unnatural events, gender, music and dance, liturgy and salvation.

## **Typology of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism**

In this section, I do not attempt to be exhaustive and to provide a systematic classification of Pentecostalism because of the diversity and change coupled with varied elements that may be embraced from other types. As pointed out by Anderson with reference to AICs, attempts to categorise them is not very helpful because they are dynamic and under

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<sup>140</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 2.

<sup>141</sup> I have in mind Nisbert Taringa's ideas which he raised in his book, *A Comparative Analysis of Shona and Christian Attitudes to Nature: Shona Religion and Christianity*, Saarbrücken, Lambert Academic Publ. House, 2010, 4.

constant process of change.<sup>142</sup> For example, the classification of Pentecostals by Hollenweger does not neatly fit into the Zimbabwean context. Hollenweger classifies Pentecostals in America into three groups that are; Classical Pentecostal denominations (including their new mission churches), Charismatic movements within all traditional churches (including their mission churches) and indigenous non white churches<sup>143</sup> The context and dynamic nature of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism and the schism that has always given birth to new Pentecostal churches further complicates typologies. The EFZ is the umbrella body of Pentecostals and Evangelicals. Although they have differences, they have certain characteristics that make it possible to distinguish them. Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe can be classified under ‘old’ and ‘new’ Pentecostals, although we should not rigidly apply the terms because of the challenge that we might face in classification and also in the categories themselves.

In Zimbabwe, Pentecostals fall under Neo-Pentecostals that have come into being since the late 60s and 1970s and are greatly inspired by North American tele-evangelism. There are renewal movements that have emerged within the historic mission denominations, for example, from the Catholic Church and United Methodist in Zimbabwe. Newer Pentecostals have also emerged from the neo-Pentecostal denominations, enriching Zimbabwe’s religious climate with an array of Pentecostal manifestations, at the same time pressurising non-Pentecostals to adopt their tendencies. It has been argued that the factors behind the emergence of Pentecostal churches can be located in social, economic, theological, cultural, religious and political spheres. The serious economic situation since the 1990s leading to people seeking comfort in churches might well explain the sprouting of Pentecostal denominations, given the rough times that post-colonial Zimbabwe has undergone. However, Pentecostals point to the sprouting of many churches as evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The AFM in Zimbabwe is the oldest Pentecostal Church in the country. It was established by missionaries from South Africa during the colonial era.

It would be fair to claim that many Pentecostal churches are directly or indirectly a result of the expansion of the AFM in Zimbabwe. ZAOGA was born out of AFM, under the leadership of “young zealots” from

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<sup>142</sup> Anderson, *African Reformation*, 2001, 94.

<sup>143</sup> See Walter Hollenweger, “After Twenty Years Research on Pentecostalism”, *International Review of Missions*, 75, 1986, 3-12.

AFM<sup>144</sup> and chapter four elaborates on the rise of Guti and the emergence of ZAOGA. Although figures are difficult to provide, ZAOGA is one of the Pentecostal churches that commands un-questioned numerical strength in Zimbabwe, and has exerted influence in almost all spheres, including politics. Celebration Ministries International of Pastor Tom Deuschle was found in Zimbabwe in 1979.<sup>145</sup> Deuschle is American and has found a church that is multi-racial. The presence of Deuschle from America and the establishment of his church in Zimbabwe, having members both white and black (though blacks are the majority) points to the challenge that the term ‘African Pentecostalism’ faces because of the implications/significance of geography, race and colour. A wave of breakaways has taken place, resulting in the establishment of many Pentecostal denominations. The observations by Mwaura in East Africa are applicable to Zimbabwe to explain the emergence of many new Pentecostal churches:

In such crises as system collapse, including the religious beliefs and values that give meaning and explain immediate ultimate concerns, then the context is ripe for New Religious Movements to emerge, including Pentecostalism. Need arises to join a new and promising group. The new community thus joined is expected to provide members with much more social space, in psychological tranquillity, healing, security and solidarity.<sup>146</sup>

This appears to be the case in Zimbabwe, where every new church captures the imagination of many and pulls the crowds, depending on the charismatic nature of the leader. For example, the United Families International (UFI) of Emmanuel and Ruth Makandiwa that was formed in June 2010 as a breakaway from AFM has challenged the old established churches like ZAOGA and the AFM. However, these schisms and contestation for members should not be interpreted as complete fragmentation of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. They have similar trends such as ministries of deliverance from evil forces perceived as emanating from African worldview, the concern with prosperity and alignment with modernity. From the above descriptions of Pentecostalism, it appears that the AFM, ZAOGA and Celebration Ministries are among the ‘old’ Pen-

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<sup>144</sup> See David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 2006.

<sup>145</sup> See, Tom Deuschle, *Building People Building Dreams: How the Church Can Change a Nation*, USA, Thomas Nelson Publ., 2003, 1-31.

<sup>146</sup> Mwaura, “African Initiated Christianity in East Africa”, 2004, 181.

tecostal churches. These are established even in rural areas. The rest might be considered as ‘new’ in the sense that they were formed after the attainment of independence in 1980. These churches are diverse and exhibit variations in terms of organisational structures and doctrine, that have even seen denominations criticising each other at times, which appear to be lack of unity and fragmentation.

In spite of this, certain strands that run through these churches such as faith healing, gospel of prosperity and its handmaid of ‘deliverance’ bring them closer in identity. One striking feature is how most of these church leaders acknowledge Guti as their spiritual father and Eunor as spiritual mother, including some of those who broke away from ZAOGA.<sup>147</sup> For example, Celebration Ministries International has acknowledged Guti as ‘father’ and has invited him to teach during their conferences. They have given him tokens of appreciation. Asa Gurupira of Faith in God charged his church members in August 2010 to fast and pray for Guti as he claimed that he received the command from God.<sup>148</sup> Makandiwa of the UFI gave Guti a token of appreciation and “submission” to Guti in 2011.<sup>149</sup> This is in spite of the challenge that Makandiwa’s UFI has posed to ZAOGA in terms of increasing its numerical strength and display of charismatic gifts, especially healing and prophecy. Uebert Angels of Spirit Embassy delivered a prophecy in which he rebuked a member of his congregation (former ZAOGA member) for stealing from Ezekiel Guti and his wife Eunor. Angels claimed that God had told him that the man had to go and apologize to Guti for reinstatement in the church because that is where his blessings were.<sup>150</sup> A member of the Anglican Church and lecturer at the University of Zim-

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<sup>147</sup> Most Pentecostals honor Guti as “father” probably because of age that is important among the Shona. Tokens have been given to Guti and some denominations like Celebration Ministries and UFI and Church on the Rock have set weeks of prayer for Guti.

<sup>148</sup> Discussion with Gillian Matikiti, a member of the Faith in God Church and colleague at work who was also fasting for Guti the whole month of Aug. 2010, Harare, 28 July 2010.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with evangelist Jeff Gadzika who organizes crusades in ZAOGA and is always sent outside the country by Guti, 5-6-2010, Emmanuel Makandiwa also praised ZAOGA for recognising the authority of Guti by saying “God of Ezekiel.” He then told his congregation that he gave Guti a token of submission to his authority because he wants the anointing that is in Guti. Sermon on 21 July, 2012, Glamis Arena, Harare.

<sup>150</sup> Uebert Angels delivered the prophecy in one of his Sunday Services at Harare International Conference Centre, 25 Aug. 2012.

babwe approached the researcher to find out the size of Guti's shirt. She claimed that she wanted to buy Guti a shirt from Tanzania (African attire) because she believed that she would be blessed.<sup>151</sup>

People from other denominations also go to pray on the mountain and cave in Bindura, "the mythical birth place of ZAOGA". Recently, people have embarked on pilgrimages to Mutema Ngaone village to pray in the bushes where Guti claims to have had his first and several encounters with angels.<sup>152</sup> This has served to raise the profile of Guti as a 'father' to many churches. Guti is the spiritual father of Bishop Wiley and Dr Jeana Tomlison of New Covenant Ministries in the USA.<sup>153</sup> Thus, in spite of old age which appears to usurp Guti's charisma, the study portrays Guti as a decorated figure in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, (see appendix 3). The next section outlines Pentecostal theology in Zimbabwe.

## Pentecostal Theology in Zimbabwe

Examining Pentecostal theology requires several volumes. Consequently, this study concentrates on those aspects of Pentecostal theology that are directly related to this study, particularly the themes in chapter five. Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing forms of Christianity whose influence has been felt in many sectors. It has attracted people of various socio-cultural, economic and political backgrounds, notably women, the young and educated. As pointed by Mwaura and Parsitau, Pentecostal movements all over Africa have their roots in para-church evangelical associations of the 1970s. These associations were greatly influenced by international and inter-denominational evangelical student's organisations such as Scripture Union, Student Christian Movement, Christian Union, the Campus Crusade, Life Ministry and Navigators.<sup>154</sup> In Zimbabwe, Scripture Union, Christian Union and Life Ministries are vibrant in most university colleges and high schools. The Pentecostals are also influenced by American neo-Pentecostalism whose greatest

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<sup>151</sup> Anonymous member of the Anglican Church and lecturer at the Univ. of Zimbabwe, 25 Oct. 2012.

<sup>152</sup> See History of ZAOGA F.I.F.

<sup>153</sup> See foreword in Ezekiel Guti, *Maturity which Comes by Knowing the Ways of God*, Harare, EGEA, 1992 and Ezekiel H Guti, *Tithe: Prosperity that Comes through Obedience in Tithing*, Harare, EGEA, 2007.

<sup>154</sup> Mwaura & Parsitau, "Perceptions of Women's Health and Rights", 176.



proponents include, Kenneth Hagin (Sr), Kenneth Copeland, John Avanzini and TD Jakes who have paid visits to Africa and Zimbabwe respectively.

## Prosperity

Most of the Pentecostal leaders have been trained in Western theological institutions or mentored by American pastors. Thus, the faith and prosperity gospel dominates Pentecostal theology in Zimbabwe. This theology has attracted a lot of criticism in Zimbabwe as critics point to a reproduction of the worst forms of capitalism in Christian guise<sup>155</sup>. They also charge that the Pentecostal church leaders are reaping from the hard pressed pockets of desperate believers.<sup>156</sup> The over-emphasis on prosperity has earned Pentecostal gospel nicknames like ‘gosprenuership’. Conversion is linked to prosperity that comes about through deliverance from the demonic forces that are often linked to traditional blood ties. This leads to calls for the rejection of traditional religion and culture.<sup>157</sup> Associated with rejection of the past is the emphasis on cutting off all links with traditional rituals of appeasing and venerating ancestral spirits through deliverance. Appeasing the ancestral spirits and carrying out the rituals has remained one of the challenges in Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches. This is because of the implications that it has, including members severing family relationships since the rituals are communal. Traditional beliefs and practices are demonised by most Pentecostals, although in some circles the denunciation is rather more theoretical than practical. They proclaim a holistic gospel of salvation that includes deliverance from all types of evil and oppression like sickness, barrenness, sorcery, unemployment and poverty.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> See e.g., Allan Anderson, “The Newer Pentecostals and the Charismatic Churches: The Shape of Future Christianity in Africa”, *Pneuma*, 24, 2, 2002, 180.

<sup>156</sup> The popular sentiment in Zimbabwe is that most proponents of the gospel are leading lavish lifestyles and abusing adherents’ finances and resources. For example at the Zimbabwe Faith, Ethics and Philosophy Forum, Pentecostal churches were lambasted for advocating this gospel of prosperity to the extreme. Harare, 25/10/2011.

<sup>157</sup> This is the popular Pentecostal message that characterizes most sermons. See books written by Guti also, for example, *New Believers Guide for Christian Success: The Things You must Know as a New Believer*, Harare, EGEA, Nd, translated as *Zvawakafanira Kuziva Semutendi Mutsva*, Harare, EGEA, Nd.

<sup>158</sup> Anderson, *African Reformation*, 2001, 210.

## The Bible

The Bible is central to Pentecostal faith and practice, as it is seen as the source of authority and doctrine. Because the Bible is seen as unerring, there has been an increase in emphasis on discourses of gender based on the Bible against the rising tide of gender and human rights activism. Adriaan van Klinken notes that there is literal reading of the Bible and lack of historical-critical hermeneutics, concepts such as male headship and female submission are accepted as God given creational order and this therefore means that the Pentecostals re-affirm gender hierarchy.<sup>159</sup> Lack of historical awareness in the interpretation might be due to Pentecostal declarations that the Bible is not a historical document but a contemporary document.<sup>160</sup> Gifford adds that apart from the declarative use of the Bible (believers declaring to be what the Bible says), there is also an attempt to shed light on the Biblical teachings using African customs and proverbs and at times the resentment of Western influences. The insights from Gifford on the use of the Bible are significant to the study because of his reference to customs and proverbs that this study also utilises. Also, I examine Guti's resentment of Western influences and monopoly in the church. The Bible is also deployed against active political engagement because of the political upheavals in the country. The Bible is deemed the law code and regarded as the yardstick to guide and judge any conduct. However, on both gender and political activism, Pentecostals have attracted public debate. It is important to point out that although there are few female Pentecostal founders in Zimbabwe, the wives of founders and other female pastors have been influential in delivering sermons that centre on the family and seek to navigate gender discourses. Different ministries within these Pentecostal movements are the platforms for espousing Pentecostal theologies and ideologies. Churches legitimate male dominance in marital and other gender relations due to the literalist and women-oppressing interpretations of the scriptures that prevail.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Adriaan van Klinken, *"The Need for Circumcised Men": The Quest for Transformed Masculinities in African Christianity in the Context of HIV Epidemic*, Utrecht, Univ. of Utrecht, 2011, 181.

<sup>160</sup> See Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, London, Hurst & Co., 2009, 174.

<sup>161</sup> See e.g., essays collected in I.A. Phiri & S. Nadar (eds), *On Being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva, WCC, 2005.

## Social Engagement

Pentecostals also advocate social engagement as they seek to transform society. Pentecostals in Zimbabwe appear to be concerned with issues affecting the world, hence, the call for involvement and engagement in all spheres (see chapter five on salvation). Most of the churches run centres that include orphanage homes, schools, hospitals and banks. This is contrary to the earlier belief that “the world is not our home” and that they should not be involved in “earthly matters.” The basis for social engagement is that only the children of God will re-direct the country in God’s direction and purge corruption which has become a culture among the political elite. Yet, these Pentecostal movements have been accused of creating avenues for corruption because of lack of fiscal accountability in their churches and that they have also failed to critique corruption.

## Personal Reconstruction

Pentecostals emphasise miracles, faith healing and the need to constantly check one’s life against any interference or influence from the evil past. Hence, a believer has to live a life of virtue and holiness. Their emphasis on the individual is described by van Dijk as “technologies of self”:

Both in terms of discourse and practice, the leaders and the churches are eager to construct a new individuality, a context of identification where there are moments of binding one’s identity to these social relations. The combination of social control extended by the churches, and their sheer success in dealing with personal problems in which they show great acumen, turn them into places where a new web replaces a former web of relations that restricted a person to bloodlines and the power of the ancestors.<sup>162</sup>

In this book, my conviction is that Pentecostals promote individualism. This is a moral principle especially typical of bourgeois ideology and morality. The theoretical foundation of individualism is the recognition

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<sup>162</sup> Rijk van Dijk, “Time and Trans-cultural technologies of the Self in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora”, *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* ed. by Andre Corten & Ruth Marshall-Fratani, , Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2001, 230.

of autonomy and the absolute rights of the individual in society.<sup>163</sup> Thus, the Pentecostal theology of ‘receiving Jesus’, becoming ‘born again’ and making a ‘complete break with the past’ militates against the communal orientation of the Shona people and has socio-cultural and religious consequences. However, it needs to be pointed out that the individualized identity is placed within a new group/family identity of ‘born again’. Thus, reinventing the Shona traditional communal and kinship ideology, however, based on being born again and membership to the denomination.

## Limitations

Despite the considerable advantages that the researcher possessed, there are a number of limitations that need to be pointed out. I found intriguing gaps between the ‘insider’ claims and their behaviour, questioning whether we would absolutely treat the believer as always right. Could not the ‘insider’ be acting for the reasons which they are not completely aware of? This confirms Chitando’s observations that insistence on the primacy of the believer and respecting his or her point of view pose challenges to research.<sup>164</sup> Some believers were not willing to express themselves as they always pointed (in their words) to the charge that was given by church leadership not to entertain any form of interviews. However, this problem was partly overcome as the researcher was involved in leadership activities in the church. This meant that she could access most of the information relevant to this study that she required. Being Shona, means having an intimate knowledge of the cultural context of the study and was, familiar with symbolic language, various cultural metaphors employed and the language as a vehicle of communication.<sup>165</sup> Apart from the challenges relating to the research field, there are other limitations that need to be noted. It is important to acknowledge that ZAOGA is only one Pentecostal church amongst many others in Zimbabwe. The results from this study may therefore, inform trends in Pentecostalism, but may not be generalizable about Zimbabwean Pente-

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<sup>163</sup> Murad Saifulin & Richard Dixon, eds, *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, Moscow, Progress Publ., 1984, 194.

<sup>164</sup> Chitando, “The Phenomenological Method in a Zimbabwean Context”, 113.

<sup>165</sup> See Gerrie ter Haar, “World Religions and Community Religions: Where Does Africa Fit in?” *Centre for African Studies*, Univ. of Copenhagen, Aug. 2000, 9.

costalism or African Pentecostalism as a whole. The study did not cover ZAOGA in the whole of Zimbabwe and the Diaspora. In addition, the research is not exhaustive, but based on some selected aspects of Shona religion and culture. The selection was based on areas of contestation and also for the purposes of deeper engagement.

Despite these limitations, the study remains critical because of the wealth of information that it provides on a theme that has been neglected: the resilience of aspects of Shona religion and culture in a Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe. It draws attention to the persistence of indigenous beliefs and practices in a contemporary Pentecostal church that, theologically, claims to have 'left the past behind.' Through participant observation, interviews and interaction with published literature, the study confirms that some aspects of Shona religion and culture continue to be a major factor in African Pentecostal identity.

## Conclusion

The chapter maintained that the study was worthwhile as it plugs a significant gap in the scholarly literature on Pentecostalism's response to indigenous spirituality. It described methodological approaches that were utilised in order to establish information on the resilience of the indigenous culture among the Pentecostals. Since some of the themes have been considered by other scholars, the study asserts its point of departure and to clarify the central concepts. In order to avoid the impression that Pentecostalism is the only form of Christianity found in Zimbabwe, the chapter provided an overview of other types of Christianity found in the country, a description of Pentecostal denominations and their theology. The following chapter focuses on analysing literature that is relevant to this study in order to provide the background for critical analysis.

## 2 | An Appraisal of Contributions on Pentecostalism

### Introduction

The previous chapter was an introduction to the study. This chapter focuses on giving analysis of contribution made on Pentecostalism. I review the literature by Daneel<sup>1</sup> and Anderson<sup>2</sup>, and then consider Maxwell's<sup>3</sup> vast publications on ZAOGA, citing material that is relevant to this study. The works of other scholars on Pentecostalism and ATR are also examined, specifically in their own right, how Pentecostalism has interacted with ATR and the changes that have been brought by that interaction. I should hasten to point out that some relevant texts that are reviewed within this chapter are summarized since an exhaustive engagement with publications would require several other narratives. Other relevant material will be interacted with in the forthcoming chapters.

In light of the above, special place is given to the following scholars: Marthinus L. Daneel, Allan H. Anderson and David Maxwell. A general survey of the scholars that write on African Pentecostalism is provided. Most of the scholars agree that the process of Africanizing or domesticating Christianity has seen African religious leaders defeating what might be regarded as “cultural rape.” This refers to the Western conceived superiority of their culture which they super-imposed on ATR and culture.<sup>4</sup> The scholars have been attracted by the role that the poor have played in the expansion of the Pentecostal gospel mainly because of the message of hope in the future. These scholars also agree on the power of Pentecostal Christianity. They acknowledge its remarkable capacity to absorb both the causative agents for success and that it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religious con-

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<sup>1</sup> Marthinus L. Daneel., *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches, 3: Leadership and Fission Dynamics*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost: The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*, Pretoria, UNISA, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> David Maxwell has many publications on Pentecostalism, see his publications on ZAOGA.

<sup>4</sup> Russell T. McCutcheon, (ed), *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*, 1999, 18.

sciousness.<sup>5</sup> Scholars who have provided valuable insights into the study of African Pentecostalism include David Maxwell (see below), Cephas N. Omenyo, Philomena Mwaura, Paul Gifford, Afe Adogame, Birgit Meyer, Allan H. Anderson, Ogbu U. Kalu, J. Kwabena Asmoah-Gyadu,<sup>6</sup> and others.

It is significant that African women scholars (apart from Mwaura) do not feature on this list of prominent scholars on Pentecostalism, although Damaris Parsitau and Rekonpantse Mate of Zimbabwe have offered some insightful contributions.<sup>7</sup> The publications of these scholars have helped to establish the study of African Pentecostalism as a viable discipline in its own right. However, as alluded before, it is not possible to undertake a detailed review of their work. Rather, before we consider them, we consider Daneel, Anderson and Maxwell because they are strategically significant to this study.

## Marthinus L. Daneel

Daneel's work on African Independent Churches (AICs) is particularly significant. AICs are the first crop of spirit movements in Africa. Pentecostalism has built on their innovations and creativity. AICs are indige-

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<sup>5</sup> See e.g., Donatus Ukpong, *Nigerian Pentecostalism: Case Diagnosis and Prescription*, Uyo, Fruities Publ., 2008, and Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* Reading, Mass, Addison Wesley Pub, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g., Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, Zoetermeer: Boeken-centrum, 2002, Philomena Mwaura, "Nigerian Pentecostal Missionary Enterprise in Kenya", *Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu Kalu*, ed. by Chimah Korieh & Ugo Nwokeji, Lanham, America Univ. Pr., 2005, Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, London, Hurst & Com., 2009, Afe Adogame, "Spiritual Terrorism Beyond the Borders: African Pentecostalism, Cultural Synthesis within Local-Global Space", Adogame et al., eds, *Unpacking the New: Critical Perspectives on Cultural Syncretization in Africa and Beyond*, Wien & Berlin, 2008, Birgit Meyer, "Delivered from the Powers of Darkness": Confessions about Satanic Riches in Christian Ghana", *Africa*, 65, 2, 1995, Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2004, Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Development Within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Leiden, Brill, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> See below: on other scholars who have written on Pentecostalism/women.

nous churches with historical and theological roots in classical Pentecostal movements, although they have moved further away from this movement in several respects over the years and may not be regarded as Pentecostal without further qualification.<sup>8</sup>

Daneel's three volumes on AICs are important because of their insights on the interaction of the 'old' and the 'new' in Shona Independent Churches. However, this study focuses on the third volume because it has a lot of material on leadership and schism. This book brings out the important role and influence of leadership and the interaction with traditional beliefs that can be utilized as one assesses the resilience of Shona traditional beliefs and practices.

It is also his later publication after decades had elapsed since the publication of the second volume that he tackled the dynamism and changes in these movements. It seeks to effect the "correction of earlier misconceptions and picking threads from the second volume".<sup>9</sup> Volume 4 focuses more on female leadership and depicts the socio-political involvement of AIC leadership and the role of prophetic leadership in the liberation struggle.<sup>10</sup> Volume 3 has dimensions of leadership that are directly relevant to this study.

### **M.L Daneel, *Old and New in Shona Southern Independent Churches, Vol 3, Leadership and Fission Dynamics, 1988.***

The book is about leadership and fission dynamics in Shona independent churches that Daneel refers to as "Spirit-type" Churches. It offers a more comprehensive perception of both leadership and fission dynamics in AICs. These AICs include; Ndaza Zionist Churches (ZAC) of David Masunda, Zion Christian Church (ZCC) of Bishop Samuel Mutendi, The First Ethiopian Church (FEC) of Chari Chidembo (Topia), the African Congregational Church (ACC), Chibarirwe, and Vapostori movements (AACJM). It focuses on the key figures who were his hosts during the protracted sojourns at their churches. Some of them were involved in leadership and fission dynamics. The focal point of the book is the inter-play between the 'old' and the 'new', between traditional and Chris-

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<sup>8</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 2000, 47.

<sup>9</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 1988, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 2.



tian tenets in both leadership and fission, through identifiable processes of transformation taking place in the churches.<sup>11</sup>

Daneel unravels aspects of Shona traditional religion and culture in his analysis of leadership and fission dynamics. The themes that run through the book include: the characteristic features of Independent Church leadership, the approach to the ministry (because of the different types of AICs that he studied), leadership hierarchies/followers, their appointment, training and succession and the schismatic process-fission dynamics.

Daneel distinguishes AICs into Ethiopian-type churches, Zionist and Apostolic and the types of leaders fall into prophet type, chief type, and Messianic type. However, leadership is not static because of changing needs within the churches. To prove the changing role of leaders according to changing needs within churches, Daneel cites change of leadership patterns in Johanne Maranke, FEC, and ZCC. Mutendi was a prophet and healer in the early days but as Zion City grew, central administration became necessary and clear trends of “chieftainship,” even “monarchy” became apparent. Like the Shona chief, the leader is at the head of the trichotomous legal system. The council of each congregation corresponds to the village court, the regional court and the ward court (*dunhu*). Two officials assist the leader at headquarters, high ranking (councilors) and junior officials (messengers, spokesmen), (we note that there are no women, an important feature that seems to have been inherited by Pentecostals-see Chapter 5), intermediaries and assessors and many junior officials are close relatives of the leader. The court sessions and judicial system of ZCC were reminiscent of tribal courts in which Mutendi, like a chief, said very little until he delivered his final verdict. Mutendi’s ethical code was that which differed from the traditional chief but the approach and conclusion and the fatherly rebuke was strikingly similar to those in the traditional court case.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, Daneel points out that the powers of Mutendi go beyond that of a chief to that of Rozvi king because of absolute authority over his subjects and influence beyond them.

This wealth of information is important as it shall be examined against the background of the role and status of Guti in ZAOGA’s Day to Day Council, how cases are tried and the choice of leadership in order to

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<sup>11</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 14-15, 161.

<sup>12</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 13-14.

establish whether or not there is influence of the Shona traditional council (*dare*). Daneel points out that there is divine call to the ministry of the leaders through visions, dreams, prophetic revelation, or physical transportation to heaven and in extreme cases, involves ‘death’ and often reflect parallels to biblical personalities.<sup>13</sup> With reference to the training of leadership, there is also diversity that ranges from having “good character” according to traditional norms, general leadership abilities, inspiration by the Holy Spirit and also spiritual gifting. The image of the leader who has mystical powers to perform extraordinary acts enables him to exercise authority over his subordinates and followers.<sup>14</sup> In most of the Zionist/Apostolic churches, natural leadership traits often outweigh spiritual and educational qualifications, (education is not important, probably because of the centrality of the Holy Spirit and divine call that overrides everything), although some leaders under Fambidzano have undergone training.<sup>15</sup> It has to be emphasized that protest against Western missionary education gave birth to most AICs; therefore, this partly explains why education is not a central criterion in leadership positions.

The approach to ministry is not systematic and prophesying is considered to be an essential aspect of the ministry. Much of the inspiration in the lives of AIC leaders and the religious practices they have developed derives from the Holy Spirit, who meets these people meaningfully at their point of need.<sup>16</sup> The church government is structured hierarchically, although there might be notable differences across denominations. Tribal and pan-tribal tendencies can be distinguished, including a thoroughly contextualized leadership that blends with the traditional norms of leadership patterns of authority on the one hand and constitutes new patterns with different demands on the other. The pattern of authority is an adaptation to traditional authority.

The important question is: Does Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe expresses the same features as those identified by Daneel in relation to AICs? This study sets out to investigate the phenomenon in the forthcoming chapters, especially chapters four and five. Related to the position and authority of founders, is the significance of visions and dreams in authenticat-

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<sup>13</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 49-58.

<sup>14</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 50.

<sup>15</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 59-62.

<sup>16</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 115.

ing and bolstering the divine call and commission of founders, the leader becomes a ‘savior’ and is deified. This is seen in ZCC’s claims that the deceased Mutendi appeared to them in visions and dreams.<sup>17</sup> The authority of founders is also confirmed in the reference to, for example, “the Jehovah of Samuel Mutendi”. Leaders are likened to the Biblical Moses, leading oppressed people to a new region of liberation and opportunity. As Daneel observes, the immediate question is: does not the elevation of leaders (Mutendi), usurp the position of Christian God and are there no parallels with ancestor veneration?<sup>18</sup> This question becomes especially relevant when members accept the deceased leader’s communication in dreams and visions. Daneel points out that followers do not see this elevation as ancestor veneration but a “cloud of witnesses”. The leader is the church and he is the message because of his centrality in the structure of the church and in the church’s theology.<sup>19</sup> This might be the reason why they feature prominently in visions and dreams.

However, Daneel is not blind to differences that run across AICs. He points out that Topia does not believe the deceased leader becomes God because it amounts to ancestor veneration but ZCC believes Mutendi ushers people into heaven. Noting differences within AICs is important because the diversities defy generalizations. Although, Daneel (and others) have considered aspects of Shona traditional religion and culture and how AICs have interacted with them, it is still of academic necessity to consider these aspects in Pentecostal churches.

In AICs, there is desire for kinship to take over leadership after the death of founder, particularly the first born son. Succession adapts to African heritage from father to son, for instance, after the deaths of Sengwayo and Mutendi. This is important in the ideological and religious framework of AICs. Is this significance of leadership the same among Pentecostals? An examination of ZAOGA therefore, provides the answers that are needed to establish whether or not there is adaptation to African heritage in the church system. In this case, the study endeavors to establish Guti’s status by examining his and his members’ claims to leadership, making use of visions, dreams and appealing to divine commands and revelations. This brings in the significance of models of contextualization that were briefly discussed in chapter one. Daneel also pays at-

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<sup>17</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 270.

<sup>18</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 270.

<sup>19</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 290, 296, 299.

tention to the root causes of fission in AICs by citing socio-political, theological and non theological causes.

The fission is important as this study draws attention to the fission in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) as I explore the rise of Guti and also the fission in ZAOGA that saw Guti purging his co-founders and the effects upon ZAOGA. Daneel describes the roots and growth of AICs, “the dried out branches and the new shoots of the old age Zionist, Apostolic and Ethiopian trees.”<sup>20</sup> He points out that the very nature of AICs gives rise to richness and diversity: their lengthy ceremonies of worship, their endless pre-occupation with the Bible-related themes in their sermons and the predictable defections of office bearers followed by reshuffle of church affiliations in a process of proliferation, expansion, renewal or consolidation or waning of church groups.<sup>21</sup> In each group this is accompanied by orally projected, group integrated, and sometimes contradictory interpretations and re-interpretations of local church history. The interpretation and re-interpretation of church history is important in as far as it shows the underlying schisms and power struggles for recognition and legitimacy. This study explores and analyses the rise of Guti and the narration of ZAOGA history that authenticates and legitimizes Guti’s firm hold and monopoly over ZAOGA. Yet, other independent circles have a different history.

Daneel also provides a critique of Hubert Bucher’s analysis on the Shona. Daneel argues that Bucher has presented a generalized and biased Shona cosmology in which Bucher argues that the Shona have not really confronted traditional religious assumptions and that the traditional worldview has been incorporated in to the movements essentially unchanged and that the mellange has put the gospel at a disadvantage.<sup>22</sup> I share the same sentiments as Daneel because the process of adaptation and contextualization brought about changes in one way or the other, hence, to claim that there has been no change might be tantamount to denying the creativity and innovations made by these religious groups. Daneel gives the example of real changes, in spite of similar diagnosis. The diagnosis and therapy of Shona prophetic healers is a real substitute of traditional divine healers because the *n’anga* (traditional healer) believes in the power of the ancestral spirits while the prophet believes in

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<sup>20</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 115.

<sup>21</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 117.

<sup>22</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 1988, 391.

the power of the Christian God. Daneel points out that the activities of the *n'anga* seem to influence the prophet; related yet decided new ministry of healing. He says:

In the prophet, we find the new *nganga*, the substitute of the traditional *nganga* who deals with ills of society that he stands at the centre, uniquely placed to enact the message of Christ's incarnation. They stave off the powers differently. The *n'anga* advocates expulsion of the evil wizardry or *ngozi*, through rites. To the Zionists and the Apostle, the ancestral spirit is inadmissible on biblical grounds. A compromise is only reached when non-Christian or non Zionist relations must be met in the conflict situation.<sup>23</sup>

Acknowledging the dynamic nature of religions, there is need to explore healing in Pentecostalism to establish whether or not there are resilient aspects from the traditional paradigm that have found avenues of expression, as with AICs. Also, there is need to establish how religious functionaries in ZAOGA deal with the same aspects of wizardry and *ngozi* (avenging spirit/s). Chapter 4 explored how Guti's traditional background could have influenced prophecy and healing in ZAOGA. However, Daneel points out that, compromise solutions hardly ever include prophetic inducement of church members to participate in traditional rites in order to appease ancestral spirits. I agree with Daneel, although with different focal groups. Just like AICs, Pentecostals (ZAOGA) have innovatively negotiated the traditional aspects, to bring about complications and diversities that defy generalisations and also conclusions that appear to give the impression that they merely regurgitate the traditional practices. This shall be considered at length when I examine aspects of beliefs and practices among the Shona and how ZAOGA deals with them to establish whether what Daneel says on compromise is valid, in chapters five.

However, I disagree with Daneel when he criticizes Bucher for focusing more on the 'old' than the 'new'. It appears to deny the Christian nature of AICs. There is need to understand that Daneel wants to emphasize the Christian nature of AICs in spite of incorporating the 'old' and that is why he seems to have a bias towards the 'new'. This study takes a middle approach by focusing on both the 'old' and the 'new' on equal

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<sup>23</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 392.

plain and Bucher's observation might be worth noting when he talks of compromising Christian tenets.

To establish how ZAOGA has sourced from the traditional paradigm is important. In the process of negotiating the 'old' and the 'new', it appears that Pentecostals 'compromise' Christian aspects to accommodate the traditional beliefs and practices. This is also not to deny the distinctively Christian nature of ZAOGA, but to unravel how they have innovatively accommodated aspects of Shona beliefs and practices in their new faith, bringing out the resilience of the indigenous beliefs and practices. For example, in chapter five on *ngozi* (avenging spirit), the belief and practice of appeasement has been re-invented within Christian praxis by ZAOGA hence it has found an avenue of survival.

Daneel's book is significant in so far as it pays attention to the interaction of the 'old' and the 'new', through the issues of leadership, hierarchy, kinship, hereditary succession and other forms of the old and how the AICs negotiate them. Daneel points out the distribution of authority in leadership hierarchies in accordance with the traditional kinship obligations and the tendency to perpetuate church interests within families through hereditary succession-an adaptation of the recognizable Shona traditional patterns of Shona society. This raises the question whether kinship, tribal and other considerations, do not consistently override and supersede the interests and objectives of Christ's *ecclesia*<sup>24</sup> in Pentecostalism. For example, when Guti teaches, "understanding the doctrine of my church by searching the scriptures"<sup>25</sup>, does it not lead to 'superficiality of Christian identity or loss of Christian identity'? All this is important because this study discusses leadership, kinship, hierarchy and hereditary succession in ZAOGA. These are significant phenomena in African Pentecostalism that have complex tribal and national under-currents that ultimately affect the church's theology and orientation towards other churches as well as the 'outer world'.

Other issues that Daneel mentions (although not explored in detail) include salvation and his open ended theological position because of recognition of change within AICs. Daneel's balanced analysis on Shona Independent Churches has to be applauded. Leadership is central to

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<sup>24</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 398.

<sup>25</sup> Guti's theme of the year-1998 was; "Understanding the Doctrine of my Church by Searching the Scriptures" because, he argued, many churches were leading people astray by not following biblical principles and stipulations.

Pentecostalism because the structure hinges upon it. In the same manner, I examine the significance of leadership in ZAOGA. Because of the pre-occupation with leadership and schism, in some instances, Daneel does not explain how AICs negotiate the old, for instance, on words prior to death, role and status of *ruwadzano* (women's fellowship) and *ngozi* (avenging spirit/s). Therefore, he does not furnish with information on how AICs negotiate and reach a compromise solution. This study therefore, intends to go beyond by examining the process of negotiation between the 'old' and the 'new' in ZAOGA with respect to selected traditional beliefs and practices. It has been pointed out that Daneel does not specifically write on Pentecostalism and this means that this study cannot wholly embrace Daneel's findings on dynamic AICs and impose them/argue that they are a replica of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. This study therefore, has the task of providing information on Pentecostalism, basing from the insights that have been established by Daneel because these AICs have laid foundation for the Pentecostals. Daneel emphasizes the remarkable resilience of the Christian message in spite of the 'old' that is incorporated in the 'new.' He says:

The yeast of the Christian message shows a remarkable resilience in that the gospel keeps functioning as a corrective in the interaction of the old and new.<sup>26</sup>

He also says:

Trends of interaction have inspired no more than a superficial Christian transformation which has led to syncretism-legitimate contextualization in which the Christian message and church structure manifest themselves in a sufficiently indigenized shape to be recognizable and meaningful in the Shona context, without becoming "enslaved" by this contextual shape.<sup>27</sup>

Hence, we note that Daneel's priority is on the manifestation of the Christian message in an indigenized form. This study is concerned with the resilience of traditional beliefs and practices among the ZAOGA Christians in the interaction of 'old' and 'new' and how they have interacted. Hence, the area of focus and emphasis becomes a point of departure from that of Daneel.

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<sup>26</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 398.

<sup>27</sup> Daneel, 388.

In spite of different focus and emphasis, Daneel has considered important dimensions of the inter-play between the 'old' and the 'new' in the AICs that have direct relevance and useful to this study, for example, kinship ties are also important to this study because kinship ties are the basis of Shona traditional religion and culture and are considered in chapter 3 and ZAOGA kinship ties in chapter four, and the chapters that follow. Daneel records the presence of Ruben at his father's death bed (Mutendi) and the claimed transfer of ecclesiastical authority to him. Salvation is closely tied sometimes even exclusively related to the specific principal leader, protection and salvific security. Zionist interpretation of salvation shows a strong emphasis on rural economic progress here and now as a sign of God's blessings therefore, Nehemiah's control of large herds of cattle symbolizes prosperity and progress in the church.<sup>28</sup> This study discusses the significance of words prior to death and the concept of salvation in ZAOGA and seeks to establish the influence of Shona concepts.

There are also references to areas of investigation in this study, for example, women's fellowships/associations (*ruwadzano*) in both ZCC and Chibairirwe and that in Chibairirwe *ruwadzano* raised money that two contesting leaders vied for and that ZCC women's fellowship is characterized by praising Mutendi for his ability to cure infertility. It alludes to industrious/active women's fellowships and the provision of solutions to women. Overall, women hold junior positions in the church hierarchy, apart from the leadership they hold in their women's associations. This gives the impression that as far as authority is concerned, the Shona Independent Churches offer scope only for male leadership. Yet, Amanze has pointed out that AICs were the first to offer space for female leadership.<sup>29</sup> This becomes an area of in-depth analysis to consider status, role and significance of women among the Shona (chapter three) and in ZAOGA's Gracious Woman in chapter five. Of importance is to try to establish in detail, how the 'old' has been negotiated in ZAOGA, through an examination of selected themes, *ngozi*, belief in witches and witchcraft activities, words prior to death (considered by Daneel in passing when he narrates the power struggles of Mutendi's sons after his death). Faith and prophetic healing will be explored in relation to healing

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<sup>28</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 278, 291.

<sup>29</sup> James Amanze, *African Christianity in Botswana: The Case of African Independent Churches*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1988, 20.



in ZAOGA's deliverance "Explos" and the missionary dimension of AICs necessitates the examination of the evangelistic enterprise of ZAOGA in Chapter four. Other practices that Daneel considers are, throwing of gifts (*kupa zvipo*), *nhaka* (inheritance) by making reference to division in ZCC, ancestral veneration, the prayer of Reuben to his father Samuel Mutendi, *mukwerera* (rain-making ceremony), beer drinking and polygamy. Beer drinking and polygamy posed a lot of challenges in AICs because leaders could not ban them but provided checks and balances to make sure that anyone who would drink excessively would be disciplined. These raise theological and moral issues that are crucial in Pentecostalism. Some AICs upheld polygamy and polygamists were implored to make sure that they guarded against strife in such polygamous relationships, take care of the welfare of all the wives and perpetuate the Christian ethos of unity and love.

Pentecostals denounce and demonise practices such as polygamy as immoral and sinful. AICs have provided the paradigm of an indigenous gospel providing impetus for further indigenisation by Pentecostals. One important observation by Daneel is the state of flux that is caused by the interaction of the 'old' and 'new', probably more or less what Tutu refers to as "religious schizophrenia"<sup>30</sup> because of encountering dilemmas in the process of negotiating the 'new' and the 'old'. From the above, it can be noted that Daneel has raised important aspects in AIC congregations. He says that;

...in spite of the misconceptions and flaws which could be qualified as syncretistic, the Christian nature of these movements has remained manifest in thoroughly contextualised patterns in which the good news of salvation in Christ and related Christian beliefs have not become obscured in to their Africanised guise.<sup>31</sup>

Daneel has contributed a lot in analysing the interaction of the 'old' and the 'new' in AICs and showing their creativity in blending culture with the Christian gospel, the diversities, complexities and at times flux as the gospel is contextualised. It is therefore, imperative to consider Pentecostalism in the light of his findings since AICs are the first crop that provided the impetus for the growth of African Pentecostalism. All forms such as continuity, discontinuity and melange, in order to establish ele-

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<sup>30</sup> Desmond Tutu, "Whither African Theology", *Christianity in Independent Africa*, ed. by Fashole Luke et al., London, Richard Gray, 1978, 70.

<sup>31</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 390.

ments of Shona traditional religion and cultural beliefs and practices that have proved to be resilient in ZAOGA are given attention. Having examined Daneel's work, the following section concentrates on one of Anderson's significant publications.

## Allan Anderson

### Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost. The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*, 2000.

Anderson's description and comparative analysis of Zionist/Apostolic and Pentecostal churches in South Africa is important to this study. In, *Zion and Pentecost*, Anderson cites the activities of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), and Assemblies of God (AOG)'s activities, the fissions derived from racism and segregation of the blacks and the breakaway and emergence of black leaders such as Nicholas Benghu. The significance of this book to this study is twofold. First, Anderson has provided comparative insights on Zionist/Apostolic churches and Pentecostalism, thus moving towards bridging the wide gap that existed in scholarship between Zionist/Apostolic churches and Pentecostalism. Second, the dynamics of Pentecostalism in South Africa is the matrix within which ZAOGA emerges from the AFM. The AFM expansion into Zimbabwe subsequently influenced the rise of Ezekiel Guti and the birth of ZAOGA, which shall be considered in Chapter four. The study chose this book because of its examination of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic churches in South Africa. It has been already pointed out that the significance of considering AICs is because of the foundation that they provided for Pentecostals, in terms of independency and negotiation of the 'old' and the 'new'. In this book, Anderson points out that Zionists and Pentecostals are an African phenomenon. The churches include, Zion Christian Church (ZCC), St John Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), International Pentecostal Church (IPC), Full Gospel Church of God (FGCG) and Assemblies of God groups' (AOG). Anderson explores the accommodation and confrontation between the spirituality of the Zionist/Apostolic and Pentecostal churches and the African worldview. He carries out a comparative examination of Zionist/Apostolic and Pentecostal beliefs and practices and their attitude and responses to traditional beliefs and practices in South Africa- attitudes and responses to

traditional practices such as rituals, divination, healing, ancestors and liturgy. These responses bring out how Zionists/Apostolic negotiate the traditional worldview with the gospel. This is important because the book furnishes us with Pentecostal attitudes towards the traditional religion and culture that this study sets to establish also among Pentecostals in Zimbabwe.

Anderson's book addresses the following; the rise of Zionist/Apostolic and Pentecostal and Zionist churches, beliefs and practices that include, prophets and healing, spirits and ancestors, traditions and rituals, exorcism and indigenization of the gospel, apartheid and liberation. Most of these aspects are important because this study focuses on establishing the resilience of some of these aspects. Anderson points out that Zionists/Apostolic and Pentecostals emphasize baptism, prayer for healing, speaking in tongues<sup>32</sup> and also pays attention to the reasons for the attraction and growth of these churches. Anderson also points out that healing is central. With regards to some traditional practices, Pentecostals show outright rejection while some sections of Zionist/Apostolic churches show compromise, and that this rejection extends to Zionist/Apostolic practices of use of symbolic objects in healing practices and that Pentecostals are critical of Zionist and Apostolic churches.<sup>33</sup> The rejection of Zionist/Apostolic churches and their symbolic staff is set to be established in the Zimbabwean context in the forthcoming chapters. It is crucial to examine whether or not the Pentecostals do not practice what they reject, even in other forms.<sup>34</sup> Anderson points out that a distinction between Zionists and Apostolic is still blurred in South Africa. In this particular context, 'Apostolic' does not mean Pentecostal because the name is owned even by those churches that are not Pentecostal.<sup>35</sup> Anderson also examines the origins of Pentecostalism and the difference between Pentecostal mission churches, whose origin is pre-dominantly white Pentecostal missions from North America, sometimes known as classical Pentecostalism to distinguish between the original and older

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<sup>32</sup> Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost: The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*, Pretoria, UNISA, 2000, 42.

<sup>33</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 91.

<sup>34</sup> Kudzai Biri, "The Silent Echoing Voice: Aspects of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism and the Quest for Power, Healing and Miracles", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Aug. 2012, 48, 2012, 43-55.

<sup>35</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 45.

Pentecostals and the newer “neo Pentecostals’ and Charismatics. New Pentecostals have exclusively black leadership.<sup>36</sup>

Anderson cites racism and schism in the AFM and AOG mission churches, that later saw the emergence of African Pentecostal leaders such as Nicholas Benghu. This is important to our study because the emergence of ZAOGA is located within the context of expansion of Pentecostalism in Southern Africa (from South Africa into Zimbabwe). He mentions South African black evangelist Nicholas Benghu, the most effective Pentecostal leader in South Africa who established independency from AOG in his 1950 famous “Back to Jesus” crusade and established Pilgrim Bible College in Port Elizabeth.<sup>37</sup> It is significant in the history of ZAOGA, for Benghu had contact with Guti and this contact and influence is significant in the analysis of the rise of Guti, leadership style and theology (see chapter four). Anderson also points out similarities in liturgy of Pentecostals and Zionists/Apostolic churches- exuberant liturgy and enthusiastic experience dominated Christianity, but at the same time, the need to appreciate the distinct character of each liturgy, healing practices, their different approaches to African traditional religion and their unique contribution to Christianity in a broader context.<sup>38</sup> He points out the centrality of Christ and the Holy Spirit, its power, baptism and manifestation. They make use of their normal/customary understanding of the literal words; they enlarge the meaning of the Bible for themselves, out of their context with its inherent pre-suppositions.<sup>39</sup> Liturgy is also important since the liturgical innovations of ZAOGA are explored against the background of the Shona.

Anderson also points out that leadership patterns in South African Pentecostalism exhibits American Pentecostalism, especially on Ray McCauley of Rhema Church, and the promotion of Western televangelists like Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn.<sup>40</sup> More importantly, he notes that names of some churches mediate this Western influence, a point to investigate in ZAOGA against the backdrop of negation of Western influence by Guti and the promotion of Shona naming system in chapter five. On Pentecostal leadership in

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<sup>36</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 40-43.

<sup>37</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 89-90.

<sup>38</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 44.

<sup>40</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 44.

South Africa, Anderson says Pentecostals do not have prophets or bishops. Yet, there are prophets, bishops and Archbishops in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism and this shows varieties and divergences in African Pentecostalism such that there is need to critically examine the structure and naming/designations in ZAOGA. Related and important to leadership in African Pentecostalism is Anderson's reference to the significance of origins of Pentecostalism in the black church of Los Angeles and the Azusa street leader Seymour, the spiritual father of hundreds of early Pentecostals, blacks and white, which is a challenge to all forms of racial bigotry, hypocrisy and oppression in Pentecostalism. Yet, Pentecostalism acquiesced in the society of its day and became a bastion of apartheid.<sup>41</sup> The identification of the origins of Pentecostalism with the Azusa Street and Seymour means Pentecostalism is identified with the poor and the oppressed, with non-racialism and with reconciliation, but also with black leadership, black power and dignity.<sup>42</sup> This is what Walter Hollenweger says: black power cannot be seen as a contrast to the black Pentecostal movement, both movements are religious and revolutionary and it is difficult to draw a dividing line between the two.<sup>43</sup> This observation of the inseparability of black power and the black Pentecostal movement is significant because this study explores the teachings on black empowerment in ZAOGA through Talents (see Chapter five).

Both Zionists/Apostolic and Pentecostals have a strict code of ethics that is against drinking beer but they differ on issues of marriage because Pentecostals are against polygamy that Zionists/Apostolic condones. Anderson discusses the important issue of salvation and deliverance in these churches. Salvation is 'here and now', deliverance from the worldly problems particularly the need for healing, a reason for growth as people flock to these churches in search of healing, which is part of evangelism.<sup>44</sup> Preaching salvation is preaching Jesus, salvation of the soul but extends to every facet of life. Anderson also brings in Pentecostal forms of political engagement. He says that Pentecostals do not offer solutions to what were seen as political questions and yet they were quick to pro-

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<sup>41</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 109.

<sup>42</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 106.

<sup>43</sup> Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecost Between Black and White, Belfast*, Christian Journals, 1974, 24.

<sup>44</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 125.

vide answers to this other worldly problem.<sup>45</sup> Some Pentecostals were denied political affiliation (although some white Pentecostals openly did) and did not address the needs of South Africa during years of oppression. Anderson cites theology as the main reason for Pentecostals to hate the world and wishing to escape. Yet, ZCC enjoyed the favor of the government since the church was registered in 1942.<sup>46</sup> This brings to mind the increasing awareness of Zionist/Apostolic awareness of political issues. In Zimbabwe Mudzidzi of Johanne Masowe weChishanu, Paul Mwazha of the African Apostolic Church and many other leaders have openly supported President Robert Mugabe, despite there being a division of opinion on whether or not it is right for Christians to participate in politics.<sup>47</sup> It becomes important to examine the different context in Zimbabwe to find out how Pentecostals relate to politics and how Guti and his church have dealt with political issues and whether they 'hate and wish to escape the world'.<sup>48</sup>

South African Pentecostals emphasize black pride and dignity because of the experiences of apartheid. In Zimbabwe, racism was also rampant during the colonial period and complex challenges continue to intrigue citizens well after independence. Hence, there are local variations because of experiences and these affecting the theologies of Pentecostals and how they have responded to their socio-economic and political challenges. This is helpful to this study because in a similar manner, attention is given to how experiences have shaped the theology in ZAOGA and her engagement with socio-economic and political issues in Zimbabwe. Anderson's book is important because it unravels how Zionist/Apostolic and Pentecostal churches in South Africa negotiate the traditional worldview. The information is important because it helps in our analysis of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. Moreover, the significance of Anderson's book is his sensitivity to diversities that run in these churches in South Africa. It cautions us to treat Pentecostal denominations in their own right and to test the applicability of these findings

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<sup>45</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 110.

<sup>46</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 93, 167.

<sup>47</sup> In Zimbabwe, AICs commonly called 'Vapositori' have even encouraged members to vote for Mugabe. Others declared that he is divinely ordained and will leave office on his own accord.

<sup>48</sup> See e.g., Ezekiel Guti, *The Church and Political Responsibility, Resource Management: Preparation for the Next Generation, Pray For Africa to be the United States of Africa*, Harare, EGEA, 1994.

from other contexts in the local context as similar themes are examined in ZAOGA.

Like Daneel, Anderson's examination of these AICs points out that the interaction of the 'old' and 'new' is complex. He draws attention to healing and that we cannot simplistically equate it with traditional healing. Although there are many parallels between forms, this does not mean the content of the prophecy is the same.<sup>49</sup> Hence, a patient and systematic examination of ZAOGA is required, to establish the resilience of Shona traditional religious and cultural beliefs and practices. The adaptation to and confrontation with the African tradition, constitute both the challenge and the problem of AICs to a contextual African Christian theology.<sup>50</sup> For example, are dreams and appearance of ancestors affirming members' decisions to attend Christian churches a form of veneration?<sup>51</sup> This study sees it as channel of continued manifestation of the belief, in a new form, hence, a channel of resilience of the traditional belief. Therefore, the need to examine how ZAOGA has addressed some selected Shona beliefs and practices. Anderson has provided helpful insights, "rectifying some of the omissions and clarify some of the misconceptions of the past and to describe the Zionist/Apostolic and Pentecostals in terms of their responses to the African worldview".<sup>52</sup> While Daneel specifically deals with Zionist/Apostolic churches, Anderson bridges the gap in his comparative analysis of Zionist/Apostolic churches with Pentecostalism. Anderson simply pointed out that in Zionist/Apostolic churches there are strict rules on menstruating women and that women and girls are forbidden to greet men by any physical contact,<sup>53</sup> without exploring further whether it is biblical or traditional culture. He did not analyze the gender dimension of these movements, especially in Pentecostalism and this study examines the status, role and significance of women in Pentecostalism. Anderson also pointed out on *tokoloshe* that many members believe and testify that the prophets can exorcise such spirits. While *tokoloshe* is popular in South Africa and the most feared, in Zimbabwe it is *ngozi* (avenging spirit/s) that strikes the imagination.

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<sup>49</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 140.

<sup>50</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 47.

<sup>51</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 117.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 19.

<sup>53</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 165-166.

Anderson did not give us possible outcome of failure to heal in churches, whether they revert to the 'old' or compromise. This study therefore, utilizes *ngozi* to establish how ZAOGA negotiates the intriguing spirit of *ngozi*. Anderson, like Daneel, emphasizes changes in the relationship between diviner and prophets rather than preservation. It is within this change and its dynamics that ZAOGA is examined to establish how and what changes occur.

## David Maxwell

While fitting tribute goes to scholars on Pentecostalism, focus on Pentecostalism (ZAOGA specifically) goes to David Maxwell. This section provides an overview of the work of Maxwell because he has several publications that have a bearing on this study, hence, unlike the two scholars above, the limit is not to one book but several of his publications. Maxwell has written extensively on African Pentecostalism with a special focus on ZAOGA among other case studies. His close association with Guti and other prominent leaders of the church has contributed to his vast, first hand and critical knowledge of ZAOGA, apart from discussions, seminars, conferences and the help and advice which he got from the members of ZAOGA. It would appear that Maxwell is the man that has managed to penetrate the psyche and put his fingers on the pulse of Guti. Maxwell presents balanced criticisms of the movement, judging from his substantive publications on ZAOGA. The areas that he has covered include religion and politics, interaction of Pentecostalism with ATR, the success and impact (both positive and negative) of Pentecostalism on the economy and social realities of the communities that he has studied. Thus, he has endeavored to consider many aspects of the communities in Zimbabwe in relation to Pentecostalism. The advantage of Maxwell's publications over and above the others for this specific study lies in the fact that he specifically and extensively studied ZAOGA, both in some rural and urban settings. He managed to get first hand information as he travelled with Guti, attended church services and accessed ZAOGA archives at ZAOGA Headquarters in Waterfalls (which many people cannot easily access). In other areas like Manicaland, Maxwell stayed with and participated in church services with members of ZAOGA while working as a school teacher. The paragraphs below do not



present a review of all his work on ZAOGA. Rather, they provide a summary of insights that are relevant to this book.

In a 1995 publication, entitled, “Witches, Prophets And Avenging Spirits: The Second Christian Movement in North-East Zimbabwe”, Maxwell illustrated how the North–Eastern Shona have seized upon Christian beliefs and practices, in response to locally specific conditions, and in the process have transformed their own pre-existing religious system.<sup>54</sup> The Pentecostal churches that Maxwell considered were ZAOGA, Mugodhi, Torpiya, Zviratidzo, Rujeko, Borngaes and Samanga (although I can classify them as AICs -*Vapositori*). He specifically explores the phenomenon of witchcraft, avenging spirits and prophets. This publication is significant to the study because it has laid a foundation as this study also considers avenging spirits and witchcraft activities among the Shona, however, in a different manner. If the Shona have seized upon Christian beliefs and practices, in response to locally specific conditions, do we not have Shona aspects that fit within the Christian perspective or community so that there is mutual borrowing and continuation of aspects of Shona culture among Pentecostals in Zimbabwe?

In a 1998 publication, “Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?: Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe”, Maxwell focused on the gospel of prosperity propounded by ZAOGA. He argued convincingly that while ZAOGA leaders draw upon American versions of the prosperity gospel to give legitimacy to their excessive accumulation, its own dominant prosperity teachings have arisen from predominantly Southern African sources and are shaped by Zimbabwean concerns.<sup>55</sup> This observation is critical to the research because I take steps in the same direction to establish whether it is only in the area of the prosperity gospel that ZAOGA has drawn from the local concerns or has extended to some of the selected areas of interest.

Retaining his focus on ZAOGA, Maxwell observed that the Christian movement in Africa often began as youth and women’s movements because the church offered a domain where they were relatively free

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<sup>54</sup> David Maxwell, “Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits: The Second Christian Movement in North-East Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 25, 3, Aug. 1995, 309-310.

<sup>55</sup> David Maxwell, “Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?: Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28, (3), 1998, 351.

from the tutelage of elder males.<sup>56</sup> He cites the phenomenon of avenging spirits (*ngozi*) among the Shona with specific reference to the Hwesa people of Nyanga area. He points out that appeasement of *ngozi* is a bewildering issue among the women because it often involved a gift of a young girl to the family of the murdered victim. Pentecostalism appealed to such people because it is able to resonate with popular understanding of the mechanics of traditional cults.<sup>57</sup> However, just as there are limits to Pentecostal powers of healing, there are limits to the whole process itself and some claim that they could join the church after dealing with *ngozi*. This aspect is particularly appealing to this study as it sets out to establish how Shona converts to ZAOGA respond to this phenomenon. Alongside the issue of *ngozi*, women still bear the brunt of witchcraft accusation.<sup>58</sup> The two elements of *ngozi* and witchcraft that Maxwell highlighted are examined in this book in order to establish whether these traditional beliefs still exist and if so, how ZAOGA has dealt with them.

The significance of this article lies in exposing the disadvantaged status of women and children in Shona culture and in the church (a point he re-iterates in his publication, “The Durawall of Faith” 2005). This study draws insights from his findings and probes how ZAOGA handles selected indigenous beliefs and practices. Maxwell points out the significance of mountains as holy places and burial places for the past chiefs associated with *mhondoro* spirits but ZAOGA has re-sacralized the mountains to be places of pilgrimage, fasting and prayer; adapting the prevailing ideologies to the service of their faith and their faith to the needs of society.<sup>59</sup>

In his 2002 publication, “Catch The Cockerel Before Dawn”: Pentecostalism and Politics in Post Colonial Zimbabwe,” Maxwell paid special attention to ZAOGA’s authoritarianism that has its roots in ATR that most scholars have overlooked.<sup>60</sup> The rationale behind his claim is that ZAOGA’s Christian values such as authoritarianism are rooted in the

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<sup>56</sup> David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People 1870s-1990s*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ. Pr., 1999, 196.

<sup>57</sup> Maxwell, *Christian and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*, 196.

<sup>58</sup> Maxwell, *Christian and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*, 204.

<sup>59</sup> Maxwell, *Christian and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*, 204.

<sup>60</sup> David Maxwell, “‘Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn’: Pentecostalism and Politics in Post Colonial Zimbabwe,” *Journal of the International African Institute*, 70 (2), 2000, 249.

African soul or the mature realization of the need to domesticate Christian values.<sup>61</sup> However, the focus of this book is to examine areas where ATRs have shown resilience in the church, in the light of social change and the long period that has lapsed (almost two decades) after Maxwell's findings. Maxwell also points out the political significance of Pentecostalism, highlighting the relations between politicians and church leaders, with specific reference to Guti and ZANU PF (the ruling party in Zimbabwe, before the political developments of 2008).<sup>62</sup> In "Christianity and the African Imagination" (2002), Maxwell cites ZAOGA as an example of popular Christianity. According to him, its greater appeal lies in the fact that they have borrowed from the traditional culture and religion, but their appropriations were re-coded within the Christian systems. For him, ZAOGA draws both material and ideological resources from the American dominated global born-again movement while still retaining local control.<sup>63</sup> Thus, they have taken on new forms and ideas and the success of the new forms of popular Christianity (Pentecostalism) lies in their continuity and discontinuity with what had gone before, their real stuff of pilgrimage and prayer, healing and exorcism, rain-making and miracles.<sup>64</sup> Maxwell also cites Guti's stay in Dallas where he got ideas, a pool of resources and huge range of international contacts which enabled him to modernize his movement and enhance his own position. This information is very useful to this study because it points to the magnitude of modernization and sophistication in ZAOGA. In addition, it enables an assessment of whether or not that has left room for Shona religion and culture to continue in the lives of believers, by focusing on the ways and means of survival, through a deeper engagement.

Maxwell's 2005 "The Durawall of Faith": Pentecostal Spirituality in Neoliberal Zimbabwe" has a valuable insight into the developments and significance of ZAOGA as a movement in a politically, socially and economically crisis-hit Zimbabwe. He focused on ZAOGA city assembly in

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<sup>61</sup> Maxwell, "Catch the Cockerel before Dawn", 249.

<sup>62</sup> In 2008, following a disputed presidential election, ZANU-PF and the two opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) parties signed the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that ushered in the Government of National Unity (GNU) or inclusive government.

<sup>63</sup> David Maxwell, "Introduction", *Christianity and The African Imagination: Essays in Honor of A. Hastings*, ed. by David Maxwell & Ingrid Lawrie, Leiden, E J Brill, 2002, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Maxwell, "Introduction", *Christianity and the African Imagination*, 7.

Baines avenues, Highfield (Harare) and assemblies of Northern Nyanga, the eastern town and rural areas in Manicaland province. In his analysis, Maxwell notes how the faith of Pentecostals has been a “durawall” for them, offering them stability and hope in times of crisis.<sup>65</sup> He notes that most pastors are not trained but their sermons are very powerful and effective and that ZAOGA continues to give people a message of hope which keeps them going despite the negative social, political and economic predicament in Zimbabwe. This offers security in the face of state retrenchment, the capriciousness of global capitalism and growing levels of violence and crime.<sup>66</sup>

However, despite that security, women and youth remain vulnerable especially being the victims of HIV and AIDS because ZAOGA seems to accept a husband’s adulterous liaisons and women are still required to fulfill their sexual duties to such aberrant husbands.<sup>67</sup> This is an important observation that Maxwell noted and it shall be considered at length in this thesis in chapter five. Maxwell has observed and, correctly too, in his overall critique of the dominant preaching by most ZAOGA pastors. He says that images of refugee security and protection in preaching suggest an element of escapism or flight from the world.<sup>68</sup> Maxwell adds that this has positively sustained believers in neo-liberal Zimbabwe, offering them hope and lived solution to combat intensifying poverty, marginalization and insecurity, problems that arise out of structural conditions which are beyond the power of individual to alter and which their political leaders are unable or unwilling to alter.<sup>69</sup>

The above observation by Maxwell finds affinity with the insights of Peter Berger that Cesar utilizes. Cesar notes that:

The transcendental and the real inter-mingle, breaking down the theological and cultural barriers between the sacred and the profane. This inter-mingling between of the transcendental and the quotidian

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<sup>65</sup> David Maxwell, “The Durawall of Faith: Pentecostal Spirituality in Neo-Liberal Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 35, 1, 2005, 7.

<sup>66</sup> Maxwell, “The Durawall of Faith”, 7.

<sup>67</sup> Maxwell, “The Durawall of Faith”, 7.

<sup>68</sup> Maxwell, “The Durawall of Faith”, 2005, 13.

<sup>69</sup> Maxwell, “The Durawall of Faith”, 28.

in Pentecostalism has the immediate effect of giving plausibility to the hostile world which the poor live.<sup>70</sup>

Maxwell further furnishes us with information on ZAOGA in his 2006 publication, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Trans-national Religious Movement*. In a sense, this work represents Maxwell's most detailed engagement with ZAOGA. The book is indeed a major signpost in the study of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. Whereas previously articles, chapters in books as well as dissertations and theses had provided glimpses of ZAOGA's identity, the book offers a detailed analysis of the history and expansion of ZAOGA as a transnational Zimbabwe based movement. Maxwell provides an informative and analytical account of ZAOGA's identity, mostly based on fieldwork. The book offers valuable information that has informed this book in many respects. He cites Bindura as the mythical birth place of ZAOGA and Highfield Revival Centre as the "mother church." He suggests that ZAOGA is a cult sustained by a heavily edited sacred history in which Guti stood out as the sole agent in the movement's past history where he alone was responsible for the construction of the mother church.<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that ZAOGA is referred to as a cult. This might provoke criticism against such labeling. However, this study subscribes to the application of the term because ZAOGA is heavily dependent on the person of the founder (Guti) and his 'sacred history'. Maxwell provides a rich harvest of "behind the scenes" observations and access to the movement's innermost papers, mentioning critics and opponents that Guti got rid of in order to gain personal mileage in the church. This documentation by Maxwell is very important because he hints us at another 'history' as he unravels the hidden secrets of the church leadership, exposing the power struggles between Guti and other co-founders during ZAOGA's evolving stages. This history sharply contradicts that of the church which is laden with theological biases and conceals the truth from most believers and is only meant to glorify Guti.<sup>72</sup> In addition to

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<sup>70</sup> Waldo Cesar, "From Babel to Pentecost: A Social-Historical Theological Study of the Growth of Pentecostalism", *Between Babel and Pentecost: Trans-national Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. by Andre Corten & Ruth Marshall -Fratani, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2001, 7.

<sup>71</sup> Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 2006, 3.

<sup>72</sup> See Sacred History of ZAOGA, African Apostle and the Remained Unspoken in the African Apostle. Harare, EGEA.

the history of how ZAOGA was founded, Maxwell also mentions Talents which were pioneered by Nicholas Benghu but started and perfected in ZAOGA by Priscilla Ngoma, one of the co-founders. However, the history of the church has it that God spoke to Guti about them and he started teaching them to members. It does not credit both Benghu and Ngoma. This is an eye opener in dealing with several contentious issues in this book.

Maxwell's book has first-hand information he got when he travelled with Guti, from ZAOGA archives and from prominent members of the church. Maxwell also notes that marital fidelity is fundamental: wife beaters, drunkards, smokers, fornicators and adulterers are subject to church discipline and that the new Pentecostal man becomes less predatory, more able to care for the children of his marriage.<sup>73</sup> While the act of discipline is still exercised in the church, ZAOGA seems to have shifted from that original stance of being strict and disciplining aberrant husbands. All that is emphasized is an enduring patient, 'Proverbs 31' woman. This justifies the claim by some scholars that Pentecostalism seems to be liberating in its early days, but later picks the patriarchal stance.<sup>74</sup>

Maxwell's description of ZAOGA Post Graduate Fellowship is quite revealing and he mentions that they are at liberty to make their grievances known. He notes that they went to *Parade* in 1996, to reveal the corruption that was rife in the church, which led to many people, including some leaders, leaving the church.<sup>75</sup> However, the autocratic nature of the church leaves no room for criticism. This is generally revealed by Guti whenever he has meeting with church leaders. In one of the meetings Guti said:

Where were you with your knowledge? Where were you with your education when God chose me, a poor, uneducated young man in Mutema Ngaaone (his birthplace in Chipinge rural) to form and lead this church? You can start your own churches!<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Maxwell, "Delivered From the Spirit of Poverty", 1998, 353.

<sup>74</sup> See e.g., Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008.

<sup>75</sup> Maxwell, "Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty", 1998, 368.

<sup>76</sup> Ezekiel Guti addressing pastors during a Friday prayer meeting at AMFCC, Harare, 02 Apr. 2008.

This is testimony to a movement that does not tolerate any criticism, even though the movement is saddled with challenges and corruption. Maxwell traces the origins of Pentecostalism in the US, its spread to Africa (Southern Africa) and the influence on the rise of Guti and ZAOGA. He concludes by saying that:

In his (Guti's) tempered criticism of African culture and commentary on modernity the Archbishop embodies a powerful and appealing fusion of roles- apostle, prophet, culture broker and community leader, representing both continuity and change in era of immense social flux.<sup>77</sup>

With these useful insights, this study digs deeper by specifically identifying and examining aspects of selected Shona beliefs and practices that have shown levels of resilience in ZAOGA, especially through influence from Guti's rural background. This is an area that seems to have fallen out of Maxwell's interest in his publications. For example, in his 1999 publication<sup>78</sup> Maxwell cited *ngozi* and witchcraft among the Shona of Eastern Zimbabwe, but this study builds on Maxwell's findings by providing a detailed analysis of different avenues and ways in which belief and appeasement of *ngozi* and belief in witchcraft continue to exist in ZAOGA. In his 2005 publication<sup>79</sup>, he also mentions the disadvantaged status of women and youth because of the patriarchal nature of ZAOGA.

This book, therefore, fills that gap by examining at length the Shona religious and cultural aspects that have continued, after Maxwell's publications (because of the severe 'external pressures' that the Shona continue to experience) through detailed analysis of how ZAOGA negotiates Shona religion and culture to establish how the aspects have found avenues of expression. It is also prudent to acknowledge the wide gap that exists in terms of the time that has lapsed between Maxwell's findings on ZAOGA and this research. Do we still find the same beliefs in view of the inter-cultural and religious changes taking place in Zimbabwe? New developments in ZAOGA after Maxwell's publications are significant in

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<sup>77</sup> David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Trans-national Religious Movement*, Oxford, James Carrey, 2006, 4.

<sup>78</sup> See David Maxwell, *Christian and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People 1870s-1990s*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ. Pr., 1999.

<sup>79</sup> David Maxwell, "The Durawall of Faith': Pentecostal Spirituality in Neo-Liberal Zimbabwe", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 35, 1, 2005.

pointing to recent theological developments taking place in ZAOGA in response to people's needs.

Apart from Maxwell's work that has a direct bearing on this book it is pertinent to examine the work of other scholars who have reflected on Christianity in Africa. This will inform our interpretation of ZAOGA's response to selected aspects of Shona religion and culture. Other scholars have contributed to the emergence of African Pentecostalism as a significant area of research. Their insights are utilized in my analysis of African Pentecostalism and cultural resilience of indigenous culture by examining ZAOGA.

## **Scholarship on Pentecostalism: An Overview**

This overview of scholarly work on Pentecostalism, also adopts a selective slant mainly focusing on scholars who have interacted with themes that are closely related to areas of interest. Attention and analysis is given to the works that tackle the theme of the resilience of ATRs, the vibrancy of African Pentecostalism, Pentecostalism in rural and urban settings, gender in ATR and Christianity and the gospel/message of prosperity. The material is used in the following chapters as various themes are examined against the background of ZAOGA's interaction with the 'old' and identifying how the 'old' has shown resilience. The organization and overview help to assess both the vitality of Shona traditional religion against the vibrancy of Pentecostalism in both rural and urban Zimbabwe.

## **The Resilience of African Traditional Religion and Culture in the Wake of Christianity's Dominance**

Whereas most of the authors whose works are reviewed below have dwelt on the interaction between mainline churches and ATR, their views are still relevant to a study of African Pentecostalism. One of the leading figures in the study of African Christianity, Terence Ranger, has



noted that Christianity has become part of the African identity.<sup>80</sup> Ezra Chitando has offered some insights into the African condition. He points out that Christianity has been condemned as a handmaid of colonialism by some African intellectuals. However, the reality is that Africans have largely domesticated Christianity, making it an African religion.<sup>81</sup> It seems that what Chitando calls “domestication of Christianity” is a historic process of integrating aspects of ATRs within the Christian faith. This has enabled ATRs to revitalize and to adapt themselves to the changing circumstances. Rosalind Hackett takes an apologetic stance and denies the claim by some writers that ATRs are on decline in power and influence. She writes that:

...the subconscious depths of the African societies still exert a great influence upon individuals and communities so that we need to appreciate fully the historicity of African religions, their capacity to innovate, to respond to the challenge of macrocosmic and abandon the idea of ATR as merely a pathetic survival.<sup>82</sup>

She has also pointed out that Christianity has served as a vehicle for the continuity and re-generation of ATR by examining societies in Nigeria. Their emphasis upon taboos, mercy grounds, polygamy, divination, healing, dancing, drumming and trance-like states and their theories of misfortune and evil have traditional roots, even if justification from some of the practices is found in the Old Testament.<sup>83</sup> Their process of accepting, rejecting and affirming African modes of worship explains why the churches are an important medium in the wider context of social change. This might equally apply to most African societies since there is a general Africanness that is shared throughout the continent in terms of religion and culture. Hence, Hackett’s Nigerian case provides useful insights, especially on taboos, dancing, drumming and theories of misfortune and evil.

Kwasi Wiredu shares the same view as Chitando by pointing out that an Africans’ acceptance of some Western ideas does not in itself amount to

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<sup>80</sup> Terence Ranger, “Religion, Development and African Identity”, *Religion Development and Identity*, ed. by K. H. Peterson, Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1987, 29.

<sup>81</sup> Chitando, “The Phenomenological Method in a Zimbabwean Context”, 1998, 99.

<sup>82</sup> Rosalind Hackett, “Revitalization in African Traditional Religion”, *African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society*, ed. by Jacob K. Olupona, Maryknoll: NY, 1991, 29.

<sup>83</sup> Hackett, “Revitalization in African Traditional Religion”, 29.

domination by them, but he is only dominated if his acceptance is not duly reflective.<sup>84</sup> But African church leaders seem to have reflected much by accepting Christianity and exorcising it of its alien traits for it to speak relevantly to the African situation.<sup>85</sup> Christianity has attacked aspects of ATRs that are embedded within the souls and hearts of Africans. Not only does Wiredu criticize this type of gospel, but also those African Christian leaders who have attacked and demonized ATRs without justification.<sup>86</sup> Michael Kirwen has attributed this unjustified attack and ongoing denial of the validity and power of ATRs to the theologies of Christian leaders. He maintains that these theologies were constructed within the cultural framework of Western societies.<sup>87</sup> However, as pointed out by Steven Bevans and Rekonpantse Mate, such culturally insensitive and oppressive attitudes have been unmasked in the last several decades as having little to do with the real meaning of Christianity.<sup>88</sup> In his Nigerian case study, Deji Ayegboyin writes that the Newer Pentecostals have the opportunity to pick and choose what to absorb from the 'soil.' Although they look down upon African indigenous churches, it is plausible to pre-suppose that these AICs provided an enabling environment for the emergence of the Pentecostals.

He also suggests that some of the characteristics of the AICs shaped those of the Pentecostals.<sup>89</sup> Ayegboyin refers to 'Newer Pentecostals' as those churches which started from the 1980s. Although ZAOGA started earlier (1967), she neatly fits into the categories and the trajectories that he explores. Moreover, I am aware of the definitional problems and the challenges of categorization that call for clarification of concepts (see Chapter one). However, these do not hinder research from establishing

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<sup>84</sup> Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 1989, 155.

<sup>85</sup> Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, 155.

<sup>86</sup> Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, 155.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Kirwen, *The Missionary and the Diviner: Contenting Theologies of Christian and African Religion*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987, xix.

<sup>88</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 1992, 6 & Rekonpantse Mate, "Wombs as God's Laboratories": Pentecostal Discourses of Femininity in Zimbabwe, Africa, 72 (4), 2000.

<sup>89</sup> Deji Ayegboyin, "Dressed in Borrowed Robes: The Experience of new Pentecostal Movement", *Tradition and Compromises: Essays on the Challenge of Pentecostalism*, ed. by Anthony Akinwale & J Kenny, Ibadan, The Michael J Dempsey Centre, 2004, 88.

what ZAOGA has picked and absorbed from the indigenous religion and culture.

Cephas Omenyo has posited the Akan of Ghana as an example of people whose religion shows striking parallels between Pentecostal dogmas with the African primal culture.<sup>90</sup> This helps to show that there are areas of commonality in both religions (ATR and Christianity) and that none is superior to the other. Both exist on plain ground and this warrants equal and fair analysis. Significantly, Omenyo further points out that the development of Pentecostal movements in Ghana is the integral part of the global Pentecostal movements because they have roots in the world Pentecostal movements either directly or indirectly.<sup>91</sup> In this way, Omenyo has been sensitive to the historical links between African Pentecostalism and White Pentecostalism but without regarding one as representing the other.

There are a number of issues that emerge from the analysis of the work of scholars who have dwelt on the relationship between Christianity and African culture. First, they insist that Christianity has not been a foreign imposition. Converts to Christianity have found numerous ways of working out their identities within the encounter. Second, they contend that indigenous religions have not capitulated in the face of the assault by Christianity. They have continued to thrive. Third, these scholars maintain that there are sufficient grounds for the two religions to find common ground. They promote a dialogue between/among equals. All these insights are utilized in this book as it assesses the interaction between ZAOGA and Shona religion and culture.

The vibrancy of the Pentecostal movement cannot be denied. Cesar asks these questions:

Is the wave of new religions and their syncretism the growth of countless ‘New Age’ movements at the end of second Christian millennium a sign that we are witnessing a return to spirituality and; are secularization and disenchantment losing their place in history?<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Cephas Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Case Study of the Charismatic Renewal in Mainline Churches in Ghana*, Boekencentrum, Zoetermeer, 2002, 272.

<sup>91</sup> Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*, 272.

<sup>92</sup> Waldo Cesar, “From Babel to Pentecost: Socio-Historical-Theological Study of Pentecostalism”, Andre Corten & Ruth Marshall Fratani (eds), *Between Babel and Pentecost: Trans-national Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2001, 36.

Asonzeh Ukah identifies vitality as the major force behind the expansion of Pentecostalism. He cites the features of religious vitality. These include re-constituting of religious geography through the multiplication of places of worship and increase of number of Pentecostal sites or camps. There is also religious advertising in order to compete for public attention and soliciting for public patronage. Furthermore, there is religious specialization in the provision of specific religious goods and services such as healing.<sup>93</sup> Pentecostalism has also demonstrated that secular activities and spiritual strivings are not antithetical, blurring the boundary between the sacred and the secular. Can they be influenced by the traditional paradigm in the light of what Mbiti says;

In the traditional society there was no dichotomy between the secular and the religious, no distinction between the religious and the irreligious and no separation between the material and the spiritual<sup>94</sup>?

There are individual businesses and church economic practices-economic mobilization. They go beyond the provision of schools, clinics, orphanages and maternity homes.<sup>95</sup> Ukah cites one of the sources of this vitality, relevant to this study, as coming from the perennial spiritualities and traditional cosmologies of the African people.<sup>96</sup> There is also political mobilization, penetrating the top cadre of state and national politics in order to gain resources and influence. Lastly, penetrating religious, material and popular culture in the name of a plethora of books, video and audio tapes which deal with Pentecostal confrontation with the demonic world, healing and prosperity among others, is common.<sup>97</sup>

## The Vibrancy of African Pentecostalism

Apart from analyzing the encounter between Christianity and ATR, some scholars have drawn attention to the growth of African Pentecostalism. Anderson, whose work we discussed above has drawn attention to African Pentecostalism. He distinguishes it from American Pentecos-

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<sup>93</sup> Ukah, *Religious Vitality in the Expansion of Pentecostalism in Nigeria*, Bayreuth Univ., 2002.

<sup>94</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1970, 2.

<sup>95</sup> Ukah, "Religious Vitality in the Expansion of Pentecostalism in Nigeria", 3.

<sup>96</sup> Ukah, "Religious Vitality", 4.

<sup>97</sup> Ukah, "Religious Vitality", 4.

talism. He accounts for the reasons of the Pentecostal expansion in Africa as follows: cultural factors such as oral liturgy, narrative theology and witness, reconciliatory and participant community, visions and dreams in worship, healing, liturgical dance, overcoming barriers of race, social status and above all, the promise for solutions such as sickness, evil and fear.<sup>98</sup> Anderson shares the same view as Harvey Cox who points out that the African Independent Churches are ‘the African expression of worldwide Pentecostal movement because of style and origin’.

Cox<sup>99</sup> is one of the scholars who have ventured into many Pentecostal churches to research. His fifteen-chapter book *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* can be regarded as one of the most illuminating texts of the period by its insights into the whole subject of Pentecostalism. Cox cites the World’s Columbian Exposition and the Azusa Street Revival as the two gatherings in America that prompted and changed the Pentecostal religion. The Columbian Exposition was a meeting of the rich and the so called ‘holier than thou’.<sup>100</sup> He says of the Azusa Street Revival:

...a spiritual fire roared forth that was to race around the world and touch hundreds of millions of people with its warmth and power and that it is the spiritual hurricane that has already touched nearly half a billion people and an alternative vision of the human future whose impact may only be in its earliest stages today.<sup>101</sup>

Cox has glorified Pentecostalism and condemns the stereotypes that people have of it, although he is infuriated by the gospel of faith which blames listeners if they are poor or not in perfect health. He has noted, far above others, how both the rich and the poor have played roles in the origins and development of Pentecostalism, dispelling the claims that the religion is a haven for only the poor. Also, unlike other scholars who have emphasized the division caused by Pentecostals in families and societies, he sees it differently. He writes that Pentecostalism unites both and gives the poor hope.<sup>102</sup> Cox examines the characteristics of

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<sup>98</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 206.

<sup>99</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Mass, A Wesley, 1995, 46.

<sup>100</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 46.

<sup>101</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 65.

<sup>102</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 165.

Pentecostals and rightly asserts that they reflect a restoration of three basic forms of spirituality which are primary piety, hope to the disadvantaged and music. Hence, for him, it makes sense to speak of Pentecostal spirituality as the best hope for reshaping religion in our time and the future.<sup>103</sup> This point has been noted by Ruth Marshall-Fratani and Andre Corten who introduce their edited volume in the following way:

...This ensemble of studies reveals above all the extreme diversity of Pentecostalism, especially in its social composition. In Latin America, Pentecostalism remains for the most part a religion of the poor, even if the latest wave has involved greater numbers of the middle class. In African cities, it presents a new mode of identification among the relatively educated, one which places the emphasis on its modern and trans-cultural characteristics and which involves an attempt to colonize the public space.<sup>104</sup>

Adogame investigates the factors that facilitated the re-packaging and transmission of African Christianity to what hitherto was the home of mission Christianity by providing the history, structure and the missionary zeal that characterizes the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) in Diaspora.<sup>105</sup> It will be argued that the missionary outreach (zeal) that characterizes CCC is not unique and confined to it, but applies to Pentecostals such as ZAOGA as well. Adogame also points to the challenge of space for worship which is a major problem in Europe and has also affected the CCC.<sup>106</sup> That lack of space has not hindered the missionary zeal, but has led to innovative ways, such as making use of buildings offered by other churches.<sup>107</sup> Apart from renting buildings from other churches, in response to the challenge of space ZAOGA in Zimbabwe and abroad has alternatively resorted to 'house churches' whereby members of the church who have space offer their homes for church activities. Thus, Adogame's findings are used in critiquing ZAOGA in the following chapters. Most related/akin to the religious scenario in Zimbabwe is Adogame's "The Politicization of Religion and the Religionization of Politics in Nigeria" in which he examines the politicization of religion

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<sup>103</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 105.

<sup>104</sup> Andre' Corten & Ruth Marshall Fratani, "Introduction", 20.

<sup>105</sup> See Afe Adogame, "A Home Away From Home: The Proliferation of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) in Diaspora-Europe", *Exchange*, 2730, No. 2, 1998, 141-160.

<sup>106</sup> Adogame, "A Home Away from Home", 143.

<sup>107</sup> Adogame, "Politicization of Religion", 125.

and religionization of politics by some religious entrepreneurs and the quest for political power that has partly occurred within the framework of religion.<sup>108</sup> Adogame cites the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and the Christian Association of Nigeria, complementing each other in terms of their agenda to win souls as a major and urgent task and their political intervention.<sup>109</sup> This is important because:

As integral aspects of culture, religion impacts politics and is in turn influenced and shaped by it. The scope and nature of these influences could be either positive or detrimental to the corporate existence of a pluralistic society.<sup>110</sup>

This study also assesses ZAOGA's place in Zimbabwean politics through its founder, Ezekiel Guti in its bid to gain recognition and increase the missionary outreach and how it has shaped theology. Waldo Cesar mentions that elements of the religious revivals of the distant past are combined with and are mixed with new and more dramatic problems and human experiences (identified by Max Weber as *theodeceia*).<sup>111</sup>

Andre Droogers looks at globalization and Pentecostal success and points out that globalization is often accompanied by pain and suffering and creates all kinds of identity crises in all kinds of cultures, societies and persons. The question 'who am I' becomes pressing when "new repertoires of behavior and conviction enter the market of public opinion."<sup>112</sup> Pentecostalism helps to solve the individual quest for a reliable and convincing orientation in life. In addition, it offers a formula that corresponds to the scale of the globalised world in so far as it links personal and global worlds.<sup>113</sup> However, the research queries whether or not Pentecostalism does not create new challenges for the construction of identity. The answer to the question is provided in the overall analysis of the status of Pentecostals in their interaction with Shona traditional religion and culture. Droogers proceeds to add that:

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<sup>108</sup> Adogame, "Politicization of Religion", 125.

<sup>109</sup> Adogame, "Politicization of Religion", 125.

<sup>110</sup> Adogame, "Politicization of Religion", 125.

<sup>111</sup> Max Weber quoted by Waldo Cesar, "From Babel to Pentecost", 22.

<sup>112</sup> Droogers, "Globalisation and Pentecostal Success", *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. by Ruth Marshall-Fratani & Andre Corten, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2001, 57.

<sup>113</sup> Droogers, "Globalisation and Pentecostal Success", 55.

...If globalisation can be observed at the local level, then Pentecostal diversity matches the local diversity that is the other side of universalising globalisation coin. Pentecostalism facilitates the translation from the global to the local and vice versa for example, the emphasis on prosperity which fits very well the dream of wealth spread by the globalisation process.<sup>114</sup>

## Pentecostalism in Urban and Rural Settings

A number of scholars have reflected on Pentecostalism in its urban and rural settings. Paul Gifford's *African Christianity: Its Public Role*<sup>115</sup> has explored the political and economic role that the Pentecostals have played with their respective governments in generic terms. His work is quite challenging, although he has excluded the rural areas which generally represent African religious heritage and culture as opposed to urban centers where a lot of urbanization and acculturation have taken place. The focus on urban centers might have led to the exclusion of some important aspects within African Pentecostalism that need to be examined in this study. The Zimbabwean situation justifies this. Since the time of liberation struggle (the 1970s), the rural areas have been a strong base for the protracted guerrilla warfare and subsequently the political revolution. Post-colonial Zimbabwe has seen the ruling ZANU-PF party enjoying almost uncontested support in the rural areas through perpetuating its religious ideology and incorporating traditional religious figures in rural areas in its agenda. Many Zimbabweans in urban areas join their folks in the rural areas for traditional rites and rituals in specific times of the year, particularly during crisis moments. My own interpretation of this is that any meaningful study of religion and culture and politics in Zimbabwe should not overlook the rural areas. Norma Kriger believes that the youth and women participated in the war of liberation as a means of fighting and protesting against their low status in the traditional society.<sup>116</sup> Gifford's research therefore overlooks aspects of ATR in the rural areas and the role of women that I examine in this

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<sup>114</sup> Droogers, "Globalisation and Pentecostal Success", 55.

<sup>115</sup> See Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, London, Hurst & Com., 1998.

<sup>116</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerilla War: Peasant Perspectives*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1988, 4.



study.<sup>117</sup> In comparison, Ogbu Kalu seems to be more sensitive to the significance of the rural areas. He posits that:

...the cultural discourse foregrounds the fit of the Pentecostal movement into the indigenous worldviews as an explanation of the attraction and the growth of Pentecostalism, imaged as a religious response to the three publics, the indigenous “village” public, the emergent and urban culture and the intruding Western public and each purveys certain values.<sup>118</sup>

Kalu also adds that:

...scholars have tended to start and end the study of African Pentecostalism with contemporary, urban emergent cultures and have lost sight of the vitality of the movement as it engages the ‘village public’ which ends up in wrong emphasis on externality in some social scientific interpretations.<sup>119</sup>

However, on women and youth, Gifford points out that Pentecostals provide scope for youth in a culture traditionally dominated by elders and that the position of women has shifted as they assume leadership roles and determine policies as equals in committees.<sup>120</sup> This is treated at length in chapter five as the role of women in the church is considered against their traditional roles. In *The Religious Right in Southern Africa* (1988), Gifford also condemns the fundamentalist aspects of Pentecostalism. He has attributed it to the social and psychological alienation of certain aspects of modernity. He alleges that:

Fundamentalism is spreading in Zimbabwe...and is growing in places where there is social and psychological alienation resulting from certain aspects of modernity.<sup>121</sup>

However, this view has been criticized within the religious circles by some who feel that religion is bi-polar. There are physical and social

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<sup>117</sup> See e.g., Susan M. Kilonzo & Ezra Chitando, “Review Article: Paul Gifford’s *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya: A Critical Appreciation*”, *Swedish Missiological Themes* 98, 1, 2010, (99-118), 10.

<sup>118</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 2008, xi.

<sup>119</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 2008, xi.

<sup>120</sup> Paul Gifford, *Cristianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, London, Hurst & Com., 2009, 10.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Gifford, *The Religious Right in Southern Africa*, Harare, Univ. of Zimbabwe Publ., 1988, 10.

realities that can be seen by people which most of these scholars analyze from a social perspective. They seem to have over-looked the inner convictions of the believers that have a place of significance in their daily religious practices considering that even the rich constitute recognizable numbers in Pentecostal churches. This is a point taken note of by Gerrie ter Haar.<sup>122</sup>

As pointed out by Mugambi, in the African heritage religion cannot be abstracted from the rest of life, for it gives meaning and sense of purpose to all aspects of thought and action.<sup>123</sup> This argument comes from the observation that ZAOGA has drawn people from all walks of life. While it is true that religious commitment is sometimes a result of social and psychological alienation, extreme reductionism should be avoided. However, Gifford's insight on the gospel of prosperity remains important. Ulf Strohhahn points out that the vibrancy of Pentecostalism was perceived as a defeat for ATR but Pentecostals in Malawi still sought refuge in local traditions after they found out that churches had little to offer during ecological disasters or sickness.<sup>124</sup> Strohhahn's insights are useful as they provide the platform to inquire into the spirituality of Zimbabwean Pentecostals to establish how and the extent they have interacted with Shona religion and culture.

## Gender in African Traditional Religions and Christianity

The study also utilizes the findings of scholars who focus on the variable of gender in ATR and Christianity. Rekopantswe Mate, one of the few women scholars in Zimbabwe to focus on Pentecostalism and gender, has carried out her studies in urban Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe on ZAOGA and the Family of God (FOG). Her focus is on the discourses of femininity as purveyed by urban based Pentecostal women's organizations, Gracious Women and Precious Stones affiliated to ZAOGA and FOG respectively. Both organizations emphasize submission to husbands (Colossians 3:18) and women are taught to pray when they face

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<sup>122</sup> See Gerrie ter Haar, *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe*, Cardiff, Cardiff Academic Pr., 1998.

<sup>123</sup> Jesse N. K. Mugambi as cited by C. J. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1996, 23.

<sup>124</sup> Ulf Strohhahn, *Pentecostalism in Malawi: A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Malawi*, Zomba, Kachere Series, 2005, 57.

challenges, even when the husband is unable to satisfy the wife sexually.<sup>125</sup> When their husbands engage in extra-marital affairs, they should pray and not divorce. This is a point taken note of by David Maxwell on ZAOGA. The ideology is that since they are ‘helpers’ they should help their husbands, even if they are also employed.<sup>126</sup> Mate queries the submission to one’s husband which is equated to submitting to God’s will. She points out that the emphasis on submission to husbands does not accord well with the proclamation of liberation and that the gospel perpetuates male promiscuity since women are encouraged to be docile and not divorce, regardless of the situation they might be in.

While fitting tribute goes to members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians who have documented the diverse experiences of women, the focus on women with special reference to AICs and Pentecostals goes to scholars such as Philomena Mwaura, one of the leading African female scholars on AICs and Pentecostals. Her research and publications are directly related to this study.<sup>127</sup> Mwaura points out that research shows that patriarchy is the cause of gender power imbalances in economic and social areas of life.<sup>128</sup> Joel Robbins’ observation is paradoxical and needs attention as the status of women in Pentecostalism is explored. He says that Pentecostalism has appealed strongly to women, yet there is a strong commitment to the Pauline notions of patriarchy in which women have to submit to their husbands and participate in churches formally run by men, yet they outnumber men.<sup>129</sup> In the tor-

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<sup>125</sup> Rekopantswe Mate, “Wombs as God’s Laboratories”: Pentecostal Discourses of Femininity in Zimbabwe, *Africa*, 72, 4, 2002, 554.

<sup>126</sup> Maxwell, “The Durawall of Faith”, 2005.

<sup>127</sup> See e.g., Philomena Mwaura, “Nigerian Pentecostal Missionary Enterprise in Kenya: Taking the Cross Over”, Stephen Spencer, (ed), *Mission and Migration*, Derby, Cliff College Publ., 53-77, Philomena N. Mwaura, “Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches”, Ogbu Kalu, (ed), *African Christianity: An African Story*, Trenton New Jersey, Africa World Pr., 2007, 359-407, “African Instituted Churches and Women in Kenya”, Chinwe MA, Nwoye, (eds), *Urban Ministry in Africa: Theological Reflections for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Nairobi, Paulines Pr., 2008, 86-100.

<sup>128</sup> Philomena N. Mwaura, “Violation of Human Rights of Kenyan Women with HIV/AIDS through Stigma and Discrimination”, Hinga, T. Kubai A.N. & Mwaura, P. (eds), *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to the Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2008, 127.

<sup>129</sup> Joel Robbins, “The Globalisation of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, 2004, 132.

rent of literature on gender issues, outstanding female scholars and theologians have protested against cultural practices that increase women's vulnerability and challenge the religious legitimacy of patriarchal oppression.

Louis Lodewyk Kruger writes that patriarchy in the sense of an androcentric, hierarchical, societal notion of male domination manifests a one-sided view of humanity and therefore, creates the possibility of abuse and oppression. She also charges that it is clearly rejected in the Bible in favor of theo-centrism but to an extent biblical exegesis has been biased in favor of a patriarchal interpretation.<sup>130</sup> These scholars condemn the patriarchal nature of ATR which the churches have failed to critique. They are quite radical in their approach as they seek the principle of inclusion of women in making decisions in the society and in church.<sup>131</sup> Structural inequalities and social hierarchies are informed more by stereotypes and prejudice than by scientific reality of men and women as dynamic social actors are at the heart of myriad of problems facing women in general and African women in particular.<sup>132</sup> They have focused on domesticity and point out that patriarchy is the dominant power structure in both the world and the church. According to Dorothy Pape, the ideal woman is docile and her place is in the home.<sup>133</sup> This has led her to question whether it is the final blue print of God's ideal woman. M. F. C. Bourdillon states that the traditional position of women had deficiencies relative to that of men, deficiencies which found clear expression in formal, legal and ritual occasions.<sup>134</sup> It is this background that has led to a team of outspoken women, particularly the Circle of Concerned Africa Women Theologians (founded by Mercy Amba Oduyoye) who have lambasted the African Christian Churches and their leaders in failing to address patriarchal grip on women. Oduyoye has revealing insights when she says:

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<sup>130</sup> Louis Lodewyk Kruger, "Prejudice Against Woman in Christianity-Root Causes", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 28, June 2002, 182.

<sup>131</sup> See e.g., the works of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians such as Mercy Oduyoye, Isabel Phiri, Musa Dube, Madipoane Masenya & others.

<sup>132</sup> *Codesria Bulletin*, 1 and 2, Editorial note, 2006, 1.

<sup>133</sup> Dorothy Pape, *God and Woman: A Fresh Look at What the New Testament Says about Women*, London, Inter-Univ. Christian Fellowship, 1997, 15.

<sup>134</sup> Michael F. C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona with Special Reference to their Religion*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1976, 51.

The Circle itself represents an attempt to listen to women’s voices as they contributed and continue to contribute to theological reflection and draw attention to issues which faith communities have ignored.<sup>135</sup>

Phiri adds that the central aim is a search for justice, equity and love.<sup>136</sup> The views of these scholars show that they value the essence of womanhood. Oduyoye explicitly and convincingly documents this when she says:

As children, girls and boys, our mothers shaped our faith. Our spirituality was nourished by their faith and life. Often they were our first teachers of religion at home and in faith communities. They served the cause of these communities but the words of the chronicles hide them. They appear unannounced as footnotes and appendices to the men’s stories. This has been a cause of concern, hence this first attempt by the Circle to sweep the rooms of our religious communities until they have retrieved the lost coin.<sup>137</sup>

Hazel O. Ayanga writes that although her church pioneered the ordination of women in her country (Kenya), it is still far from addressing women’s concerns.<sup>138</sup> She adds that Christianity has not been able to provide women with clear unequivocal guidance on what to do when their husbands are HIV positive.<sup>139</sup> Biri shares the same view as Ayanga by pointing out that ZAOGA’s emphasis on the submission of women to their husbands and the role that women play are sourced from the traditional religion where married women cannot task/call their husbands to account.<sup>140</sup>

Daphne Mayope-Madiba convincingly argues that religiosity has perpetuated inequalities among men and has assigned women to some of the

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<sup>135</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, “Naming Our Mothers”, *Her- Stories: Hidden Histories of the Women of Faith in Africa*, ed. by Isabel Phiri et al., Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2002, xi.

<sup>136</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri et al., “Introduction”, *Her-Stories: 2002*, 3.

<sup>137</sup> Oduyoye, “Naming Our Mothers”, 2002, xi.

<sup>138</sup> Hazel O. Ayanga, “Religion and Women’s Health”, *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*, ed. by Musimbi Kanyoro & Nyambura Njoroge, 212.

<sup>139</sup> Ayanga, “Religion and Women’s Health”, 212.

<sup>140</sup> Kudzai Biri, *African Tradition Religion and Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe: The Case of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa*, Saarbrücken, Lambert Publ. House, 2011, 35.

lowest and most unenviable positions in society. She says that a woman works a double shift, at her place of employment and tradition has assigned specific roles to women in the church and society.<sup>141</sup> The church has also laid down certain codes of conduct about women's morality, dress, reminding them of their roots in Eve and Paul's instructions to be submissive and obedient.<sup>142</sup> This point is reiterated in Pentecostal women's fellowships and organizations. Mayope-Madiba then questions where the dominion that God gave to humanity is, in view of the biblical interpretations and biases in the name of religion that have downgraded women and render them subservient.<sup>143</sup> In order to counter this, they try to retrieve contributions of diverse women in Africa and condemn the churches' notion of submission as a dangerous ideology. They call for the empowerment of women in order to resist patriarchy. Isabel Phiri expresses this clearly when she says:

African women have diverse experiences of patriarchal oppression in religion and in society and the theologies that African women write about reflect this diversity. What is important is that African women theologians are united in voicing out their voices against patriarchy.<sup>144</sup>

Phiri's analysis above is convincing because every category of women, ranging from the girl child, the single, the married and the widowed each have 'a story to tell' either of oppression, suppression, exploitation, deprivation and marginalization in the environment which they live, dogged by sexual hierarchy. Nevertheless, these stories show women's resilience and brazenness in the face of various difficulties and opposition.<sup>145</sup> Musa Dube, analyzing the effects of globalization in the context of HIV and AIDS, argues that the greater share of challenges befall

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<sup>141</sup> Daphne Mayope-Madiba, "Women in African Traditional Religion", *Groaning in Faith*, 275.

<sup>142</sup> Mayope-Madiba, "Women in African Traditional Religion", 275.

<sup>143</sup> Mayope-Madiba, "Women in African Traditional Religion", 275.

<sup>144</sup> Isabel A. Phiri, "African Women of Faith Speak Out", *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, ed. by Isabel Phiri et al., Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2003, 5.

<sup>145</sup> Phiri, "African Women of Faith Speak Out", 2.

women and children. These challenges are fuelled by patriarchy in both the church and society.<sup>146</sup>

This is also captured by Oduyoye in her discourses. She argues that there is a myth in Christian circles that the church brought liberation to the African woman. She poses this question:

“...but what actual difference has Christianity made for women other than its attempt to foist the image of a European middle class house wife?”<sup>147</sup>

The churches accept the material services of women, but do not listen to their voices, seek their leadership or welcome their initiative. The churches seem to align themselves with forces that question the true humanity of ‘the other’ and at times find ways of justifying the oppression or marginalization of ‘the other’.<sup>148</sup>

Apart from those who are in marriage, widows are not an exception because the rituals they undergo reinforce despair, as opposed to the Christian principles of life and love. Oduyoye has, therefore, challenged the claim that the advancing status of women in Africa can be seen in the increasing acceptance of the ordination of women to leading roles in the ministry of various denominations because she is not a decision maker and her voice is not listened, let alone being heard. She adds that biblical interpretation and Christian theology in Africa have had the effect of sacralizing the marginalization of women’s experience even in African religions, which distorts the essence of womanhood.<sup>149</sup>

R.N. Edet puts it across forcefully: “The church is called mother. Is she performing her function of birthing in Africa?”<sup>150</sup> The idea of a free woman conjures up negative images in Africa because she spells disaster and there is virtually no dignity outside marriage.<sup>151</sup> Thus, women

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<sup>146</sup> Musa Dube, “Talitha Cum! Calling the Girl-Child and Woman to Life in the HIV/AIDS and Globalisation Era”, *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, 75-79.

<sup>147</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1995, 9.

<sup>148</sup> Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa*, 1995, 9.

<sup>149</sup> Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa*, 4.

<sup>150</sup> Rosemary N. Edet “Christianity and African Women’s Rituals”, *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa*, ed. by Mercy Oduyoye & Musimbi Kanyoro, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 1992, 33.

<sup>151</sup> Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa*, 1995, 4.

are stripped of their rights to make decisions and choices in their own interests. Against the backdrop of what is condemned by these scholars, it is quite interesting to note what Eunor Guti, the wife of Ezekiel Guti, teaches in *A Wise Woman*.<sup>152</sup> The main tenets of gender relations that characterize ZAOGA can be gleaned from what Eunor Guti wrote. The following statements are not analyses but they are simply highlighted since they shall be dealt with in chapter five.

- A good way to measure respect to your husband is to find out from this question, Am I treating my husband as I would treat Christ?
- I don't always express my opinion especially when my husband has made a final decision.
- Don't try to change him. But to find what you can do on your side to be able to cope up with him.
- The only time I won't follow the head (husband) is when he says lets come out of the church, God's desire for women is yielding to the opinion/authority of someone else (husband) and also her popular saying, 'Not above him, not under him but side by side with him'.<sup>153</sup>

The above quotations by Eunor Guti are useful as they are written by a woman who is referred to as "Archbishop", Apostle, Doctor Eunor" in ZAOGA. Also in view of the above, can women pioneer the goal of liberating themselves, as envisioned by Musa Dube that the oppressed become agents of their own empowerment?<sup>154</sup> The study investigates this in chapter five whether the designation 'Apostle' to a woman is biblical or it shows the creative innovation by African Pentecostals. While it might be surprising and fascinating for a woman to acquire such a title in a patriarchal African setting because of the power, responsibility and honor that is attached to the titles, the research seeks to establish whether assuming the titles has had any positive impact of empowerment regarding the status and role of women in ZAOGA, other than the general position of subservience.

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<sup>152</sup> Eunor Guti, *Wise Woman*, Harare, EGEA Publ., 2006.

<sup>153</sup> This is the statement that features on ZAOGA advertisement post when Gracious Woman holds meetings or Conventions.

<sup>154</sup> Musa Dube, "Talitha Cum!", 88.



## Scholarly Publications on Religion and Gender Justice

The views of the women scholars are also affirmed by some male scholars. Cletus N. Chukwu writes that a man's promiscuity can find cultural excuses whereas a woman's promiscuity is condemned without any hesitation. He notes that cultural expectations are that she should remain submissive, even when she faces the possible danger of contracting HIV from her promiscuous husband.<sup>155</sup> Dorcas Akintunde adds that the traditional belief is that men are superior to women and thus the latter are not given equal opportunities or recognition where one might expect. She observes that in a patriarchal system, most men exercise power over married women who are usually in no position to exert control over their sexuality.<sup>156</sup> Several scholars have noted that Pentecostalism has sought to improve the status of women. However, it is also undeniable that the greater share of hardships has fallen on women. The churches provide few opportunities for women to assume leadership roles and women are often involved as ushers, choristers, prayer warriors and evangelists. Women find that the top leadership positions are difficult to attain.<sup>157</sup>

In spite of this, research shows that women join the churches because their needs are met.<sup>158</sup> This Ghanaian case resonates well with Zimbabwean Pentecostalism where many women seem to go to church in search of solutions to their problems and also in the hope of getting some consolation. They continue to seek God and do not give up in the face of all hardships. Amanze also recognizes the important role that women have played in the African context and also that they are a major force in New Religious Movements. He cites examples of women who

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<sup>155</sup> Cletus Chukwu, *Applied Ethics and HIV/AIDs in Africa: A Philosophical Discourse*, Eldoret, Zapf, 2002, 64.

<sup>156</sup> Dorcas Akintunde, "HIV/AIDS: God's Punishment for "Sexual Perversion"? The Nigerian Experience", *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Ed. by Ezra Chitando & Nontando Hadebe, Geneva, WCC Publ., 2009, 118.

<sup>157</sup> See e.g., Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2004, and Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008.

<sup>158</sup> See e.g., Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2004, Damaris Seleina Parsitau, "From Periphery to the Centre: The Pentecostalisation of Mainline Christianity in Kenya", *Missionalia*, 35, 3, Nov. 2007, 83-111, and Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008.

founded churches. These include Mai Chaza of Zimbabwe, who founded Guta Ramwari in 1954, Prophetess Christinah M. Nku, St John Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa and Alice Lenshina of the Lumpa church in Zambia among others. Amanze says that it seems plausible to argue that the AIC movement in Botswana has taken a lead in emancipating women from male dominated churches that have kept them in a state of subservience to the male folk for a very long time.<sup>159</sup> While this is quite persuasive, the questions that need to be addressed are: why then is there an outcry against patriarchy in the church if women have pioneered churches and occupy high ranking posts at different historical epochs? Can we conclude that these developments are a mere drop in the ocean that aroused and wetted the appetite of women but failed to quench their thirst, leaving them crying for more?

Kalu's observation needs affirmation. He says that the AICs may be presumed to have opened the space for women but upon closer scrutiny, (despite the fact that women prophetesses and founders exercised ritual and administrative powers), women were still restricted through the enforcement of Levitical prohibitions and gender ideology sourced from the indigenous society.<sup>160</sup> Kalu concludes by saying that women in Pentecostal circles operated freely during the early years of the movement but were reined into submission and exclusion, consolidating a patriarchal ideology.<sup>161</sup>

Anderson offers revealing insights as he explores the origins of Pentecostalism. He notes that women were effectively mobilized into service as ministers and founders during the early days of the Pentecostal movement, both in America and elsewhere. The ministry of Pentecostal women continues today in many parts of the world.<sup>162</sup> However, the early emphasis on the ministry of women formally disappeared later in classical Pentecostal missions. The importance of the experience of the Spirit baptism in the lives of female ministers had to take second place to the general patriarchal structure of the church and society.<sup>163</sup>

Ayegboyin sees it differently by arguing that women have been involved at all levels of ministry and that borrowing from AICs and from the

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<sup>159</sup> James Amanze, *African Christianity in Botswana*, 1998, 20.

<sup>160</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 148.

<sup>161</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 148.

<sup>162</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 276.

<sup>163</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 276.

trend in global Pentecostalism, the distinctive orientation of women in the Pentecostals has led to progressive levels of female empowerment and male-female co-operation that would prove vital for Pentecostalism throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>164</sup> D. Ukpong also cites that, taking a cue from the Pentecostal churches, women are assuming responsibility at public worship in the mainline churches.<sup>165</sup> However, the questions that can immediately be raised are: if the orientation of women has proved vital for the success of Pentecostalism, does it mean that those women are empowered and that there is real co-operation between men and women? To what extent are women empowered when they operate within the checks and balances set by men, for example, when men found ministries for them, deploy male pastors to teach them and require a report on all the activities in the women’s fellowships, as was the case in ZAOGA at the time of this study? I unravel the dynamics in chapter 5 to establish whether or not ZAOGA women are empowered.

Chitando has some helpful insights that partly offer answers to the above questions. His investigation on Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, masculinities and HIV/AIDS has direct relevance to this research since he includes ZAOGA. Chitando points out that there are active men’s fellowships and these encourage sexual modesty which is a positive aspect to transform masculinities in the HIV/AIDS era. Pentecostals employ the strategy ‘to catch them young’ to instill values and counter aggressive masculinities.<sup>166</sup> However, Chitando observes rightly that although this offers considerable promise, the Pentecostal rhetoric is characterized by ‘soft masculinities’.<sup>167</sup> In confirmation of that, this study notes that ZAOGA Husband Agape and Men’s fellowships are held once in a blue moon as compared to women who meet on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for prayer and teachings.

Moreover, there is need to judge Eunor Guti’s teaching, especially on submission, against the backdrop of such soft masculinities and estab-

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<sup>164</sup> Deji Ayegboyin, “Dressed in Borrowed Robes: the Experience of New Pentecostal Movements in Nigeria”, *Tradition and Compromises: essays on the Challenge of Pentecostalism* ed. by Anthony Akinwale & Joseph Kenny, Ibadan, The Michael J. Dempsey Centre, 2004, 88.

<sup>165</sup> Ukpong, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 2008, 174.

<sup>166</sup> Ezra Chitando, “A new man for the new era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, masculinities and the HIV Epidemic”, *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Missiology*, 35, no3, Nov. 2007, 116.

<sup>167</sup> Chitando, “A new man for the new era”, 116.

lish whether there can be liberating transformation on the role and status of women with regards to gender imbalance in Pentecostalism. In addition to that, the 'catch them young' strategy in ZAOGA seems to be more oriented to evangelistic purposes rather than to teach the young in the struggle against gender imbalance. Joel Robbins mentions that Pentecostalism appeals to men because it does not publicly question their authority and even solidifies it within the household by taking the antagonistic edge off of marital relations, going from being 'king of the street to being master of the household'.<sup>168</sup>

In fact, it is no exaggeration to claim that ZAOGA teaches that God has ordained male headship, whether women like it or not.<sup>169</sup> The project of the liberation of women through human rights is considered as the devil's weapon to fight God's ordained order.<sup>170</sup> Hence, the conclusion is that Zimbabwean Pentecostal rhetoric on masculinities does not specifically deal with marital issues effectively. Most women with 'born again' husbands have 'stories to tell' in women's fellowships as they seek advice from their colleagues. I hope to establish and answer these questions in detail as I shall examine ZAOGA women in chapter five.

The significance of the contributions on gender issues is that all the contributors have documented with a plurality of voices how religions (both Christianity and ATR), oppress and distort the image of women. The patriarchal nature of both religions which has promoted gender imbalance and injustices is spelt out. I therefore examine ZAOGA's prevalent attitude to the cultural heritage of adherents of the church, the role and status of women in partnership with their male counterparts in order to see whether it has invested in a project of liberation of women. There is need to establish whether or not ZAOGA seek to bring change on the status of women or has simply inherited the traditional customs and values that might give ATR justification and resilience in the church.

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<sup>168</sup> Robbins, "The Globalisation of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity", 2004, 133.

<sup>169</sup> Biri, *African Traditional Religion and Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe*, 2011, 35.

<sup>170</sup> ZAOGA Gracious Woman teaches that God has ordained male headship and that this calls for women to submit to their husbands.

## Views on the Prosperity Teachings in Pentecostalism

Alongside the theme of gender justice, other scholars have focused on the gospel/message of prosperity. One of the most enduring issues in the study of African Pentecostalism is its teaching on prosperity, health and wealth. This dimension has been particularly controversial, with some charging that it represents all that is negative about African Pentecostalism. They assert that African Pentecostalism has ‘gone wild’, with its leading figures falsely promising an easy life to their desperate followers. Ukah, for example, regards the entire teaching on prosperity, especially in Nigeria, as a charade.<sup>171</sup> While the abuse of the teaching on prosperity in some instances is acknowledged, the off-hand dismissal of this dimension is extreme. Emeka Nwosuh has paid attention to the designated ‘gospel of prosperity’ which he condemns as a subtle denial of the reality of suffering, pain and failure in the Christian mystery, fostering a certain form of spirituality that does not sufficiently appropriate into the Christian lived experience the deep implications of the mystery of the cross. He argues that some past and present forms of spirituality are often noted for their negative attitude towards the material things of the world but a surprising aspect of Pentecostal spirituality is its compatibility to the material order.<sup>172</sup> Hence, Pentecostals strive towards harmonization of the spiritual order and the material order, which falsely gives the impression of a balanced spirituality, yet underhandedly has created a subtle drive towards materialism.<sup>173</sup> J. Mbukanma further emphasizes the point by claiming that this quest for earthly riches and temporal well being via religion is an illicit diversion, a turning from God to oneself.<sup>174</sup> On the same issue, Anderson notes that the emergence of these new churches throughout the world indicates that there are unresolved questions facing the church such as the role of success and prosperity in God’s economy, enjoying God and his gifts including healing and material possession and the holistic dimension of salvation.

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<sup>171</sup> See e.g., Asonzeh Ukah, *African Pentecostalism: Features, Promises and Problems*, Lagos, African Heritage Publ., 2007.

<sup>172</sup> Emeka Nwosuh, “Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Spirituality”, *Tradition and Compromises: Essays on the Challenges of Pentecostalism* ed. by Anthony Akinwale & J Kenny, Ibadan, The Michael J. Dempsey Centre, 2004, 105

<sup>173</sup> Nwosuh, “Pentecostalism: The New face of Christian Spirituality”, 105.

<sup>174</sup> Jude Mbukanma, “The Contradictory Posture of Neo-Pentecostalism: A Philosophical and Theological Critique”, *Tradition and Compromises*, 68.

The 'here and now' problems being addressed by the new Pentecostals and Charismatic churches are problems that still challenge the church as a whole.<sup>175</sup> In line with the Gospel of Prosperity, Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani point out that salvation in Pentecostalism is now resolutely this worldly and the evidence of this new life has become as much material as it is spiritual. The image of salvation at the heart of this process of investment in the faith with tithes, seed money, fasting, studying, prayer and many more increasingly means upward mobility and personal success.<sup>176</sup> Anderson adds that, pre-occupation with earthly concerns often comes at the expense of Christian virtues like, humility, patience and peace.<sup>177</sup>

However, Lovemore Togarasei sees a paradox in the Gospel of Prosperity. Although there are criticisms concerning the Gospel of Prosperity, the Pentecostals in Zimbabwe and Botswana have contributed to sustainable development for poverty reduction through encouraging entrepreneurship.<sup>178</sup> The issues that the above scholars have raised are of significance to this research as the spirituality of ZAOGA is examined with a focus on the message of salvation and prosperity in chapter five. This seems to be confirmed by ZAOGA testimonies of financial blessings. No one seemed to explain how they got the huge sums of money they boasted about, except to hear statements like, 'God opened doors for me, God did a financial miracle in my life, God favored me and blessed me...' Most of them do not explain how they acquired the wealth, which leads us to suspect that many of those people could be involved in shady deals.<sup>179</sup>

The virtue of humility is compromised as people become boastful of what they have. This robs some Christians of peace and leads to lack of brotherly love that the Bible calls for. However, there is also need to acknowledge ZAOGA's social theology which is sensitive to struggling single ladies, orphans and those who are deprived. Anderson is cautious to warn that we need to be careful of generalizations when we make an assessment of the Gospel of Prosperity which fails to appreciate the

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<sup>175</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 280.

<sup>176</sup> Andre Corten a & Ruth Marshall-Fratani, "Introduction", 7.

<sup>177</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 68.

<sup>178</sup> Lovemore Togarasei, "The Pentecostal Gospel of Prosperity in African Contexts of Poverty: An Appraisal", *Exchange*, 40, 2011, 344-345.

<sup>179</sup> Catherine Kagowa, an elder in the church, discussion held on 5-7-2010, Harare.

selective reconstructions and creative innovations made by the new Pentecostals (against the worst forms of American capitalism in Christian guise).<sup>180</sup> This is dealt with in chapter five. In spite of compromising the virtue of humility, Gifford is quick to notice that this faith gospel has proved very functional among the religious entrepreneurs who constitute the media evangelists, for its ‘seed faith’ idea has helped to bring in enormous resources needed to sustain these extremely expensive ministries.<sup>181</sup> ‘Faith gospel’ literature has also been abundant across the continent of Africa through the 1980s and 1990s and he cites Zambia as an example where in 1996, seven successive Christian programmes were screened on the National TV, all faith gospel.<sup>182</sup> Although Gifford gives the Zambian example, there is a relevant example from ZAOGA that seem to summarize the component of the faith gospel in Zimbabwe from ZAOGA. This will be investigated in chapter five. This faith gospel is significant in this study and it is examined as the notion of salvation in Shona indigenous religion and in ZAOGA is considered. In spite of these negative dimensions within the Pentecostal movement, its power and influence cannot be under-estimated. As J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu puts it:

Africa within the last half century emerged as a hot bed of contemporary Pentecostalism in both its classical and neo- Pentecostal versions... The growing attention to the new brand of Pentecostalism is testimony to its current significance in African Christianity.<sup>183</sup>

Maame Akua Boadi notes that the movement has attracted and continues to attract people who are demographically diverse- young and old, male and female, rich and poor with the number of women outnumbering that of men.<sup>184</sup> Sola Adewole on the same note points out that Pentecostalism has had a significant influence on the other churches by making the older (mainline) churches to go back to the drawing board

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<sup>180</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 2004, 280.

<sup>181</sup> Paul Gifford, “The Complex Provenance of some Elements of African Pentecostal Theology”, *Between Babel and Pentecost*, 62.

<sup>182</sup> Gifford, “The Complex Provenance of some Elements of African Pentecostal Theology”, 2001, 64-65.

<sup>183</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, “From Prophetism to Pentecostalism”, 2-3.

<sup>184</sup> Adelaide Maame Akuah Boadi, “Engaging Patriarchy: Pentecostal Gender Ideology and Practices in Nigeria”, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria*, 173.

and find out the areas where they are not living up to expectation.<sup>185</sup> Hence for Cesar, the continued vitality and prosperity of many Catholic and Protestant churches is due to charismatic inheritance which originated in Pentecostalism.<sup>186</sup> Hillary Achunike documents this influence on Catholic Brothers and Seminarians in Nigeria. He says;

...That Pentecostals are making waves and winning converts by the day is to state the obvious. The rank and file of the mainline churches are disturbed. The Catholic hierarchy of Nigeria is disquieted...Pentecostalism has influenced not only the laity, but also the priests....The upsurge of Pentecostals has made some people claim that only two things are viable in Nigeria today: selling petrol and planting new Pentecostal churches.<sup>187</sup>

Achunike notes that the priests and seminarians in Nigeria (though not all) are 'Pentecostalised.' This led to the publication of *Guidelines For the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria* by the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria in 1997 and *Guidelines For The Healing Ministry In The Catholic Church In Nigeria*. This influence is not only within the Christian circles.<sup>188</sup> J. Adekoya adds that Pentecostalism has greatly influenced the propagation of Islam in Yorubaland as Muslims are forced to borrow some Pentecostal language and other features in order to be able to arrest the departure of their members, especially the youth.<sup>189</sup> Hence, Clement Majawa's claim that African Pentecostalism has its distinct contribution to make by altering the character of Christianity, including that of the missionary churches,<sup>190</sup> appears valid.

All these scholars converge on a single point: their acknowledgement of Pentecostalism as a vibrant phenomenon that is felt in every facet of life on the Nigerian landscape. While Nigeria is a fertile ground for African

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<sup>185</sup> Sola Adewole, "The Charismatic Movement and Pentecostalism", *Tradition and Compromises*, 48-49.

<sup>186</sup> Waldo Cesar, "From Babel to Pentecost", 23.

<sup>187</sup> Hillary Achunike, *The Influence of Pentecostalism on Priests and Seminarians in Nigeria*, Onitsha, Africana First Publ., 2004, 5-6.

<sup>188</sup> Achunike, *The Influence of Pentecostalism on Priests and Seminarians in Nigeria*, 5-6.

<sup>189</sup> Julius Adekoya "Islamic Fundamentalism in Yorubaland and the Impact of the Explosion of Pentecostalism", *Tradition and Compromises*, 29.

<sup>190</sup> Clement Chihambako Majawa, *The Holy Spirit and the Charismatic Renewal in Africa and Beyond: Pneumatological Considerations*, Nairobi, Catholic Univ. of Eastern Africa, 2007, 27.



Pentecostalism, Zimbabwe too has proved to be attractive for the remarkable growth of Pentecostalism. This explosion and vibrancy provides the fertile ground for examining how Pentecostalism has ‘managed’ traditional religion and culture in Zimbabwe.

## Conclusion

The views of scholars in this chapter confirm that extensive research on African religions and African Pentecostalism has been carried out. It shows that African Pentecostalism is a vibrant phenomenon. However, there is evidence that there are traits of African religion and culture that have displayed ‘a spirit of unprecedented resilience.’ The literature surveyed has also exposed both positive and negative traits of African Pentecostalism in expressing belief systems and practices in an African cultural setting. Mostly, women scholars have exposed challenges that African women face that impede development. They provide perspectives that unearth inequalities in the society and in church in order to uphold women’s integrity and dignity. They call upon them to be ‘agents of their own empowerment’. These contributions are used in the analysis of ZAOGA and its interaction with selected indigenous beliefs and practices. The next chapter deals with the Shona. Shona traditional religion and culture is analyzed in order to provide the basis for appreciating ZAOGA’s engagement with ATR and culture in Zimbabwe in subsequent chapters.

## 3 | Shona Traditional Religion and Culture

### Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed and analyzed literature that is relevant to this study. It drew attention to some of the most prominent publications on Pentecostalism and its interaction with indigenous beliefs and practices. This chapter specifically considers Shona traditional religion and culture. It considers its communal orientation and emphasis on kinship as key elements. It summarizes points relevant to the understanding of the Shona people of Zimbabwe. It should be noted that the examination of the Shona is mainly based on selected beliefs and practices that have remained a hot issue among both Christians and non-Christians. Pastorally, these beliefs and practices have been a great challenge. Although a number of scholars have written about some of the themes, this particular study interacts with them within a specific Zimbabwean based Pentecostal movement. The research perceives these themes as providing us with examples that can be examined in order to establish the resilience of the indigenous religion and culture among Pentecostals.

This chapter has selected the following themes for closer analysis: words prior to death, avenging spirits, role and status of women, belief in unnatural events, witches and witchcraft, liturgy and salvation. These themes were selected due to my contention that they provide fertile ground for appreciating the relationship between Pentecostalism and Shona indigenous beliefs and practices. On the other hand, the premise for considering the Shona is that for one to be in a position to understand the trajectories that African Pentecostalism has taken among the ZAOGA Shona Christians in Zimbabwe, and in order to evaluate the resilience of Shona culture, there is a need to understand Shona traditional religion and culture in the first instance. Therefore, chapter five has been devoted to analysis of the aspects of religion and culture discussed in this chapter. The study focuses on the Shona, because they are the dominant ethnic group in Zimbabwe, as compared to other groups that are generally referred to as 'minority' ethnic groups. It is also the assumption of the study that the Shona as the dominant ethnic group house most ZAOGA Christians. This is not to overlook some ZAOGA churches that are established in other parts of the country, such as in Matabeleland. In spite of the contestation that exists between the Shona

and the Ndebele, it defies debate to argue that the Shona ethnic groups dominate in Zimbabwe, by virtue of their numerical strength. Therefore, the numerical strength of the Shona is the rationale for choosing to focus on them.

Cognisant of the abundance of literature on Shona religion and culture by anthropologists and scholars of religion (including dissertations by undergraduate students), this chapter does not provide an extended discussion of the local beliefs and practices as no single book can do justice to a thousand years history and religion and culture of the Shona. The chapter acknowledges the pioneering by scholars such as Michael Gelfand, Michael F. C. Bourdillon Gordon Chavunduka, Tabona Shoko and others. Historians and other scholars have offered detailed accounts of the Shona people.<sup>1</sup> These scholars have provided detailed information on various aspects of Shona culture and religion that the study has utilized. In the following section, the chapter outlines the identity of the Shona people. There is a close relationship between religion and culture in African societies. Adelaide Maame Akua Boadi puts it as follows:

...The life of Africans-their politics, ethics, education-is almost inseparable from religion. The continent has therefore been described by some as one where religion ‘shapes the life and thinking of the people’. The life of the African from cradle to the grave is infused with religion. This in-weaving of culture and religion produces societal norms and mores that define and guide human relations.<sup>2</sup>

Although religion is an element of culture, one finds little dichotomy between religion and culture and also between the secular and the sacred.

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g., David Beach, “The Initial Impact of Christianity on the Shona: The Protestants and the Southern Shona”, 25-40, *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, (ed), Anthony Dachs, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1973; Michael Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1973, 114-115; Michael F. C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona with special reference to their Religion*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1986; Gordon Chavunduka, *Traditional Medicine in Modern Zimbabwe*, Harare, Univ. of Zimbabwe Publ., 1994; Tabona Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe: Health and Well-Being*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publ. House, 2007, and Shirley Thorpe, *African Traditional Religion*, Pretoria, Sigma Pr., 1991, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Adelaide Maame Akua Boadi, “Engaging Patriarchy’: Pentecostal Gender Ideology and Practices in Nigeria”, Chima Korieh & Ugo Nwokeji, eds, *Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu Kalu*, Maryland, Univ. of America Pr., 2005, 172.

## The Shona: An Overview

The word Shona refers to the classification of different groups speaking related dialects comprising the Karanga, Manyika, Zezuru, Korekore, Ndaou and others. They cover most of Zimbabwe and parts of Mozambique, stretching to the Zambezi River in the North and the Indian Ocean to the east.<sup>3</sup> However, Mazarire points out that:

...It might appear unjust to bunch all these dialects together as we examine their religion and culture. This is mainly because numerous sub cultures exist within various Shona societies. However, some common practices have become so dominant, thereby providing us with the basis to speak about 'a harmonised' Shona culture.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the common practices, it should be clear that the term Shona is a collective noun which conflates the linguistic, cultural and political attributes of people who did not even know themselves by that name until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and even then could be variously described as vaNyai, abeTshabi, Karanga or Hole. In its modern sense, Shona is no more than a reference to dialect, and in its political context, more populous ethnic group.<sup>5</sup> Mazarire adds that the term Shona presents the historian with a number of challenges: the term is an anachronism, the people were known to themselves by outsiders as mostly the Karanga and it is difficult to explore the complex interactions between these people of varied environments and their consequences<sup>6</sup>, such as adaptation to new socio-economic styles. Consequently, the origins and complex challenges relating to the Shona are beyond the scope of this study. There is however, need to pay attention to the socio-religious and cultural dynamics that have characterized the Shona ethnic groups over the years. Shona culture has been influenced by urbanization, labor migration, Christianity and other external forces. Christianization by its very nature means entailed the 'colonization' of the Shona people's consciousness with the axioms and aesthetics of Western culture. More so, responses to Christianity were and are still varied because of the ad-

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<sup>3</sup> M.F.C Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, c850-1880s", Brian Raftopoulos & S. Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, Harare, Weaver Pr., 2009, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Mazarire, "Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe", 2009, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Mazarire, "Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe", 4-7.

vantages and disadvantages inherent in appropriating the new faith.<sup>7</sup> This makes it difficult to refer to the Shona as a homogenous and static group of people because they have undergone a process of socio-economic and political change.

According to Bourdillon, this classification is a result of the observation that the dialects are all classifiable as a single linguistic unit, which can readily be incorporated into a unified language based on the Zezuru dialect. Although these classifications are linguistic and while the boundaries are not precise, they do reflect the same cultural patterns.<sup>8</sup> Having highlighted who the Shona are, I proceed to discuss the aspects and chief characteristics of their traditional religion and culture by mainly focusing on those that are major and relevant for this study.

## Shona Traditional Religion and Culture

Shona traditional religion belongs to the category of the religions that have recently been termed, ‘indigenous religions’. These are religions that have had to negotiate the impact of missionary religions, particularly Christianity and Islam. Indigenous religions have guided their adherents for many centuries. They have shaped the identity of their adherents and continue to influence converts to new religions. Shona religion cannot remain isolated from the changes that are taking place in human thinking and life. Modern social and physical changes, modern technology and the encounter of peoples with one another in a global way, as well as the spreading of Christianity and other religions and ideologies have shaped Shona religion and culture. Therefore, the Shona are not static, for they choose from their cultural pool as they respond to new circumstances. In this section, Shona traditional religion is summarized as a viable example of an indigenous religion. Information on the Shona traditional religion and culture is not exhaustive. Areas viable for the study were carefully selected highlighting what the Shona believe in, in order to provide a background for a detailed analysis in chapter five. The religion of the Shona speaking people is complex. However, in spite of the complexity, it rests on kinship and communalism.

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<sup>7</sup> Sabelo J. Ndhlovu-Gatsheni, “Mapping Cultural and Colonial Encounters, 1880s - 1930s”, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, ed. by Brian Raftopoulos & A.S. Mlambo, Harare, Weaver Pr., 2009, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 16-17.

## Shona Kinship and Communalistic Ideology

The Shona people are communally oriented. The family and lineage is important for the individual. However, the individual is understood within the context of the community. Opoku captures this African communalistic philosophy that applies to the Shona by saying:

To be human is to belong to a family...one's humanity is defined by a sense of belonging, for it is not enough to be a human being unless one shows a sense of, and participation in the community. Religion has a communal orientation which sharply contrasts with the divisive thrust of the imported religions and cultures and with the egoistic and materialistic ethics that they sustain.<sup>9</sup>

What Opoku says applies to most African societies, including the Shona societies. Opoku adds that undergirding the community is the principle of inter-dependence since the human individual is not self-sufficient to the extent that all his/her needs could not be met single-handedly.<sup>10</sup> This is very important to this book because when one converts to ZAOGA, s/he becomes a new creation and 'a complete break with the past' is emphasized. In the light of Shona communalistic conception, is the individual not self-sufficient and complete? The study explores the notion of making a 'complete break with the past' in chapter 4, when ZAOGA's "paradoxical combination of opposite characteristics, a variety of seemingly contradictory scenarios is examined."<sup>11</sup>

Mutua points out that those African religions are communal and non-universalist and that the notion of converting to African religions is alien.<sup>12</sup> Mbiti has emphasized the same point by pointing out that the communalistic orientation of Africans is expressed by "I am because we belong" and that an individual is defined by the community.<sup>13</sup> Mangena, with reference to retributive punishment by avenging spirit as a result of murder, emphasizes the communal aspect of the Shona. He points out that even innocent people suffer by virtue of belonging to the same family as the murderer. Hence, the Shona value the notion of extended fami-

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<sup>9</sup> Kofi. Asare Opoku, "African Traditional Religion: An Enduring Heritage", *Journal of the Inter-denominational Theological Centre*, 16, 1& 2, Fall 1988/Spring 1989, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Opoku, "African Traditional Religion", 25.

<sup>11</sup> Droogers, "Globalisation and Pentecostal Success", 48.

<sup>12</sup> Mutua, "Returning to my Roots", 169.

<sup>13</sup> See Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 1969, 204-205.

ly. The emphasis is on ‘we’ and not ‘I,’ therefore, crime was seen as communal responsibility,<sup>14</sup> and this attitude extends to almost every facet of life. This is mainly because a Shona person can only be understood within the context of communalism. The individual cannot be separated from the community. In the following section, the chapter focuses on key Shona religious concepts. First, the Shona concept of God or Mwari is discussed.

## God/Mwari

The Shona believe that Mwari created the world and he is referred to as the Great Spirit or as the Great Ancestral Spirit. He is known under different names and is the creator of the whole universe. Taringa argues that the West emphasizes the male image of God, yet African concepts of God are *sui generis* and less sexist.<sup>15</sup> This study does not provide an in depth critique of gender discourse about God, except to highlight that this Western male understanding of God has in one way or the other influenced the teachings on gender in Pentecostalism (see chapter five). However, traditional beliefs are not clear about the nature of the high God and the Shona lack a systematic theology as in some cases he appears to be a mysterious God far beyond the comprehension of humanity through what he does.<sup>16</sup> We will use some aspects of the mysterious nature of Mwari when we discuss the Shona perception of unnatural events.

The role of Mwari and ancestral spirits is also important in that it points to the inter-connectedness of Shona religion and culture with every aspect of life. One can cite the example of the Shona uprisings against colonial rule that were instigated by religious leaders<sup>17</sup> in order to demonstrate that Shona religion and politics are intertwined. Although

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<sup>14</sup> Fainos Mangena, *On Ubuntu and Retributive Punishment in Korekore-Nyombwe Culture: Emerging Perspectives*, Harare, Best Practices Books, 2012, 224.

<sup>15</sup> See Nisbert Taringa, “African Metaphors for God: Male or Female?”, *Scriptura, International Journal for Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa*, 86, 2004, 174-179.

<sup>16</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 1976, 17.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g., David N. Beach, “Chimurenga: The Shona Rising of 1896-1897”, *Journal of African History*, 20 (3), 1979, 401, and Terence Ranger, “The People in African Resistance: A review”, *Journal of Southern African Studies: Special Issue on protest and resistance*, 4 (1), 1977, 125-126.

the Shona believe in God (Mwari), they also believe that their lives are controlled by their ancestral spirits.<sup>18</sup> This has been a source of misunderstanding for some Western scholars who strongly believed that the Shona were merely ancestor worshippers and were ‘untutored’ to have a conception of God. Closely related to Mwari are the ancestral spirits (*midzimu*). The following section highlights beliefs associated with the ancestral spirits in Shona religion.

### **Ancestral Spirits (*Midzimu*)**

An African community is generally believed to comprise of the living, the dead (ancestors) and those not yet born.<sup>19</sup> Family ancestral spirits are spirit elders and guardians of the family. They are concerned about the well-being of the family in all aspects. In order for them to fulfill the guardianship role, a *kurova guva* ceremony (a funeral ritual performed a year after the death) has to be held. In order to enable the spirit of the dead to join the community of ancestors, it is invited to assume the protective role of its offspring.<sup>20</sup> According to Levee Kadenge, it seems at death individuals assume more powers and the living have to respect them more than they did when they were alive. Their death is to the advantage of the living and the death is not a loss but a promotion to the stage where they can be among those who represent the living.<sup>21</sup> The Shona believe that ancestral spirits dwell both in the spiritual world and the world of the living. They believe that these spirits are capable of causing both harm and good.<sup>22</sup> Another way in which ancestors may express dissatisfaction to their descendents is by withdrawing such blessings as good rainfall because as intermediaries between the living and the Crea-

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<sup>18</sup> Bourdillon. *The Shona Peoples*, 1976, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Chad. N.C. Gandiya, *Medical Ethics In African Traditional Medicine in Zimbabwe*, Unpublished Dphil, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, Univ. of Zimbabwe, 2006, 66.

<sup>20</sup> Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona*, 1973, 114-115.

<sup>21</sup> Levee T.C. Kadenge, *Death and Mourning Among the Zezuru: The Attitude and Response of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe: Theology and Pastoral Implications for Christian Ministry in Zimbabwe*, Unpublished Dphil, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, Univ. of Zimbabwe, 1988, 66.

<sup>22</sup> Gordon Chavunduka, *Traditional Medicine in Modern Zimbabwe*, Harare, Univ. of Zimbabwe Publ., 1994, 60.



tor they are able to influence him.<sup>23</sup> Herbert Aschwandan confirms this also by noting that disobedience brings diseases because it is disobedience to God.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the ancestors bless, curse, guide and even punish when there is wrong doing such as incest, quarrelling in the family and not carrying out rituals at the proper times as expected.<sup>25</sup> Michael Gelfand has this to say:

...One of the positive sanctions of the Shona is the reward for living virtuously that a man receives from his ancestral spirits: not only do they protect him but his cognates as well. All those who follow the paths of righteousness would be blessed... for if they offend the family spirits they will be punished, he and his children will suffer...An individual who has protective support of his ancestral spirits can be certain that all will go well with him and his family.<sup>26</sup>

This might be the reason why the ancestors are loved and honored, but feared too.<sup>27</sup> Their active role in the lives of the believers suits Mbiti's description of them as the 'living dead'<sup>28</sup> because they continue to influence the lives of those who are living. The notion that the dead do not disappear completely leads to a discussion of the *ngozi* (avenging/ angry spirit) in the Shona worldview. The section below captures the concept of avenging spirits.

### **(Avenging/ Angry Spirit)**

Bourdillon and Daneel correctly observe that *ngozi* is the most feared spirit among the Shona peoples.<sup>29</sup> There are different types of *ngozi*. Gelfand points out that there are three types of *ngozi* among the Zezuru. The first one is one of a murdered person. Second, the spirit of whom

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<sup>23</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 235.

<sup>24</sup> Herbert Aschwandan, *Symbols of Death*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1987, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona*, 114-115.

<sup>26</sup> Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona*, 114-115.

<sup>27</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 234.

<sup>28</sup> See John S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969.

<sup>29</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 234 and Marthinus L. Daneel, *Old and New in Shona Independent Churches, 1: Background and the Rise of Major Movements*, The Hague, Mouton & Co, 1971, 133.

something was borrowed during life and was not returned and third, the spirit that returns to spouse because of desertion and bad care during period of critical illness or/and parental spirit that comes to punish the children for maltreatment. The Karanga have an additional one in which a man goes with another man's wife, when a loan is not paid or if the bride wealth is not paid to the bride's parents. According to these motivations, a spirit can turn *ngozi* in response to these injustices which leads us to the broad concept of avenging spirits.<sup>30</sup> What Gelfand says about the types of avenging spirits also shows the diversity of beliefs among the Shona dialects. However, the most terrifying one is the spirit of a murdered person who comes back to revenge the wrong. Bourdillon says such a spirit attacks suddenly and harshly. It usually attacks an individual through his or her family causing a succession of deaths, or death followed by serious illness in other members of the family.<sup>31</sup>

Human life is considered sacred by the African people and no individual has the right to take it away from anyone. It is believed that illness and deaths caused by *ngozi* can take a long time to recognize if the culprits themselves are dead.<sup>32</sup> The cause is normally diagnosed by a diviner who identifies the angry spirit and outlines the necessary steps for appeasement. Even innocent people suffer by virtue of belonging to the family of the murderer.<sup>33</sup> This is mainly because a Shona person can only be understood within the context of communalism. The Shona have a proverb which says, "*Mushonga wengozu kuripa*"<sup>34</sup> (The only way to appease *ngozi* is to pay a fine). Mangena further points out the significance of this by saying that *ngozi* teaches the murderer and his family to practice restorative justice and teaches wrong doers how it feels to be treated in certain ways that violate a person's natural right to life.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, the avenging spirit of an ill-treated mother does not cause death but disaster and misfortune such as loss of wealth and misfortune and also overtakes not only the son but also his children. This may require the offending child to ill-treat himself by dressing in rags and beg-

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Gelfand, *The Shona Religion*, 1959, 133-134.

<sup>31</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 234.

<sup>32</sup> Mangena, *On Ubuntu and Retributive Punishment in Korekore-Nyombwe Culture*, 2012, 222.

<sup>33</sup> Mangena, *On Ubuntu and Retributive Punishment in Korekore-Nyombwe Culture*, 222.

<sup>34</sup> Shona Proverb.

<sup>35</sup> Mangena, *On Ubuntu and Retributive Punishment in Korekore-Nyombwe Culture*, 25.

ging grain for a feast in her honor at which a beast is killed and the offending child absent.<sup>36</sup> An offending husband may have to live in his dead wife's room, keeping it clean and performing her duties.<sup>37</sup> *Ngozi* which asks for cattle as compensation is easily appeased because people do not find it hard to pay cattle, but problems arise when *ngozi* asks for a girl. It causes divisions in families and there are several cases where girls run away from home before they are sent to the victim's family. It can therefore be noted that methods of appeasement are varied, but they depend on the relationship between the victim and the spirit and on the type of the crime. Once the necessary reparations are made, *ngozi* ceases to be dangerous.

In some instances this fine is paid by giving a virgin girl (*soro*) to the family of the murdered victim accompanied by cattle. So in all cases, the full appeasement of the angry spirit involves severe punishment, either in loss of wealth or in extreme humiliation which further indicates how fearful that spirit is to the Shona. This has been cited as enforcing adherence to the traditional norms against murder.<sup>38</sup> However, Dupre Louis rightly argues that the idea of community has lost its ontological ultimacy due to factors such as modern rationalism, the call for individual rights and the emergence of the self.<sup>39</sup> This shall be used in the analysis to establish whether conversion militates against ZAOGA converts' Shona communalistic philosophy. Alongside the belief in the avenging spirit, the status of women features prominently in Shona spiritual beliefs. Having reviewed literature related to this theme in the previous chapter, the following section summarizes Shona ideas relating to the status of women.

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<sup>36</sup> See e.g., Charity V. Chiunya, *Modernization and its Impact on the Traditional Beliefs with Special reference to Ngozi*, Unpublished BA Honours Dissertation, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, Univ. of Zimbabwe, 1991, 10, Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 234.

<sup>37</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 234.

<sup>38</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 60.

<sup>39</sup> Dupre Louis, "The Common Good and the Open Society", *The Review of Politics*, 35, no4, 687, quoted by Mangena in *On Ubuntu and Retributive Punishment in Korekore-Nyombwe Culture*, 53.

## The Role, Status and Significance of Women

The status of women in religion has been the focus of a number of studies.<sup>40</sup> In the literature analysis of the previous chapter, attention was drawn to the contributions of African women scholars of religion who have reflected on this theme. The emerging picture is that the indigenous religions granted considerable space to women. However, patriarchal concerns gradually squeezed this space. Such ambivalence is seen in the status of Shona women. Shona marriage confers on the husband exclusive sexual rights over his wife. The wife has to provide food for her husband and children. An inability to cook on the part of the wife is a serious shortcoming which may lead to the breakup of the marriage.<sup>41</sup>

However, a divorced woman has no dignity, just like one who has never been married (*tsikombi ine chitsina*). Every married woman at least has to bear children for her husband. The significance of marriage and children among the Shona is spelt out by Kadenge. According to him, every woman at least has to bear children for herself and for her husband. When a married but childless woman dies, the living relatives can try to comfort her before burial by attempting to fulfill her wish of having a child, for example, by inserting a rat or mouse in her vagina and pull it out again, symbolizing birth<sup>42</sup> (Zezuru) or burying her with a maize cob at the back to symbolize a mother who had a child (Manyika). This is accompanied by comforting words like, '*Ndiye mwana wako uyu*' (This is your child). The Shona believe that once they do this, the deceased is comforted and will not come back as an angry spirit. When a married woman fails to conceive, she becomes a laughing stock. Stella Changara brings this out in her poems. The barren woman becomes the people's talk: they sing and they laugh because it is unheard of and against societal expectation. She says that, "*Pari nemunhu pose, kungave kuhuni, kutsime, kurukova, kumakurwe, nepakudya*"<sup>43</sup> (where ever people are, fetch-

<sup>40</sup> See e.g., the work of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, Isabel A. Phiri et al., eds, *Her Stories: Hidden Histories of Women of Faith in Africa*, (eds), Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2002 and Mercy A. Oduoye & Musimbi R. Kanyoro, eds, *The Will to Arise: Women Tradition and the Church in Africa*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1992.

<sup>41</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 1976, 36-43.

<sup>42</sup> Kadenge, "Death and mourning among the Zezuru", 112.

<sup>43</sup> Stella Changara, "Kushaya Mbereko" in Ngatisimuke: Nhapiapi Yenhorimbo. Nhetembo Dzakasarudzwa Muzvinyorwa Zvenhengo dze Zimbabwe Women's Writers, Harare, Zimbabwe Women's Writers, 1998, 66.

ing firewood, water, at the stream, in the fields and when dining), they would be taunting her. Even the young ones do not respect her because she is *ngomwa*, a name given to a barren cow. This carries derogatory and humiliating sentiments.

All this brings out the level of suffering, shame and humiliation that a barren woman (but, significantly, not the husband), experiences among the Shona people. Moreover, traditionally in Zimbabwe, a woman encountering serious difficulties in child birth was suspected to have been unfaithful to her husband. However, to assume such a direct causal link led to unjust condemnation of the innocent.<sup>44</sup> If the woman bore no children, everything would be demanded back, except the cow given to her mother, that is, the ‘mother’s beast’ (*mombe youmai*) in appreciation of the role she played in bringing up the child.<sup>45</sup>

*Mombe youmai* is very significant among the Shona and female *vadzimu* on the mother’s side would be angered should her husband or his sons kill or in any way dispose the beast she received when her daughter married. The beast could not be paid in cash and usually had to be a cow because it had to reproduce.<sup>46</sup> Mbiti points out that already at birth the woman is destined to be married. As a result, people believe a woman who is not married has practically no role in society as far as the traditional African worldview goes.<sup>47</sup> Barrenness is normally blamed on women and the childless woman goes through deep sorrows in African society. At the death of her husband she is normally inherited by one of his kinsmen, providing her with a man who is responsible for her upkeep and for her children.<sup>48</sup> Women did most of the work at home and in the fields while their husbands could be on drinking sprees.

Although a woman acquired a position of standing with some authority, the traditional position of women had deficiencies relative to that of

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<sup>44</sup> Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, “Healing and Salvation in the Church: A Theological Investigation in the Context of Zimbabwe”, Pastoral Study Paper no2, 1989, 16.

<sup>45</sup> Molly Mhuru, *Points of Conflict: An Assessment of Traditional and Pentecostal Marriage in Harare and Mhondoro Ngezi (Mashonaland West)*, Unpublished BA Hons Dissertation, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, Univ. of Zimbabwe, 1994, 19.

<sup>46</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 1976, 38.

<sup>47</sup> John. S. Mbiti, “Flowers in the Garden: The Role of Women in the African Religion”, in Jacob K. Olupona, ed, *African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society*, NY, Paragon House, 1991, 64.

<sup>48</sup> Mbiti, “Flowers in the Garden”, 1991, 64.

men, which found clear expression on formal legal and ritual occasions.<sup>49</sup> The husband is normally the one in charge in the family and all property belongs to him and in case of divorce the woman can only have little, if ever she gets anything.<sup>50</sup> Women are regarded incapable of conducting court cases and when presenting her case to the traditional court she should have a male relative to speak for her.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, a husband can be morally loose and it is not taken seriously. He could have as many wives as he could, provided that he would not neglect any of them and satisfy all of them sexually.<sup>52</sup> This is mainly because naturally men are believed to have a strong sex-instinct. This might be the reason for condoning their sexual promiscuity. Shoko has illuminating insights on this in his case study of the Karanga (Shona) of Zimbabwe in which he captures the thinking of the Shona people:

...Sex for a man is obvious. A man may have sex with a woman at will. A man is compared with a bull which is in charge of other cattle. A bull has many cows and produces plenty of offspring. Likewise a man can have sex with many women and produce as many children as possible. Marital fidelity in a man is not questionable but a man can inform his wife about his extra-sexual contacts.<sup>53</sup>

C.J.M. Zvobgo points out that the greatest hindrance to Christianity in Mashonaland and Manicaland from the missionaries' point of view was polygamy and the *roora* system. They sought ways of destroying them because they believed that they encouraged people to worship ancestral spirits.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the challenges that women face in indigenous religion, there are some positive dimensions. Mbiti has analyzed the role women in African religion through myths, proverbs and prayers. Not only do they bear life, but they nurse, they cherish, they give warmth, they care for life, since all human life passes through their own bodies.<sup>55</sup> T. Mapuranga

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<sup>49</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 51.

<sup>50</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 51.

<sup>51</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 51.

<sup>52</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 51.

<sup>53</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion*, 21.

<sup>54</sup> Chengetai Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1996, 368.

<sup>55</sup> Mbiti, "Flowers in the Garden", 63.

notes that the burdens that women carry are influenced by the myths in sexuality among the Shona, particularly the myths of creation. In the myth of the Big Reeds (Zimwenje Ziguru) the Shona women are equated to the big reeds under which little fish, frogs and other small water fowls can be protected from the bigger predators. This means women were equated to the big reeds of a river where small water fowls got protected from danger. This depicts women as care givers and nurturers of human life, especially the sick and children.<sup>56</sup>

Even though the African myths of creation do not differentiate between human beings, African folk talk does and it enforces subordination of women to men. Often women are confronted by societal expectations to behave in a compliant or submissive manner which relegates their experiences, ideas and leadership to private sphere, out of record.<sup>57</sup>

Apart from the roles from the myth, the household chores and being care givers of children has tremendous burden on the shoulders of a Shona woman. In Shona culture, men were expected to talk about sexual matters and if a woman did this she was considered a harlot or one with loose morals. According to ‘bedroom wisdom’, a ‘good’ woman takes what is offered her. Shoko adds that a good woman exercises self control in both her passions and instincts and she cannot express her feelings freely and verbally, since the culture does not allow it.<sup>58</sup> It then follows that some instances of gender violence are culturally condoned because they are perceived as within the bounds of what is expected of men in their interaction with women in different situations.

A woman is regarded as the support of a village (*mutsigo womusha*) and should she commit adultery, it is tantamount to destroying the whole village.<sup>59</sup> Probably, as Mbiti points out, this is because the mother or the wife is the most important member of the family, she is the centre of family hood.<sup>60</sup> Alongside the status of women, unnatural events feature prominently in Shona spiritual beliefs. They are highlighted below.

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<sup>56</sup> Tapiwa P. Mapuranga, “Facing Up to Aids”: *The Plight of Women with Special Reference to African Traditional Religion in Chipinge District*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, Univ. of Zimbabwe, 2002, 17.

<sup>57</sup> Adelaide Maame Akua Boadi, “Engaging Patriarchy”, 174.

<sup>58</sup> Shoko, *Karanga indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 50.

<sup>60</sup> Mbiti, “Flowers in the Garden”, 64.

## Belief in Unnatural Events

The Shona people believe in unnatural events and this belief is also expressed in myths, proverbs and idioms. The Shona past is idealized in unnatural events. Mountains, caves, forests and some trees are centers of these unnatural stories that have been passed on from generation to generation among the Shona. The most popular is the mysterious provision of food to hunters and travelers, normally under the *Muhacha* (*Parinari Curatellifolia*) tree when they were hungry. They would clap hands and thank the ancestral spirits for the provision but also could not see where and how the food came in front of them and disappeared when they were full.

Other narratives have places that are regarded as sacred and certain taboos and avoidances (*miko nezvierwa*) are observed. Taboos are more binding than rules and failure to observe them culminates in punishment, especially disappearance.<sup>61</sup> The most popular of these areas is Mount Nyanga in Eastern Zimbabwe where there have been a number of proven cases of disappearances reported, including tourists who come into the country. Some areas include or are mainly found along the Pungwe River. David Lan clearly spelt out the belief in unnatural events as he explains what transpired among the freedom fighters (guerillas) during the war of liberation against the British in Zimbabwe. Many of them tell stories of how they were mysteriously led to sources of food or supplies, which they believe were engineered by dead members of the family or ancestral or territorial spirits. Apart from the provision of food, guerrillas related the accounts of timely warnings and miraculous escapes which their ancestors engineered.<sup>62</sup>

Besides these specific areas, the Shona also believe in unnatural events in the life of an individual, which also goes in line with what Lan says. This constitutes what an individual can see or experience and is interpreted as a pointer to some positive or negative significance in life. In order to cement our knowledge on this belief, John Tsikwa of Tsanzaguru township in Rusape narrated the experience which he had. His grandfather died in 1972 and three years later he wanted to join others in Mozambique during the liberation struggle. The same night that they

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<sup>61</sup> Mbiti, "Flowers in the Garden", 64.

<sup>62</sup> David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, Harare, Zimbabwe Publ. House, 1985, xv.



had agreed to elope in the dark he was ‘visited’. He heard footsteps outside and his bedroom door was opened:

I saw no one but heard the voice of my grandfather calling me by name and telling me not to join the others because I would not come back. The door was then closed. I was afraid and did not join the others who went to Mozambique that night. Unfortunately among the nine who went to Mozambique, no one came back to Zimbabwe during ceasefire or after the 1980 independence.<sup>63</sup>

This story gives us a glimpse of how the Shona believe in, value and interpret unnatural events in their lives. For them, these are not mere ordinary incidents but significant events. Witchcraft beliefs are also vital if one seeks to understand the Shona worldview more comprehensively. The chapter shifts its attention to this theme below.

## Belief in Witches and Witchcraft Activities

Gelfand defines *muroyi*, (witch) as a person with the power to manipulate the forces of nature to the detriment of mankind, but they do not believe they have witchcraft.<sup>64</sup> The subject of witchcraft continues to create controversy in Zimbabwe and in many parts of the world. Basically, there are two groups: those who believe that witches exist and those who do not believe in the existence of witches. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu clearly points out that:

Western mission Christianity for all its contribution towards the vernacular translation of the scriptures enabling Africans to receive the gospel in their own mother tongues was rarely able to deal with African worldviews of transcendent realities and mystical causality. Belief in witchcraft, for example, was denounced as figment of folk imagination and a psychological delusion.<sup>65</sup>

The belief is practically universal among the Shona, as indeed among many people throughout the world, despite the fact that the details of the

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<sup>63</sup> Personal interview with John Tsikwa, in Tsanzaguru, Rusape, 23 Dec. 2007.

<sup>64</sup> Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona*, 28.

<sup>65</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, “From Prophetism to Pentecostalism”, 168.

beliefs and the emphasis placed on different aspects of it vary.<sup>66</sup> The Shona believe in the existence of *muroyi* (witch) (*varoyi*-plural, witches) and that in order for *muroyi* to bewitch a person, she must know the victim's family (*dzinza*) and his totem (*mutupo*).<sup>67</sup> It is believed that witches use supernatural means for harmful, evil ends, eat human flesh and some have animals and birds as their familiars or imps. These are conceived as aiding them in their nefarious practices or as personifying their addiction by relentlessly driving them on in their evil ways.<sup>68</sup>

There are different types of witches performing different activities, ranging from witchcraft caused by alien spirit (*shave*), inherited from the deceased (passed on from generations) and others believe that one can become a witch by association or buying from those who are 'veterans' out of evil intention. Of importance is to consider what Chavunduka says about witches and witchcraft in Zimbabwe. Chavunduka's contribution is important and he is of interest because he is former Vice Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe and President of Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA). His descriptions and explanations are based on his experience as a traditional practitioner. Another significance attached to him in this study relates to how people of such high social and professional caliber still hold on to the Shona traditional worldview. Hence, the belief in witchcraft among the Shona is found across the board, encompassing different people of varying political, social and religious standing. Chavunduka has differentiated witchcraft from sorcery by saying that sorcery is always on a deliberate, conscious voluntary basis, using medicines, poisons or strange objects planted somewhere with the intention of harming.<sup>69</sup> The three types of witches include the one inherited from a deceased member of the family, one got from an alien (*shave*) spirit and those who become witches through being apprenticed by others.

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<sup>66</sup> Muzamhindo, A *Phenomenological Analysis of the Tsikamutanda Witch-hunt Cult among the Shona People of Uzumba District*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, Classics & Philosophy, Univ. of Zimbabwe, 2004, 21.

<sup>67</sup> Zvarevashe, "Witches and Witchcraft" in *Shona Customs: Essays by African Writers*, ed. by Clive Kileff & Peggy Kileff, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1987, 48.

<sup>68</sup> Michael F. C. Bourdillon, "Traditional Religion in Shona Society" in Anthony J. Dachs, ed, *Christianity South of the Zambezi*,.1, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1973, 82.

<sup>69</sup> Gordon Chavunduka, *Traditional Medicine in Modern Zimbabwe*, Harare, Univ. of Zimbabwe Publ., 1994, 89-90.

The operation of witchcraft is mysterious and it is believed that witches can travel in a basket (*rusero*), use birds like *zizi* (owl), animals such as *bere* (hyena), *ngwena* (crocodile) and can ride on the victim's back and command him or her to labor in their fields. An interview carried out in during this research at Watsomba in Mutare, was very surprising and confirms the above belief and description of witchcraft activities. A seventeen year old girl narrated her story thus:

...Ndakangonzwa kunge mumba mapinda munhu usiku but it seems ndini ndakatomuvhurira door. Ndakaita kunge ndabereka munhu asi ndikafuma ndakasvuuka ibvi rangu rekuright uye mapfudzi angu achirwadza, ndakaneta zvokuti, saka muroyi akanyatsondishandisa.<sup>70</sup> (I heard as if someone entered my room and it seems I am the one who opened the door for him or her. It appeared that I carried someone at my back, early in the morning my knee was bruised, my shoulders heavy, so it is a witch who visited me and made me work for him/her).

The most fearful thing is the belief that witches can use *muti* (medicine) to raise the dead from the grave and use them as *zvidhoma* or *zvitungwani* (familiar). Witchcraft is associated with spirit possession and some of the stories that are narrated are mysterious; especially how they enter houses at night, open graves to eat dead bodies and how they use their 'aids' like birds and animals in order to achieve their goals. Below are two stories that I compiled during my stay as a teacher in Chinhoyi from 2002-2003. Interviews were carried out with some residents in Makonde of what transpired during the liberation struggle in Makonde, a rural district in Chinhoyi town, west of the capital city Harare in Zimbabwe. Although these stories were collected prior to this study, they help us to see both the reality and the mystery surrounding witchcraft activities among the Shona. According to the informant, who is a villager and an eye witness during the war of liberation, ZANLA forces were very much interested in purging witches. Instead of fighting Ian Smith's soldiers (the British), they always rounded up villagers in the afternoon so that witches displayed their 'aids' and told how they carried out their work at night. He had this to say;

One old lady had an old short long bearded man whom she claimed to be her brother who had died long back but she used *muti* (medi-

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with Chengetai Muzanya at Tsonzo, Farm no 8, Mutare, 9 Sept. 2007.

chine) to raise him from the dead and he acted as a guide to enter people's homes at night. When the old man stopped and looked at her during her mission at night she will go back home because it would be impossible to enter that compound and bewitch the people.<sup>71</sup>

The question that might puzzle us is: how can someone raise a dead person to continue another life as a human (though not original body in terms of stature), when we consider the flesh which decays and what does this 'person' feed on? Another woman was beaten until she accepted that she was a witch. She went home, brought a cat and told the guerrillas that she used it as a horse at night. She would caress the small cat until it would be the size of a horse and she would ride it to any place. In the afternoon everyone would see the cat and take it just as any other ordinary animal.<sup>72</sup>

Can it be scientifically proven that an animal is caressed upon the will of the owner and it becomes quite big according to the interests of the owner, and later on becomes small? These are real stories which appear mythical but they portray the magnitude of mystery that surrounds the Shona beliefs in witchcraft activities especially when, as pointed by Muzamhindo, people readily and openly confess to perform witchcraft activities and convincing physical evidence is unearthed of *atrocious* rituals of witches.<sup>73</sup>

Lan adds that, an ex-*mujibha* (people who aided guerrillas) explained how during the war, ZANU guerrillas travelled with a spirit medium who told them people who were witches. Sometimes these guerrillas got special magic (*mushonga*) from the mediums to put around their camps, acting as a trap to witches and also took action against traditional healers (*n'angas*) who practiced witchcraft.<sup>74</sup> The Shona have a proverb which says "*n'anga muroyi*", (a traditional healer is a witch), mainly because s/he is capable at times, to misuse his/her expertise to harm others. All this points to the idea that the belief in witches and witchcraft is deeply embedded within the Shona people. In Shurugwi, chief Nhema's Mu-

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<sup>71</sup> Interviews with Mr Paul Gonhi Chinhoyi, in Kenzamba Village in Makonde, 2 Dec. 2003.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Mr Paul Gonhi, Kenzamba village in Makonde, Chinhoyi, 2 Dec. 2003.

<sup>73</sup> Muzamhindo, "A Phenomenological analysis of the Tsikamutanda Witch-hunt Cult", 34.

<sup>74</sup> David Lan, *Guns and Rain*, 68.

gumba village (which is the researcher's home area), an interviewee narrated to how a man in the village died under mysterious circumstances and the bizarre incident that followed:

...Two days after his burial, a young lady got possessed and started naming the alleged culprits who had caused the man's death. It caused uproar in the village and the village head (*sabhuku*) summoned the leader of the group. She openly confessed that they had taken the body of the dead man out of the grave and had almost eaten up the meat and were left with the head only, which she brought to the elders of the village.<sup>75</sup>

The case could not be handled by the police but it brought fear and wonder among the villagers. We can therefore, understand why witchcraft is so fearful and dreaded because it is a negative approved and even experienced reality.<sup>76</sup> Muzamhindo adds that the most feared and worst kind of a witch is a person who wanders at night, performing bad and horrific deeds.<sup>77</sup> This clearly points out the belief and reality of witches and their activities among the Shona. It is also strongly believed that it is difficult to exorcise the spirit if the host has inherited it from a deceased member of the family because this type is very deadly. However, witchcraft caused by alien spirits and obtained through other means is not as difficult to exorcise. The argument behind this is that it is in the blood or kinship ties (*hwedzinza*) and therefore, it cannot be cast away from the family. The standard practice is to pass the art on to someone else within the family. Whether the witches know what they will be doing during the act is a subject of contention.

However, the above stories indicate that they are conscious of their activities, although in some cases it is believed that they do not know that they engage in the nefarious practice. Such individuals who practice witchcraft unknowingly seek the help of traditional healers to exorcise them of the evil spirit, especially those who become witches through association or without their knowledge (*kutungamidzwa mberi*).

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Mrs Violet Tavengwa of Mugumba Village, Shurugwi, 16 Apr., 2007.

<sup>76</sup> Muzamhindo, "A Phenomenological analysis of the Tsikamutanda Witch-hunt Cult", 24.

<sup>77</sup> Muzamhindo, "A Phenomenological Analysis of the Tsikamutanda Witch-hunt Cult", 24.

However, there are cases where an individual can be accused of witchcraft as a way of saying that the person is bad and must be helped to conform. Such a person might be one who is envious of others or one who commits anti-social acts, trouble makers and so on.<sup>78</sup> Shoko confirms this by adding that there is a practice which is called *uroyi*, for example, if a man sleeps with another man's wife, especially a close relative.<sup>79</sup> Such an anti-social act is labeled as *uroyi* (witchcraft). Witchcraft thrives in the context of quarrels, jealousies and accusations in the community. The Shona are cautious with the threat "*uchazviona*" (you shall see). Such threats are discouraged because they threaten witchcraft. If something bad happens to the person threatened, one becomes suspected of witchcraft.<sup>80</sup> Among the Shona, if a sick person has been involved in a severe conflict with a neighbor or relative, s/he easily assumes that it is this conflict and the anger and hatred going with it that has made him/her sick. If there is no immediate evidence, s/he may want to seek the help of the diviner to tell him/her whom among the living or the dead s/he might have offended.<sup>81</sup> Herbert Aschwanden observes that even the children of witches are marked for life and generally regarded as unhappy children whom one would rather not marry.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to this, the Shona believe that some people go to Malawi in pursuit of the craft from 'Manyasarandi' (people from Nyasaland- now Malawi). These people were migrant laborers in Zimbabwe and were well known for the expertise in witchcraft activities. Some people would consult the *n'anga* for *muti* for different purposes. This cements the idea that the Shona strongly believe in witches and witchcraft. Besides this, though based on discriminatory assumptions, women with excessive qualities are generally key suspects. These include extremely beautiful women, usually light in complexion. There are Shona proverbs which capture that by saying, "*Matende mashava ndiwo anovazva doru*" (red pots spoil beer) and "*Mukadzi munaku kutadza kuroya anoba*" (a beautiful wife/woman is either a witch or a thief). Similarly women with opposite complexion, pitch black, are sometimes accused of being witches.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Gordon Chavunduka, *Traditional Medicine in Modern Zimbabwe*, 91.

<sup>79</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 21.

<sup>80</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 46.

<sup>81</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 46.

<sup>82</sup> Aschwanden, *Karanga Mythology*, 188.

<sup>83</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 43.

However, in the Zimbabwean Constitution, there is the Witchcraft Suppression Act (Chapter 73) which was passed in 1889 by the British during the colonial era. Through this Act, the whole practice is considered as a pretence and sham with no real existence at all. The Act is based on faulty definition of witchcraft which says nothing about witchcraft and witchcraft activities, “throwing of bones, use of charms, or any other means or devices adopted in the practice of sorcery”.<sup>84</sup>

On the whole, one can note that the subject of witches and witchcraft (just like *ngozi*) brings to light the significance of African traditional healers (as shall be compared with the role of pastors) in dealing with illness and deaths perceived to have been caused by witchcraft. With the vast of evidence in this belief, there is need to establish how ZAOGA has handled this subject which is a reality among the Shona. Another key area that requires critical analysis relates to the value of words spoken prior to death. This theme is given attention below.

Closely related to the issue of death is the value attached by the Shona to the last words spoken by a dying person. In the hey days of traditional religion in Africa, the word of mouth was considered much more sacred than the written word is now. Jean-Marc Ela also confirms this by asserting that in Africa religion is a system of signs and symbols that attributes primacy to the spoken word.<sup>85</sup> African Traditional Religion does not tamper with the spoken word and to break a verbal oath is one of the greatest felonies or taboos in Africa.<sup>86</sup>

Before death, a person could pour out contents from the bottom of the heart. There was no way the verbal last testament of a dying person would be subtracted from, added to or disputed because they were powerful. This study analyzes how ZAOGA responds to the issue of the words uttered by a person on his/her death bed. Equally important is the theme of liturgy and salvation that is considered in the next section.

## Liturgy and Salvation

I am aware that dealing with the subject of liturgy and salvation among the Shona requires volumes of work. However, for the purposes of this

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<sup>84</sup> Chavunduka, *Traditional Medicine in Modern Zimbabwe*, 103.

<sup>85</sup> Jean-Marc Ela, *My Faith as an African*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1993, 170.

<sup>86</sup> Ela, *My Faith as an African*, 170.

study I am highly selective, so that this theme can effectively be dealt with and focus on areas of concern that need to be analyzed within the framework of African Pentecostalism in chapter 5. Sebastian Bakare gives us the liturgical expressions of the Africans with special reference to the Shona:

One of the precious gifts that God has given to the Africans is the gift of dancing and singing. Africans dance all sorts of occasions to express their inner feelings whether of joy or of sorrow...In villages throughout the continent the sound and rhythm of the drum express the mood of the people, a sign of life, its beat is the heart beat of the community which evokes emotions. Dancing is therapeutic. You dance with your problems.<sup>87</sup>

He adds that among the Shona, religious experiences, whether experienced through liturgy or elsewhere, contain an element of renewal and drums, *hosho* (shakes), horns and whistles have a role in the cultural activities and rituals which give people a time to connect and have a sense of belonging.<sup>88</sup> There are no professionals set apart to perform, dance and sing but everyone participates. Shona traditional music and dance include *muchongoyo*, *kongonya* and also *mbira*, which are also known internationally. *Sungura* dance, the giddy free wheel guitar which is an import from Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>89</sup> has also become popular among Zimbabweans and several musicians have incorporated it in their dances as they sing the African tunes. Thus, liturgy in an African context expresses the experiences of African people. It has to be pointed and emphasized that liturgy is bound up with community, an important characteristic of African society.<sup>90</sup>

To understand the church in Zimbabwe, some acquaintance with the Shona concept of salvation within the context of their worldview is necessary. This study is aware of the fact that the term 'salvation' is an imposed Christian formulation on African indigenous religions. I choose to ignore and remedy the challenging implications of the term by inferring from the Shona beliefs what the notion of salvation implies to them

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<sup>87</sup> Sebastian Bakare, *The Drumbeat of Life: Jubilee in an African Context*, Geneva, WCC, 1997, 1-3.

<sup>88</sup> Bakare, *The Drumbeat of Life*, 1-3.

<sup>89</sup> Bakare, *The Drumbeat of Life*, 3.

<sup>90</sup> G. Oosthuizen, *Post- Christianity in Africa: A Theology and Anthropological Study*, London, Hurst & Com., 1969, 226.



because every society has its own concepts regarding what it means to be saved. The Shona believe that their health and welfare are matters of prime importance which largely depends on the pattern of interactions with guardian spiritual entities that control their day to day affairs.<sup>91</sup>

Gelfand says that *vadzimu* are important: they have to be remembered because forgetting them follows punishment in the form of sickness and death and that they must not be short of basics.<sup>92</sup> Bourdillon adds that the Shona are often terrified by sickness,<sup>93</sup> that is why religious functionaries, (*n'anga/nyahana*) are of prime significance because in order to access salvation, one needs their involvement, especially in order to carry out rituals to remember the “timeless living.”<sup>94</sup> Although the Shona believe in the “timeless living”, they do not embrace the Christian teachings on sin, repentance, salvation and the notion of hell and heaven. The Shona wants normality and this normality extends to all spheres of his/her material culture, food, home comforts, land and agricultural needs,<sup>95</sup> thus, the primary focus is not on the abstract but the here and now. Hence, a person needs protection from the “timeless living” and any reversal in life may be due to a withdrawal of this protection because when one is protected he/she is successful in every life facet.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined the indigenous Shona beliefs and practices. It highlighted the communalistic orientation of the Shona people and examined their belief in Mwari, ancestral spirits, *ngozi*, unnatural events, witches and witchcraft, value of words spoken on death bed, role, status and significance of women and liturgy and salvation. These beliefs are deeply entrenched in their worldview. The chapter has also demonstrated that the status and position of women is defined by the patriarchal nature of the Shona society and also highlighted the liturgical ex-

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<sup>91</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 80.

<sup>92</sup> Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona*, 119.

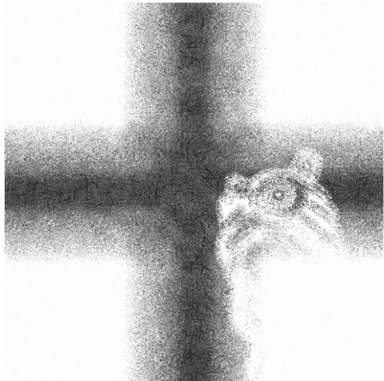
<sup>93</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 149.

<sup>94</sup> I am indebted to Sebastian Bakare who uses this term, See *The Drumbeat of Life: Jubilee in an African Context*, Geneva, WCC, 1997.

<sup>95</sup> Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona*, 162.

pressions of the Shona and that they embrace the concept of salvation, although it is different from the Christian understanding.

It was important to deliberate on these themes in this chapter so that there is the platform upon which their continuity or discontinuity among African Pentecostals can be argued. This will enable an assessment of the resilience of Shona culture among the Pentecostals in Zimbabwe. The next chapter proceeds to investigate the Pentecostal movement in general, as well as the location of ZAOGA within Pentecostalism. This will facilitate an examination of the themes under discussion, the origins, expansion and significance of Pentecostalism, the rise of Ezekiel Guti and ZAOGA, as well as an analysis of ZAOGA to assess the magnitude of interaction and borrowing between American Pentecostalism and Shona religion and culture.



## 4 | ZAOGA within the Global Pentecostal Movement

### Introduction

The previous chapter examined Shona traditional religion and culture. It highlighted the importance of Mwari and ancestral spirits, *ngozi* (avenging/angry spirit), the status and role of women, beliefs in unnatural events, witchcraft and witchcraft activities, value of words prior to death, liturgy and salvation. Also, I examined kinship and communalism as key features of Shona traditional religion and culture. This chapter examines Pentecostalism and the place of ZAOGA within the global Pentecostal movement. As a Pentecostal entity, ZAOGA did not emerge in a vacuum but amidst social, cultural, political and religious developments that were taking place in Zimbabwe and Africa. However, the origins of Pentecostalism are not going to be explored in elaborate detail in this study, mainly because, among others, Allan H. Anderson and Ogbu Kalu<sup>1</sup> have provided full details of the origins of this notable religious phenomenon.

This chapter summarizes the traits of American Pentecostalism, the rise of Guti and ZAOGA and then proceeds to examine the influence of American Pentecostalism on Guti and ZAOGA. The reason for exploring some of the traits of American Pentecostalism is to establish the extent of the material that Guti and ZAOGA have absorbed from this particular source. There is also need to establish how Guti and ZAOGA have interacted with Shona religion and culture to be in a position to assess the resilience of ATR among members of ZAOGA. This is prompted by the revealing insights by Kalu:

...Scholars write about African Pentecostalism as if they were recounting the saga of nineteenth century missionaries and the Pentecostal experience broke out without missionaries or any foreigners although the indigenes invited the foreigners.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the periodization because pattern of relationships changed over time. Moreover, relations with

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<sup>1</sup> See Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to African Pentecostalism*, Cambridge, Univ. of Cambridge Pr., 2004, Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, vii-viii.

external agents have to be carefully analyzed because African Pentecostalism did not originate from Azusa Street and is not merely an extension of American Pentecostalism<sup>3</sup> (although there is influence of both). This is because Pentecostalism is a vibrant phenomenon that is diverse and has been shaped by local variations that are also not static.

## Some Traits of American Pentecostalism

It is prudent to highlight that American Pentecostalism is a very broad topic which merits detailed separate studies and various methodological approaches. However, that is beyond the scope of this research. I therefore, do not offer exhaustive traits but focus on some key traits of American Pentecostalism that have direct relevance to this study. What is North American Pentecostalism? Nils Bloch-Hoell says that:

The movement includes many denominations, independent churches and para-church organizations that emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christian believers. It emerged first in North America at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when members of the Wesleyan Holiness Movement began to speak in tongues and identified it as the “Bible evidence” that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4). This gives them power to engage in the ‘apostolic ministry’ that included the charisms of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. The movement has gone by such self-designation as “Apostolic Faith”, “Full Gospel” Latter Rain and Pentecostals. One of the important centers of activity to identify itself as Pentecostal emerged under the direction of William Joseph Seymour and the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906 and within one year of its beginning, it had sent out evangelists that criss-crossed North America and missionaries who ministered in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Mexico.<sup>4</sup>

In the light of this description, there is need to acknowledge the diversity within North American Pentecostalism, as the general characteristics are explored, the variations, diverse political and social significance and the changes that take place over time, given that the movement is subject to

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<sup>3</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, vii-viii.

<sup>4</sup> Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement*, NY, Humanities Pr., 1964, 172-174.

a marked evolution and many contradictory postures. Hence, in spite of the diversity, we can still identify, in a general sense, common features with a goal to understand its character, expansion and influence on African Pentecostalism. Bloch-Hoell further categorizes the characteristics. These include sociological aspects, citing poor people as the majority although this can be contested and psychological dimensions because, apart from the ecstatic nature, Pentecostalism allows people to show their religious feelings. Although it is difficult to come up with a unanimously accepted Pentecostal creed because of subjectivism that results in lack of unity in the doctrine, liturgy and to a certain extent organization, there are theological aspects that withstand subjectivism such as spirit baptism and charismata.<sup>5</sup>

The characteristics appear in diverse forms, but I emphasize unity in diversity. As mentioned earlier in chapter one, there is a general trend of belief in miracles, faith gospel, emphasis on healing but primarily concerned about the working of the Holy Spirit and practice of spiritual gifts.<sup>6</sup> Gifford identifies three major characteristics that are: duality of Pentecostal worldview, 'conversion experience' with an emphasis on the working of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.<sup>7</sup> North American Pentecostalism appears as international and global in character, produces oligarchic governments and is sympathetic to authoritarian politicians.<sup>8</sup> However, there is also need to be sensitive to emerging shifts whereby some few Pentecostals are becoming more politically 'progressive' in terms of critiquing and opposing corrupt governments. It has embraced media technologies and religious broadcasting with zeal. For example, the zeal for worldwide religious revival which characterizes Pentecostals in America and many others is noteworthy.<sup>9</sup>

American Pentecostalism is also characterized by the so-called ideological faith gospel of prosperity. Role models of this faith gospel are preachers like Oral Roberts, TL Osborne, Kenneth Hagins and Kenneth Copeland among others, who teach that to prosper materially is divine

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<sup>5</sup> Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 172-174.

<sup>6</sup> Paul. Gifford, *The Religious Right in Southern Africa*, Harare, Univ. of Zimbabwe Publ., 1998, 90.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, London, Hurst & Com., 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Gifford, *The Religious Right*, 90.

<sup>9</sup> Gifford, *The Religious Right*, 90.

will and blessing is a sign of faith.<sup>10</sup> Some of these American evangelists and teachers like Jimmy Swaggart, Kenneth Higgins, Benny Hinn, Earnest Angley and T.D. Jakes have held several crusades, breakfasts and dinners in Africa, besides their message tapes which are sold internationally. These have inevitably led to the continued sprouting of new religious movements on the African continent. Thus, modern African Pentecostalism is inseparable and incomprehensible without the American religious history. Allan Anderson notes that there are complex causes of the rise of African Pentecostal movements but religious ones are significant.<sup>11</sup>

From the foregoing section, a number of issues emerge regarding the identity of Pentecostalism. First, the global spread of Pentecostalism is closely linked to events in North America. It is North America that provided the impetus for the current phenomenal success of Pentecostalism in different parts of the world. Second, the key dimensions of Pentecostalism have emerged to include an emphasis on the third person in the Trinity, namely, the Holy Spirit; speaking in tongues; belief in miracles (especially in faith/spiritual healing); energetic worship style and teaching on prosperity or the faith and health/wealth message. Thus, there is need to explore the social and historical context of the rise of Guti and ZAOGA to see if American Pentecostalism has a bearing in his life and the church. The following section focuses on this theme.

## Rise of Ezekiel Guti: The Birth and Growth of ZAOGA

The section above has provided a summary of the traits of American Pentecostalism. This background is important as it helps us to locate Guti within the larger narrative of the remarkable growth of Pentecostalism. However, to assess the vitality of Shona religion and culture in ZAOGA, there is need to engage Guti's history. This history is significant because it has shaped his worldview as well as that of his followers. Establishing the roots of Guti and ZAOGA is significant in exposing their link with the Shona cosmology. It enables us to locate their posi-

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<sup>10</sup> Gifford, *The Religious Right*, 90.

<sup>11</sup> Allan Anderson, *Bazalwane, African Pentecostals in South Africa*, Pretoria, UNISA, 1995, 18.

tion and status with reference to the adopted Christian beliefs and values in their lives. However, it has to be pointed out that the origins and growth of ZAOGA merits a separate study. For the purposes of this study, some few themes have been isolated to enable an appreciation of Guti's and ZAOGA's identities. Therefore, this chapter does not claim to have provided a detailed historical account. Maxwell has offered some penetrating insights into this theme, the encounter and interaction of Guti with missionaries and the schisms in his *African Gifts of the Spirit* (see section below).

ZAOGA is one of the largest denominations in Zimbabwe which has roots in South African Pentecostalism. In 1959, Guti and his prayer colleagues were expelled from AFM and joined the South African Assemblies of God (AOG) of Nicholas Benghu. Guti and some of the core-founders worked under AOG. Maxwell points out that it was this period that most of these core-founders tasted authority and power as they carried out their crusading activities both in the urban and rural areas.<sup>12</sup> There were divisions that led to separation from AOG giving birth to AOGA under the leadership of Guti who had become the outstanding leader among the group.<sup>13</sup> The rise of Guti requires critical historical analysis in so far as there are divergent views and narratives from 'insiders' and 'outsiders.' 'Insiders' refer to the members of ZAOGA in general who provide oral narratives based mostly on the documented church history written by Guti and his loyal followers. It is documented in ZAOGA literature that the white missionaries' paternalism bred resentment among gifted Africans. As a result of this, Guti was expelled because leaders were jealous of his preaching and healing talents. He joined South African Assemblies of God of Zulu evangelist, Nicholas Bhenghu, who baptized him as preparation for the work that he was beginning.<sup>14</sup> This appears to be a simplified theological version of the rise of Guti and the origins of ZAOGA, in view of other sources.

Instead, there were a lot of schisms that were fuelled by both political and social reasons which gave birth to the older generation of Zimbabwean Pentecostal movements like Johanne Maranke and Johanne Masowe. It is also through these schisms that ZAOGA was born out of

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<sup>12</sup> Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 90.

<sup>13</sup> Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Asmara, Africa World Pr., 2001, 79.

<sup>14</sup> Guti, *History of ZAOGA*, 1984, 21.



AFM. Maxwell points out that many people played significant roles during the early years of ZAOGA. For example, in 1957, Gutu was aided by Caleb Ngorima (the late long serving bishop and loyalist to Gutu) to run a religious campaign in Mutare under the guise of Ezekiel Gutu Evangelistic Association (EGEA).<sup>15</sup> Evangelist Gutu, surrounded by young “Zealots” mostly of humble social beginnings, formed a prayer band in the AFM assembly in Harare after expulsion in 1959. These include, Enoch Gwanzura, the overseer of the black work within AFM, Abel Sande, Ngoma, Langton Kupara and Caleb Ngorima. Both black pastors (who sometimes invited Gutu to preach) and white leaders were not sympathetic to the band which was fired up by religious impulse and a relentless drive to evangelize.<sup>16</sup> In 1959 Gutu offered his services to Zulu Nicholas Bhenghu from South Africa at his crusade in Highfield. Thus, he placed himself and his loyalists under Bhenghu. Gutu managed to use the resources from Bhenghu to bolster his group until 1967 when a frustrated Bhenghu expelled Gutu, who re-christened his group Assemblies of God Africa (AOGA). ZAOGA has it that he was dis-fellowshipped because Bhenghu received false reports about Gutu. This marks the birth of the largest Pentecostal organization in Zimbabwe that became ZAOGA.<sup>17</sup> The movement captured the name ‘Zimbabwe’ to become ZAOGA at independence in 1980 (when the country became known as Zimbabwe). The rise of Gutu comes after the departure of Bhenghu.

Resentment against white control must have been the root of disengagement from AFM by a small group of artisans which started as a choir and prayer band that developed into a ministry.<sup>18</sup> However, while Gutu claims to have been disliked by white leadership of AFM, it appears he also probably resented the Southern influence under Bhenghu, (because of leadership aspirations, in the light of how he purged core-founders and established his grip on the movement) which points out to generational and ethnic dimensions of the schism.

Gutu went to Bindura where he spent much time praying at the mountain top of Chipindura where the famous prayer for Africa is recorded.<sup>19</sup> He bought a Salvation Army building with the help of dedicated women.

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<sup>15</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 251.

<sup>16</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 252.

<sup>17</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 252.

<sup>18</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 252.

<sup>19</sup> Erwin, *African Apostle*, 135.

According to the church history, this marks the birth place of ZAOGA. Guti later came back to Highfield where he commanded a large following. From this simplified theological narrative, ZAOGA was founded by Guti alone and not with any other persons<sup>20</sup> although the history appears to reflect otherwise.<sup>21</sup>

Because Maxwell has critically documented the rise of Guti, his interaction with AFM missionaries, relationship with AOG, the birth of AOGA and expansion of ZAOGA, mostly based on the urban dynamics, this book therefore has focused on Guti's rural background and other places outside Harare. Guti's past in the rural areas and outside Harare is important because the theological narratives read events back in to the past in their legitimation of Guti's authority. It appears that the emphasis on events in Ngaone, Vumba and Bindura outside the city of Harare (Salisbury) is a well calculated move to discredit co-founders who were very instrumental in the formation of ZAOGA (see the section below). This has enabled Guti to enjoy an uncontested status in ZAOGA and at the same time shaping ZAOGA theology. For example, Guti's stay in Vumba, Marondera (where he worked at a farm and factory) and Bindura<sup>22</sup> has served the purpose of discrediting co-founders. The life in Mutema Ngaone and Vumba is pictured as a preparatory stage for the ministry that was ahead of him because of the claimed visions and revelations concerning the birth of a ministry. In Bindura he is presented as the biblical Abraham called to be away from his relatives and endure hardships for the cause of the gospel.

## Guti's Early Years

Guti comes from Mutema Ngaone village in Chipinge and his father was a polygamist and also a distinguished traditional healer. Guti was born on 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1923 and he grew up in Chipinge as a herd boy deprived of formal education. He claims that he was commanded by God to read the English Bible in 1963 because he would be taken to a far away country for God's work. He also claims that he met God before he met a preach-

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<sup>20</sup> See Ezekiel Guti, *History of ZAOGA F.I.F, The Book of Remembrance. How it Began and Where it is Going*, Harare, EGEA, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> See Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> See e.g., *History of ZAOGA F.I.F*.

er and was told to “fear not and sin not”<sup>23</sup> and this has become one of ZAOGA’s mottos, printed on posters and T-shirts. The theological narrative has it that his mother narrated to him how she heard someone sharing about the last judgment and punishment for all sinners. In fear, Guti often retreated to the bushes, crying to God to spare him. He then sought a preacher who introduced him to Jesus and became a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM).<sup>24</sup> According to an informant, the said preacher could be Joel Juma, an itinerant AFM preacher.<sup>25</sup> Before engaging Guti’s past, it is important to highlight the contestation around the formation of ZAOGA in order to understand why the past is elevated and has taken centre stage in the church’s teachings.

## Contestation around the Formation of ZAOGA

Guti denies that ZAOGA was born out of AFM but that through him and not with any other person was ZAOGA founded. This emphasis seems to discredit prominent co-founders who include Abel Sande, Joseph Choto, Lazarus Mamvura, George Chitaka, Raphael Kupara, Priscilla Ngoma and Caleb Ngorima (late) who have played a great role in the formation and bolstering of the church structures. One informant, who was a youth during the time of ZAOGA’s infancy, gave information that is useful to the study. The material is not ‘welcome’ to many ZAOGA loyalists of Guti. According to him, Guti fought two major wars. The first war was against the whites who were envious of his ‘spiritual glitter’ that saw him getting a lot of money from his powerful evangelistic services and crusades. Whites flocked to the Northern suburbs to see Guti preaching and they also wanted to marshal the money obtained by Guti to their Northern suburbs but Guti resisted. This is part of the reason why Guti was ex-communicated from the AFM, apart from ‘dumping and divorcing’ his wife of four children in the rural areas,<sup>26</sup> a theory that is not credible in ZAOGA circles.

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<sup>23</sup> See e.g., Ezekiel Guti, *History of ZAOGA FIF: The Book of Remembrance. How it Began and Where it is Going*, Harare, EGEA, 1984, 21 and Gayle Erwin, *African Apostle*, Harare, EGEA.

<sup>24</sup> Guti, *History of ZAOGA*, 1999, 21.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Munetsi Ruzivo who researches on the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, 22-02-2010.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with John Mutambwa, Univ. of Zimbabwe, Harare, 27-01-2012.

The second ‘war’ that Guti fought was with his co-founders. The informant pointed out that two issues emerged with these co-founders: Guti’s second marriage to Eunor, management of funds and the putting of church property in his own name. The major criticism came from Abel Sande and his wife because, “Sande and wife had marriage integrity and could not tolerate Guti’s second marriage.” However, the ‘official’ history of the church has it that Guti’s wife resented the fact that he spent a lot of time praying and that he had left his self employed job (Guti was a carpenter). She became pregnant by another man, drank beer, used charms and therefore God commanded Guti to marry another wife.<sup>27</sup> These are claims critics often reject. One informant argued that if it were not for the strict code of conduct in Pentecostalism, it could have been viable for Guti to have more than one wife because he comes from a polygamous family.<sup>28</sup> Although some people critique Guti’s second marriage and cast doubts on the long period that he stayed single, Guti boldly declared; “My children, learn from me, imitate me, I never touched a woman’s breast or buttocks. I never committed adultery”.<sup>29</sup>

Given the role that Sande played in establishing ZAOGA F.I.F churches and facilitating Guti’s admission when he went to the study in America and annoyed with the second marriage, he might have felt obliged to exercise authority over Guti. Sande then formed a front against Guti with other colleagues who also stayed in Kambuzuma. The informant also gave information about Cuthbert Makoni, whose son was sent to America for pastoral activities by the church. However, Makoni’s son did not pursue pastoral studies but pursued a different course. Guti then demanded a refund from Makoni as he felt his son had breached the original agreement. Makoni refused and the issue surrounding his expulsion from ZAOGA is said to be connected to the son. The image of ‘heathens’ was (and still is) perpetuated by loyalists on all those who were frustrated and went out of the church or those who were expelled.<sup>30</sup>

Even to date, ZAOGA does not disclose detailed information on those who break away or are expelled from the church. Some of these prominent co-founders even made fruitless efforts to demand a share of the

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<sup>27</sup> Erwin, *African Apostle*, 110, 150.

<sup>28</sup> Anonymous interviewee, 2 Dec. 2010, Harare.

<sup>29</sup> Guti delivering a speech at ZAOGA’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary grand jubilee, 23-10, 2010, Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with J. Mutambwa, Univ. of Zimbabwe, 27-01-2012.

church resources when they founded their own churches. For example, Elias Makanda, a former overseer in ZAOGA, broke away and demanded a share of ZAOGA properties in the courts but was not successful.<sup>31</sup> Several of these co-founders and prominent leaders that were expelled or ‘frustrated’ in ZAOGA who formed their own churches include: Abel Sande (Ambassadors for Christ, whose headquarters is in Marondera), Bartholomew Manjoro (Faith World Ministries) in Malbereign, Harare and Mike Muwani (Bible Believing Church in Eastlea, Harare). Although Cuthbert Makoni has founded a successful ministry, Christ Ministries International and a high school located in Belvedere, Harare, he appeared bitter as he narrated his contributions to the establishment of ZAOGA in the presence of his wife. Makoni pointed out that he and his wife were responsible for building many ZAOGA churches and aided Guti in many situations that they could not disclose.<sup>32</sup>

Those who found denominations have equally competitive ministries modeled alongside ZAOGA and Gracious Woman. Richmond Mchiudza formed Glad Tidings and Ngwiza Mkandla initiated Faith Ministries. Others seem to have gone into the cold. This is another history that is absent in the glittering archive of ZAOGA; a history that loyalists to Guti do not tolerate. They are guarding jealously the theological history, but one that seems to be heavily biased. It can, therefore, be noted that the management of funds and properties is one of the major reasons for internal power struggles that led to the expulsion of co-founders and various splits. This is replicated by what is taking place in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism: the need for power and it confirms the observation by Hollenweger that Pentecostalism has the weakness of splitting.<sup>33</sup>

## **ZAOGA in its Urban Setting**

Having dealt with Guti’s engagement with the internal ‘opponents’ that he purged from the movement, ZAOGA has to be situated within the urban setting (Harare, then Salisbury) in order to establish how ZAOGA negotiated the local variations. The urban terrain was characterized by many dimensions: political, cultural and religious. As a cosmopolitan

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Eve Masama, Seke, Chitungwiza, 4-04-2005.

<sup>32</sup> Discussion with Cuthbert Makoni and his wife, Belvedere, Harare, 7-05-2009.

<sup>33</sup> See Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, Peabody, Hendrickson, 1972.

city, Salisbury was characterized by various nationalities. It was a variegated city that had competing societies. In the city, Highfield was an area of political contestation. ZANU and ZAPU youths and the Rhodesian Front also vied for the control of the suburb. Prominent businessmen also competed and vied for control. These included industrialists like Charles Mzingeli and Matthew Rusike,<sup>34</sup> giving us the significance of Highfield as a strategic place. Brian Raftopoulos points out that the life of an African in Salisbury combined material deprivation with cultural and ideological diversity, indeed, that these were related in almost direct proportions.<sup>35</sup> There were opportunities for blacks from a wide range of socio-economic positions in the face of the colonial wave and the impact of Christianity on black culture was mainly through the establishment of churches which had undergone some degree of Africanisation and were under African control.<sup>36</sup> The city of Salisbury was also invaded by different religious groups. Mai Chaza, founder of Guta raJehovah and former traditional healer (*nyahana*-word for female *n'anga*), established a centre in Highfield.<sup>37</sup> Johanne Marange and Johanne Masowe, AICs that command numerical strength in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa, also established congregations.

ATR was also influential as ceremonial chiefs, apart from several traditional healers, were also influential in Highfield. Several nationalities existed and formed societies. This might explain why ZAOGA had a lot of Ndau people, Gutu's ethnic group, even suffusing the top hierarchy of ZAOGA. This is the scenario in Highfield that Gutu comes in as a competitor: it was not a religious vacuum, hence, he 'fished' people from mostly AFM and other mainline churches. The influence of immigrant Africans and the local Shona led to the search of respectability that also bred large social and religious gatherings.<sup>38</sup> This is why I argue that apart from the theological history of ZAOGA that legitimizes Gutu's rise and authenticity as ZAOGA's leader, it is of utmost importance to pay attention to prominent co-founders and other 'immigrants' such as

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Munetsi Ruzivo, 24-03-2012, Univ. of Zimbabwe, Harare.

<sup>35</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, "Culture, Organisation and Class: The African Experience in Salisbury 1892-1935", Brian Raftopoulos & Tsuneo Yoshikuni, eds, *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History*, Harare, Weaver Pr., 55, 57-58.

<sup>36</sup> Raftopoulos, "Culture, Organisation and Class", 61.

<sup>37</sup> Rutendo Wutawunashe teaching at Family of God's Precious Stones at their Annual International Meeting, Rainbow Towers, Harare, 17-06-2005.

<sup>38</sup> Raftopoulos, "Culture, Organisation and Class", 57-58.

Benghu, who have exerted a lot of influence on the rise and doctrine of the movement, although they appear as ‘appendices and footnotes’, (if ever they do) in the history of the church.

In the light of the power struggles in Salisbury and AFM church, Guti becomes an opportunist, probably aided by his charisma, to emerge as the leader of the movement. One important thing in the city that might have directly appealed to Guti is how churches re-in forced the central concept of black historical consciousness by preaching against colonialism.<sup>39</sup> The socio-political and economic variations in Salisbury could be interpreted in two ways in relation to the rise and teachings of ZAOGA. First, they give a hint on Guti’s social relations with the likes of Mai Chaza, contestation with other religious denominations. The research argues that this should not be taken lightly because it partly explains why Guti has not been vocal against traditional healers and AICs. Second, it could have influenced Guti’s theology of black consciousness, pride and empowerment. Resonance with Mugabe and ZANU PF might be the result of their deprivations and suffering at the hands of the colonial white regime. Moreover, the significance of Guti’s background has to be established and ascertain whether or not it informs the beliefs and practices of his Pentecostal movement.

## **Guti’s Past and its Implications on ZAOGA**

The past is important, especially after Guti successfully purged opponents, for the past is brought to the service of ‘crowning’ Guti as divinely appointed. It also projects him as one whose battles with ‘opponents’ were fought by God, especially the claimed miraculous visit and provision of food by three different women in the cave in Chipindura Mountain.<sup>40</sup> The “fear not, sin not” account in Ngaalone has been deployed to give Guti legitimacy over the movement. This has been done through inscriptions on church T-shirts, African attire, pamphlets and even on vehicles, as well as featuring in songs and sermons. Guti’s portrait at ZAOGA headquarters is displayed from the foyer, in every corridor and office, alongside the churches all over and at ZAOGA hospital-Mbuya Dorcas Hospital in Waterfalls in Harare. Guti’s portrait is significant in

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<sup>39</sup> Raftopoulos, “Culture, Organisation and Class”, 57-58.

<sup>40</sup> Erwin, African Apostle, 89.

two ways. It portrays Guti as the sole founder of the movement and this helps to discredit co-founders and dispels their claims of contributions to the formation and development of the movement. It also gives legitimacy to only the Guti family by creating an avenue for perpetuating leadership through blood ties, exhibited in the naming system of church properties (see chapter five).

The status of his father as a traditional healer could have influenced Guti, consciously or at a sub-conscious level. Among the Shona, traditional healers are well known for divination, healing and giving people medicine for prosperity. Having been born into the family of a traditional healer suggests that Guti could not be totally immune to the practices associated with traditional medical systems. Prophecy, healing and the message of prosperity characterized Guti's messages from the beginning. These enhanced his popularity as a young evangelist and continue to be espoused by Guti and his pastors today. This confirms the claim by Hollenweger that Pentecostalism's success lies in the fact that they start from the local needs and local misery that people experience every day.<sup>41</sup> It can be logical to argue that the centrality of these in Guti's ministry could be explained in terms of Guti's familiarization and interaction with them from childhood and their appropriation in the service/deployment of the Christian faith. It could largely explain Guti's ministry of prophecy, healing and deliverance and prosperity that are central to ZAOGA.

While it is true that the AFM missionaries were pro-healing, and that Guti could not go out of AFM "empty handed", it appears that Guti could have largely sourced from his past experiences (ATR). This might apply, especially to his healing tactics. Hence, the deployment of aspects sourced from ATR into his ministry becomes a mark of the resilience of Shona traditional practices, albeit in new form(s). This is strengthened by his regular pilgrimages to Ngaone forests and Vumba Mountains. The pilgrimages enable constant interaction with the rural areas and traditional symbols. ZAOGA re-sacralizes forests and mountains that are sacred areas in Shona tradition religion as they are abode of spirits.<sup>42</sup>

Some informants also highlight Guti's membership to the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ) when he was still in Mutema Ngaone. An informant from Mutema Ngaone confirmed that Guti was

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<sup>41</sup> See Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, Peabody, Hendrickson, 1972.

<sup>42</sup> See also Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*, 1999.



a member UCCZ in Ngaone.<sup>43</sup> Although membership to the UCCZ is absent in Guti's biography, it is likely, considering that to date, it is still the dominant mainline church in Chipinge. This study suggests that Guti's leadership styles could have been influenced by his membership to the UCCZ, especially the centralization of authority. It may also account for the appointment of bishops, a phenomenon that is absent in other Pentecostal denominations in Zimbabwe. In the UCCZ, bishops have no power. Power is with the congregation. Therefore, the bishop can be transferred or sacked by the congregation. Hence, Guti might have moved for a model that gave him power as Archbishop, Apostle, and President and Founder of ZAOGA. This would be the masterstroke, dealing a final blow to any claims to the movement that might surface/re-surface. Therefore, while the Americanization thesis as propounded by Gifford is important, the local influence is equally important in ZAOGA. All these serve to provide legitimation of Guti's supremacy over and above other co-founders. Guti's stay in the United States is the basis of the fact that he could not come back home empty handed and could not be immune to the influence of American Pentecostalism. However, Guti, like many African church leaders, do not want to identify their churches with the 'religious right' of the United States of America.

## The Influence of American Pentecostalism on Guti

The above section briefly explored the rise of Guti and ZAOGA and how his background could have influenced him in his ministry. This section establishes whether Guti and ZAOGA have been influenced by North American Pentecostalism, since it has provided an impetus on the growth of Pentecostalism worldwide. The question that has often been raised is whether or not Africa's born again movements are a manifestation of American religious imperialism. Although this is a controversial issue, "there is no doubt that American sophistication and connections enhanced Guti's position within the Pentecostal movement."<sup>44</sup> Exploring the influence of American Pentecostalism on Guti and ZAOGA is worthwhile so that we will be in a position to weigh the resilience of Shona culture in his life and that of the church. Therefore, the following shall be examined: media technologies, evangelism/missionary zeal, the

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<sup>43</sup> Anonymous pastor, interviewed 22 Sep. 2010, Harare.

<sup>44</sup> Maxwell, "Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn", 552.

faith and prosperity gospel, supporting the ruling party and authoritarian politicians, authoritarian and totalitarian government and establishment of Bible colleges. Guti went to study at Christ for the Nations Institute (CFNI), Dallas in 1971. This institute was founded by Gordon Lindsay, one of the patriarchs of the American Pentecostal movement and who “was a dynamo of charismatic Christian advance not just in America but also Africa, Asia and Latin America”.<sup>45</sup>

The question of who facilitated and sponsored Guti at CFNI remains obscure, even in the theological history of the church. Learning the English language was very important to Guti, since it ensured the success of his trans-national movement.<sup>46</sup> Guti was able to establish connections beyond African borders. Contact with the white missionaries and Pentecostals explains the success with which he managed to manipulate situations and events to raise the national and international profile of his church.<sup>47</sup> The following are Western factors that seem to have influenced Guti’s Pentecostal church: Media technology and religious broadcasting/printing, missionary zeal/ evangelism, the faith gospel and prosperity, authoritarian and totalitarian government, supporting the government and establishment of Bible colleges. These shall be described in the United States of America context in general first before examining their occurrence in ZAOGA. In the West there are notable crusading activities of Charismatics and Pentecostals, initially Billy Graham (Evangelical preacher) and Oral Roberts and more recently Reinhard Bonnke. American Bible Colleges, for example, Gordon Lindsay’s Christ For Nations Institute, Dallas (where Guti trained) and Oral Roberts University, Tulsa provide the New Pentecostal leaders with training and, more importantly, a vast pool of resources and international contacts. Contemporary Pentecostalism is associated with media technologies.

Although other churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, have made use of the print media and religious broadcasting, Pentecostals have come to appropriate the electronic media in a manner that this has become almost a defining characteristic of the phenomenon.<sup>48</sup> American preachers like Oral Roberts, T. L. Osborn, Kenneth Higgins and Ken-

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<sup>45</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 253.

<sup>46</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 552.

<sup>47</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 552.

<sup>48</sup> Anderson, *Bazalwane*, 18.

neth Copeland broadcast their teachings which have been embraced almost all over the world, especially on faith and prosperity. These churches produce audio and video tapes to augment gospel tracts, Bible study guides and Christian monthlies as tools of teaching and proselytism.<sup>49</sup>

Maxwell highlights that another important factor influencing Pentecostalism's rapid worldwide expansion is the print media: a rich Pentecostal literary tradition supported by a host of small publishing houses was essential in the global distribution of Pentecostalism.<sup>50</sup>

## Media Technology and Religious Broadcasting

It is through the media and religious broadcasting that one can detect some degree of American influence in African Pentecostalism. As pointed out by Kalu:

Media technologies help to initiate linkages to transnational and homogenizing cultural flows and networking at transnational level and this buttresses the image that Pentecostalism in Africa is an extension of the American electronic church.<sup>51</sup>

Media broadcasting is used by Pentecostals as a tool of evangelizing. Media technology penetrated into Africa in the 1960s-70s, well after Billy Graham, Rex Humbard and Oral Roberts experimented with television from the late 1950s. One can note the time gap: for example, ZAOGA launched its television channel, Ezekiel TV, in 2005. According to Gerrie ter Haar, electronic media is a characteristic of modern Pentecostal movement and is particularly effective in Africa under its strong tradition of orality.<sup>52</sup> ZAOGA is highly fascinated by the electronic media. Allan Anderson has noted that ZAOGA is among the rapidly growing and largest organizations and most influential denominations in their countries.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Anderson, *Bazalwane*, 18.

<sup>50</sup> David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 115.

<sup>52</sup> Gerrie ter Haar, *Halfway To Paradise*, 176.

<sup>53</sup> Anderson, *Bazalwane*, 18.

This rapid growth of ZAOGA can be attributed to the use of electronic music and instruments, publishing their own literature, running their Bible training centers for preachers to further propagate their message, producing glossy booklets and broadcasting television programmes (especially through Ezekiel TV and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation). In 2005 ZAOGA established its own television channel, Ezekiel TV, which features different programmes, but mainly ‘Good News Deliverance Explosions’ and crusades. The establishment of a television channel marks ZAOGA’s great stride in its acknowledgement and use of the electronic media. While there is strong reliance by ‘born agains’ on literature and electronic media derived from America,<sup>54</sup> at the same time ZAOGA does not want to further the agenda of the American religious right. Ezekiel TV and the internet site highlight the significance of the link with communities in the Diaspora who also fund the television channel. Ezekiel Guti Evangelistic Association International (EGEA International) features programmes on Zimbabwe Television on Sunday and Monday mornings. Guti, his wife Eunor and other ZAOGA pastors and evangelists preach and deliver prophecies. At ZAOGA Deeper Life Conference in 2005, Guti rebuked leaders who were no longer advertising church programmes such as Big Sundays and crusades in the media.<sup>55</sup>

ZAOGA encourages members to subscribe to Ezekiel TV so that they get daily inspirational messages. Each member has to pay 2 United States dollars, even on behalf of others and the scriptures and messages are sent to individuals’ cell phones.<sup>56</sup> During the National Big Sunday for ZAOGA University Post Graduates Fellowship (ZUPGF) held at the Crowne Plaza Monomotapa Hotel in 2005, Farai Gonzo, who worked at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, claimed that she facilitated the EGEA programmes to feature regularly on national television.<sup>57</sup> She also worked with Eunor Guti and sold EGEA tapes. Twenty four million Zimbabwean dollars (about two thousand United States dollars) were raised among other millions raised from a delegation of less than two hundred which comprised mostly University of Zimbabwe under-

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<sup>54</sup> Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Post Graduates Letter from Ezekiel Guti Annual Report, 2004.

<sup>56</sup> John Mukasi, announcing to the church, ZAOGA Emerald Hill Assembly, 12-12-2010.

<sup>57</sup> Farai Gonzo testifying at ZAOGA Post Graduate Big Sunday, Monomotapa Hotel, 22 June 2005.

graduates (ZAOGA on Campus). The purpose of raising the money was to ensure that ZUPGF broadcast its programmes on television. EGEA's daily life is dominated by the need to expand the movement and ZAOGA's engagement with media fits the description by Adogame:

New African churches and religious organizations have appropriated new media technologies such as internet websites, satellite television and interactive technologies in the transmission of their religious ideologies, as a recruitment strategy for new clientele but also as a way of maintaining links and contact to members and branches trans-nationally.<sup>58</sup>

This engagement with the media technologies has enabled ZAOGA to disseminate its religious ideologies within and outside Zimbabwe and maintaining links with all ZAOGA churches in the Diaspora (Forward in Faith Ministries, Assemblée De Deus Africana) and reinforces the spirit of Evangelism.

## Publication: The Print Media

ZAOGA on Campus (ZOC) produces magazines in which individuals write testimonies of what Jesus did for them in order to attract more members. Maxwell has documented how the movement has produced a host of tracts, pamphlets and, most importantly, spiritual autobiographies that function as canonical history.<sup>59</sup> Gutu and his wife have written many books on different subjects that are sold at the church headquarters in Waterfalls and at district church offices. These include *History of ZAOGA FIF: The Book of Remembrance, How It Began and Where It is Going? Do You know your God? Does Your Marriage Look Like This? A Wise Woman* (Eunor) and *Strategies for Saving Marriages for this Generation and Wise Man*. Other booklets and tracts include Gracious Woman Single Ladies' Fellowship, Husband Agape Fellowship International, Marriage Enrichment Expo' 95, Gracious Women's Fellowship International<sup>60</sup>, among others. It has to be noted that Gutu has influenced teach-

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<sup>58</sup> Afe Adogame, Visualising God Online: New Religious Imaginaries, Media Emplacement, Religious Mobility in Africa and the African Diaspora, [www.las.ulg.ac.be/activities/programme.pdf](http://www.las.ulg.ac.be/activities/programme.pdf). Accessed 22-11-2011.

<sup>59</sup> Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 4.

<sup>60</sup> ZAOGA has published many books, tracts and pamphlets that centre around the theological history of the church (see e.g., Grange Christian Church International

ings and ideas in ZAOGA tracts, booklets and pamphlets that either function as canonical history of the church or specific teachings for the church ministries. This study will not explore all the books, tracts and pamphlets. This is because there is a repetition of ideas and teachings that Guti and his wife capture in *Wise Woman, Wise Man: Man of Integrity* and in their sermons that the research utilizes.

The famous ‘Ten Days’ of fasting and prayer at the beginning (1-10 January) of every year also shows the importance of the print media to ZAOGA. Guti dispatches letters to all ZAOGA F.I.F churches. These letters usually contain the message and theme for the year and items that would be prayed for each particular day of the ‘Ten Days’. Almost every member of the church accesses this pamphlet which acts as prayer guide throughout the year. Some of the books, especially *History of ZAOGA*, are translated into foreign languages (French specifically) so that the sacred history can go as far as possible. It is, therefore, apparent that ZAOGA, currently an international movement, endeavors to be a global movement.

## Evangelism/Missionary Zeal

In this sub-section, I argue that although ZAOGA seeks to fulfill Matthew 28:13 (Jesus’ command to preach the gospel to the end of the earth), the church’s zeal is also informed by global Pentecostal traits. Powered with the understanding that mainline churches have practiced powerless Christianity, the vision of most African Pentecostals is to re-evangelize the entire continent<sup>61</sup> and beyond. The names of the church express its evangelistic orientation. Originally the church was known as Assemblies of God Africa (AOGA). At independence the church’s name

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2011) and discourses of marriage and family-hood. Ezekiel Guti and his wife Eunor have written many books. Although these books are many, there is a lot of repetition of what men and women are expected to do in marriage, in the family (see e.g., *Does Your Marriage Look Like This?*, 1992 pages 34-41 and *Strategies for Saving Marriages for this Generation, Marriage Teachings for Couples and Group Seminars*, 1992, pages 14-17. These teachings on marriage and family in tracts and booklets are repeated in *Wise Woman and Wise Man: Man of Integrity*. These two books capture most of the teachings in ZAOGA tracts, booklets and pamphlets, especially on the ministry and with a bias towards the role of women in sustaining marriages.

<sup>61</sup> See Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 126.

‘metamorphosed into Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA)’.<sup>62</sup> As the church advanced beyond the borders of Zimbabwe, a new name was adapted, ‘Forward In Faith Ministries,’ except in Zambia where it is known as ZAOGA and in Mozambique as Assembleia De Deus Africana (ADDA).

The change of names shows the development and expansion of the church, not only in Zimbabwe, but throughout Africa and overseas. ZAOGA vehicles are written “ZAOGA FIF *yafamba*” (has expanded). Some of the vehicles are written ‘Ezekiel Guti Evangelistic Association’ (EGEA) and these are specific vehicles that are used for evangelistic purposes, at crusades, inside and outside Zimbabwe. This captures the zeal ZAOGA has of expanding the movement. This is well articulated in Article 23: “There shall be a missionary board in ZAOGA that deals with and directs the work of our missionaries sent to foreign countries and those dependent on us.”<sup>63</sup>

Guti always emphasizes that the priority in ZAOGA is to win souls into the kingdom and not making money as presumed by some pastors. ZAOGA has also been established overseas, including in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and Canada, as well as in several countries in Africa. Women are particularly zealous in Evangelism and a large percentage of those engaged in transnational mission in Africa are women, either as single women or pastors’ wives. The pastors’ wives act as a nodal power-point in deploying evangelical power. For example, Eunor moves with a team of women to preach.<sup>64</sup>

ZAOGA’s success is attributed to the emphasis on evangelizing and training the personnel who preach the gospel to the “world”. There is the Child Evangelism ministry which targets preaching to the young generation. All this captures the zeal that ZAOGA has to reach to the nations and that zeal has been effectively realized, mainly by the use of media technologies, which, in Adogame’s words, as new virtual homes, act as

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<sup>62</sup> See David Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn”, 255.

<sup>63</sup> Ezekiel Guti, *ZAOGA Guidance, Rules and Policy of the local and Autonomous Assemblies for the Overseers, Pastors, Elders and Deacons of ZAOGA*, Harare, EGEA, 1992.

<sup>64</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 152.

conduits for disseminating religious ideologies, as means of recruiting new clientele and as developing new visual publics.<sup>65</sup>

One of the best funded ministries in ZAOGA is Foreign Missions. It caters for pastors and evangelists who go out of the country or travel to preach the gospel within and outside Zimbabwe. AMFCC in Glen Norah suburb is ZAOGA's biggest Bible College in Zimbabwe where inter-denominational pastors undergo training. The universities and colleges are targeted because they have been described as "havens of demons of sexual immorality". ZOC and ZAOGA Colleges and High Schools Ministry (ZACOHS) have been established in almost all universities and colleges in Zimbabwe in accordance with Matthew 28:19 which says; "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."<sup>66</sup> ZOC and ZACOHS members are determined to preach the gospel to their peers. 'Winning souls to Jesus' is in the ZOC and ZACOHS' vision statements so they carry out 'door to door witnessing' in the student halls. In their preaching language there is the clear dichotomy of 'us' (born again) and 'them' (not born again). ZOC believes that those who do not belong to the Pentecostal camp are not born again or saved though, they might be members of different Christian denominations. Friday evening services are held in lecture rooms and other students are invited so that they may 'receive Jesus'. They are addressed by born again inter-denominational speakers. ZOC at the University of Zimbabwe and Midlands State University go to preach in neighboring places, especially farms.

At the close of each semester, the first week is devoted to preaching in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. Part of the funding for these trips also comes from ZUPGF who work closely with this ZOC group through a post graduate advisor. This zeal to preach has been emphasized by Guti, who reiterates that many educated people behave as if they have never set foot in school and that many are "leading dirty lives before God."<sup>67</sup> This is the theological justification for targeting the educated. However,

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<sup>65</sup> Afe Adogame, *Visualizing God Online: New Religious Imaginaries, Media Emplacement, Religious Mobility in Africa and the African Diaspora*, 2009, <http://www.google.co.zw/ur/sa>, 22-02-2010, 2.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 28:19, informs the Pentecostal impetus to engage in evangelistic activities in order to win souls to Jesus.

<sup>67</sup> Ezekiel Guti always repeats this message to Univ. ZOC students on Final Years' Party and to University Post Graduates.



it is possible that they are also targeted because they have sound financial footing to finance different ministries. This zeal to evangelize and “in this same mission the passions and ideas behind the Revival in Azusa Street and its transplantation to South Africa animated them.”<sup>68</sup> Different modes of Evangelism have been employed and ZOC members contribute their meager payouts to those who are poor. This has been regarded as an effective way of winning them to Jesus. ZOC appeals for contributions in cash or kind for the Charity Ministry and Voice of Power (VOP) which organizes outings for crusades. Inter-College ‘Get-Together’ meetings are held for the purpose of encouraging members to preach the Gospel to those who are not ‘born again’. Guti emphasizes that every person must convert at least one other person at the end of each year. According to him, the youth are “full of energy” and must be targeted. Some scholars explain the popularity of Pentecostalism in terms of its “aggressive Evangelism” and that a real Pentecostal is by definition an evangelist.<sup>69</sup> Guti and ZAOGA’s evangelistic zeal is informed by global Pentecostalism.

## The Gospel of Faith and Prosperity

Chapter two has already undertaken a review of the literature on the Gospel of Faith and Prosperity. Therefore, I will only draw attention to the central points. Gifford points out that it is difficult to understand the global developments within Christianity without an idea of the faith gospel that also appeared in the boom years of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States.<sup>70</sup> I argue that ZAOGA has been either directly or indirectly influenced by the Faith Gospel embodied in American Pentecostalism, although ZAOGA also expounds a prosperity gospel that is also informed by the local paradigm and concerns. African Pentecostals have their own way of conceptualizing faith and prosperity but some American Pentecostal preachers/evangelists authored faith and prosperity sermons that ZAOGA make use of. Hence, some American faith and prosperity preachers/teachers and intercessors appear to be role models. For example, Guti envies Billy Graham.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 76.

<sup>69</sup> See e.g., Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 1972.

<sup>70</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, 1998, 40.

<sup>71</sup> See, Guti, *The Church and Political Responsibility*, and the section 4.4.5 below.

To realize prosperity after being born again, one should denounce the past. Gifford points out that emphasis on complete break from the past means a person has to leave customs that are considered as sinful and also associations with those who are not ‘converted’ to the faith. They divide the world into two, God and his believers and the devil and his followers. Hence, a ‘convert’ might find it difficult to associate with members of the family who do not subscribe to his/her faith<sup>72</sup>. In this sense, one can argue that although ZAOGA has encouraged communal fellowship through its ministries, it has encouraged individualism through its rhetoric of ‘a complete break from the past’ in order to be successful.

Therefore, it is significant to comment on this notion of “a complete break from the past”. Insights from van Dijk are utilized. A ‘complete break from the past’ operates on two levels, within individual’s personal lifestyles and their engagement with day to day society that may lead the believer to be trapped in moral wrong doing. At a deeper level, it means deliverance from ancestral past because of ancestral curses that come from blood covenants and the past lives of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents are to be inspected for the sins that have been committed.<sup>73</sup> This deliverance therefore, appears to emphasize a form of individuality because of the call to ‘break’ with the past. However, remembering the past in order to deal with it and ‘take control’ of the present appear to point to constant engagement with the past, rendering the notion of ‘complete break’ unintelligible at times. Hence, this break has been seized upon by individuals to ‘enter’ into modernity as they negotiate the past.

Poverty is classified. ZAOGA teachings maintain that there is a phase of lack that Christians undergo as part of God’s spiritual training and that should be treated as normal (note that not all Pentecostals subscribe to this view). Persistent poverty becomes evidence of a curse. Therefore, an individual has to be delivered. Thus, individuals are encouraged to work Talents.<sup>74</sup> Success through working Talents serve different purposes in

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<sup>72</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 59.

<sup>73</sup> Rijk van Dijk, “The Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora”, eds, Andre Corten & Ruth Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2001, 225.

<sup>74</sup> Talents are borrowed from Matthew 25. Informed by gender disparities in formal education and in the employment sector, ZAOGA encourages Talents as a form of entrepreneurship. Women are therefore targeted and are at the forefront in working Tal-

ZAOGA. While it is part of encouraging entrepreneurship, the account is part of Pentecostal deification of founders in order to cultivate total allegiance from members. Such a claim also impacts ZAOGA theology, including songs such as the one that goes, “*Zvakatanga nababa Guti, tose tose tikafara nazvo, nhasi uno tavakufarawo tazobudirira*” (Father Guti initiated, all of us were happy, today we are happy, we are rich). We need to note how Nicholas Benghu who initiated them and Priscilla Ngoma who perfected them are not acknowledged by most ZAOGA members: in fact, the researcher discovered that many members, including some district pastors, do not even know about Benghu and Priscilla Ngoma regarding the subject of Talents.<sup>75</sup>

## Confronting the Past: Spiritual Warfare

In ZAOGA, a believer has to confess the past to the pastors. The language of warfare, even during prayer, includes phrases and imageries like, ‘closing doors, gates, binding, loosing, cursing and commanding in the name of Jesus’. Those who possess objects have to surrender them so that they can be destroyed, which signifies commitment to follow Jesus and as effecting a ‘complete break from the past’. Believers also need to be delivered from occult powers and from a whole range of organizations such as African Independent Churches, Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Catholics.<sup>76</sup> This observation made by Meyer in Ghana resonates well with Pentecostals in Zimbabwe, who demonize African Independent Churches, Catholics and other Christian denominations and religions. ZAOGA offers rituals that are meant to exorcise powers of darkness-deliverance sessions which take many forms (see chapter five).

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ents. The emphasis on ‘Proverbs 31’ woman means women become the target group in ZAOGA. However, the need to finance the ever expanding movement beyond Zimbabwean borders might also explain the emphasis and techniques of encouraging working Talents.

<sup>75</sup> The researcher helped to supervise an AMFFC BA student who wrote about Talents. The student was penalised by the supervisor (a ZAOGA city district pastor) for mentioning Benghu and Ngoma. The supervisor commented on the thesis page, “It is Baba Guti’s vision, no one else!”, 22 May 2011.

<sup>76</sup> See Meyer, “Make a Complete Break from the Past”, 325.

Thus, deliverance is understood as a spiritual warfare which is not easy and is in fact a process.<sup>77</sup>

A person has to be delivered in the following areas: the immediate past, ancestral past, occult bondage and from demonic control or influence.<sup>78</sup> The idea of disconnecting with the past is important in ZAOGA. It has enabled the performance of deliverance rituals, thus attracting large clientele, even from 'outside.' It has attracted those who wish to accumulate as they break from traditional obligations. It also shows the contradictory postures of ZAOGA. The church appears to have propagated a statement of faith which is a brand of American Pentecostalism, whether they are aware of it or not. In the analogy of 'sowing', which is giving and 'reaping', blessings-mostly material-are emphasized. The bases of the faith gospel of prosperity are scriptures like Deuteronomy 28:1-13 and Mark 4. These verses govern the law of 'sowing' and increase. Thus abundance becomes the yardstick to judge one's faith. A prominent ZAOGA businessman, Nicholas Vingirai, declared at the International Youth Conference in 2005 that poverty was a sin before God because "Abraham our father of faith was very rich, therefore his sons must be rich also if they are in line with the will of their father."<sup>79</sup>

Poverty is equated to sin and lack of faith in the God of abundance. This confirms Ukpong's analysis that with the message of abundant life and blessing, Pentecostalism is making material prosperity the yardstick of authentic Christianity.<sup>80</sup> Biri has critiqued this gospel of prosperity, citing the negative consequences of the over-emphasis. She cited the abuse of individuals' money by some leaders when ZAOGA Grange Christian School in Harare was built.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, it is a must to 'give to God' and huge sums of money are raised at Conventions, Conferences and Big Sundays for various purposes. Pastors are showered with welcome and farewell presents. At the end of every year members contribute the

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<sup>77</sup> Guti teaches that ZAOGA churches should run deliverance sessions every week because people need constant deliverance.

<sup>78</sup> Meyer, "Make a Complete Break", 323-325.

<sup>79</sup> Nicholas Vingirai preaching at the ZAOGA International Youth Conference at ZI-PAM, Zvimba, 4-08-2005.

<sup>80</sup> Donatus Ukpong, *Nigerian Pentecostalism: Case Diagnosis and Prescription*, Uyo, Fruities Publ., 2008, 182.

<sup>81</sup> Biri K, "The Gospel of Prosperity and Its Effects upon the Church in Zimbabwe", A paper presented at Zimbabwe Faith Ethics and Philosophy Association, Harare, 23 Oct. 2010.

Birthday Gift to Guti. There is a strong belief among members of ZAOGA that God will bless them if they give the ‘Apostle and Servant’ (Guti). Those who claim and testify to have experienced miracles encourage other members to give their cash in faith and then expect miracles of prosperity in their lives. One of the ZUPF and television personalities emphasized that “if you are stingy, you will become poor”. She testified at ZUPF meeting how she gave to God and she received a lot of material blessings from different people. She challenged ZAOGA Post and Undergraduates by saying:

I have three cars in the garage and the other one was just a cheap gift from God, left by one who was leaving the country. When I go to our farm, my father kills an ox for me because I look after them. He does not do that for his other children who are not born again. I manage because I am blessed by God.<sup>82</sup>

Many people in the church admire proponents of the faith gospel such as Oral Roberts, Kenneth Haggins and Jimmy Swaggart. These are popular American preachers who teach that material prosperity is a sign of faith. ZAOGA encourages individualism which not only enables saving and accumulation but also a process of class formation. The emphasis on total break from the past has enabled many to break their traditional obligations which appear burdensome and prevent accumulating wealth, and the individual is re-socialized to be more industrious and socially mobile.<sup>83</sup> This inevitably has challenged the Shona communalistic ideology based on kinship and appears to have encouraged individualism.

Despite the economic hardships that beset the people of Zimbabwe for years, ZAOGA taught on tithing as a must and that all members had to support all ministries in the church financially. The rationale behind this teaching was that God is supernatural and is a God of ‘impossibilities.’ Despite the economic hardships and loss of jobs by many people, Pentecostal theology emphasized that God did not bless the people when everything was alright, but that he blesses in such crisis moments and economic hardships such as Zimbabwe had been undergoing for his mira-

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<sup>82</sup> Farai Gonzo testifying at ZAOGA Post Graduate Fellowship on 22 June 2005 at Monomotapa Hotel.

<sup>83</sup> See Maxwell, “Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty”, 353-354.

cles to be manifest.<sup>84</sup> This teaching seemed to have worked well for the church because ZAOGA managed to build a new headquarters and a hospital in Waterfalls. Both were completed in early 2010 under very difficult economic conditions through the work of Talents. Despite these achievements, one can charge that the leaders minimized the effects of the adverse social factors within Zimbabwe. Many had lost their jobs through retrenchment and unemployment. The basic salaries of the majority could not cater for basic commodities and rentals.

Despite all the hardships people face, there is an emphasis on tithing and supporting all ministries because “the Jesus who blesses is above the economic situation in Zimbabwe.”<sup>85</sup> This appeared to be a mark of fundamentalism and adaptation of ZAOGA to a global culture of consumer gratification and indifference to poverty and sickness.<sup>86</sup> Guti encouraged all members to use their hands, which led many women in particular to work tirelessly, eager to give testimonies in the church. This gained ZAOGA a place among the so-called elite churches by the critics because of the large amounts of money that they raise from different projects for their church. Most leadership posts are accessed by those who are faithful in their financial contributions, both the rich and poor influential people who always contribute their fortunes to the church.

## Supporting the Ruling Party and Authoritarian Politicians

In this sub-section, I argue that supporting governments and authoritarian politicians is an influence from American Pentecostalism, especially in the light of Guti’s teachings (see below). There has been a general shift in Pentecostal attitude towards political authorities and governments. While in general terms, Pentecostals have been accused of colluding with dictators, there is diversity towards political issues. Others have been politically progressive, opposing oppressive governments.<sup>87</sup> In spite of those differences, it has been pointed out that Pente-

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<sup>84</sup> It is a popular Zimbabwean Pentecostal teaching that Guti and most ZAOGA pastors uphold because of the economic crisis that Zimbabwe has been undergoing since the late 1990s.

<sup>85</sup> Popular teaching on giving in ZAOGA.

<sup>86</sup> See e.g., Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford & Susan D Rose, *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism*, NY, Routledge, 1996.

<sup>87</sup> Droogers, “Globalization and Pentecostal Success”, 47.

costalism is a significant movement for religion and politics.<sup>88</sup> ZAOGA calls for prayer for the ruling party, government, civil servants and all other people on the first day of January during the Ten Days Prayer and Fasting every year. Whether democratic or autocratic, ZAOGA believes that all authority and government come from God, as in Romans 13: 1-2:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but that of God, the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resists the power resist God and they that resist shall receive damnation.

ZAOGA leaders quote 1 Timothy 2:1-2 where it is written that prayers be made for kings and all those in authority. Thus, ZAOGA honours and supports the government of the day. Guti also wrote:

Every church leader must support the government and pray for the government. It is not good for the church leader to take sides in politics because you will not be able to do what Billy Graham does. He prays with any government that comes in and advises any government that comes in because he does not take sides.<sup>89</sup>

There is, however, a minority of Pentecostals that have defended a politically progressive stance and have formed part of the opposition against dictatorships such as those in Chile who took an active dissenting role to the Pinochet regime.<sup>90</sup> Guti urged the church to rally behind President Mugabe when he condemned the homosexuals.<sup>91</sup> The ‘Third *Chimurenga*’ (land invasions through force and violence) that began in 2000 was described as economic warfare in Zimbabwe. White-owned farms were taken by force and as an attempt to re-empower the black Zimbabweans who had been deprived of their land by colonialism. The same process had also challenged the sacrality of land. As pointed out by Sebastian Bakare, land is a birthright of every individual and it has com-

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<sup>88</sup> See e.g., Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism, Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997.

<sup>89</sup> Ezekiel Guti, *The Church and Political Responsibility, Responsibility and Resource Management, Preparation for the next Generation, Pray for Africa to become a United States of Africa*, Harare, EGEA, 1994, 44.

<sup>90</sup> Droogers, “Globalisation and Pentecostal Success”, 47-48.

<sup>91</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Bible and homosexuality in Zimbabwe, see Masiwa Ragies Gunda, *The Bible and Homosexuality in Zimbabwe: A Socio-historical analysis of the political, cultural and Christian argument in the homosexual public debate with special reference to the use of the Bible*, Bamberg, UBP, 2010.

munal dimensions whereby all members of the community are expected to share its resources because it is a gift from God.<sup>92</sup> The aftermath has seen Zimbabwe undergoing harsh economic times because of several factors, including political and economic isolation by other countries. However, corruption by the ruling party elite contributed immensely to the country's economic collapse. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops vehemently condemned this when saying:

We have concluded that the crisis of our country is in essence a crisis of governance and a crisis of leadership apart from being a spiritual and moral crisis. Almost two years after the *Operation Murambatsvina*, thousands of victims are still without a home. That inexcusable injustice has not been forgotten. Land reform programme seven years ago has led many people to be hungry, unemployment which led them to neighboring countries.<sup>93</sup>

However, Guti supported the President's stance by saying '*Toraivo ivhu hariruzi value*' (Grab the land, soil does not lose value).<sup>94</sup> Guti has a strong rural background and is aware of the significance of land among his people, especially the rural folk. No wonder why he supported the government on the Third *Chimurenga*. Guti also wrote that most of problems faced in Africa are predominantly not of Africa's own making, but were due to outside influence.<sup>95</sup> Yet, it is clear that while there are negative legacies of colonialism, Africans bear responsibility.<sup>96</sup> Guti's line of thinking resonates well with Mugabe's political discourses of blaming the West for all the problems that Zimbabwe has experienced. It is indeed a form of escapism. It appears Guti's experiences in the United States had political dimension, namely, the idealization of the homeland and fostering an attitude of attachment. The major criticism against Guti (and other Pentecostal leaders) is not that they supported the grabbing of land (because people in Zimbabwe need land), but that they (and their churches) failed to critique the methods that were used and the social

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<sup>92</sup> Sebastian Bakare, *My Right to Land: In the Bible and in Zimbabwe: A Theology of Land in Zimbabwe*, Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Harare, 1993, 83.

<sup>93</sup> Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, "God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed: Pastoral Letter on the Current Crisis in Zimbabwe, Holy Thursday, 5 Aug. 2007", 7.

<sup>94</sup> Ezekiel Guti's 2003 message to all his churches in Zimbabwe, encouraging them to participate in the "*Third Chimurenga*".

<sup>95</sup> Guti, *The Church and Political Responsibility*, 50.

<sup>96</sup> See Francois Bayart, *The Politics of the Belly*, 1993.



consequences. Guti and his wife Eunor have emphasized the need for black pride, self actualization and not aspiring to copy Western values. To this extent, their ideas resonate with those of Mugabe and his party.

At a crusade in Chibuku Stadium in Chitungwiza, Eunor Guti upbraided people, especially the youth, who strive to imitate Western values by engaging in pre-marital sex and on putting on clothes that expose body parts. She charged: “*Munodirei kutevedzera tsika dzechirungu dziri kuto-vatambudzavo imi muri vatema?*”<sup>97</sup> (Why do you want to imitate white culture? They are troubled by their own culture). The expression of sentiments of nationalism, celebration of blackness and African culture, the need to acquire land as a heritage and not to imitate Western values resonate well with Mugabe and ZANU PF ideology. Ezra Chitando captures this in the following words:

Guti’s ideological formation may be located in the nationalist movement with its emphasis on African liberation in all aspects of life. While he may attack aspects of African traditional religions as idolatry, he upholds the notion of self-sufficiency and is scathing on his attack on European culture and from the 1990s ZAOGA has been keen to be associated with the leadership of ZANU PF.<sup>98</sup>

The course taken by the church against the Western political, social and missionary domination and African nationalism is legitimizing the ruling party’s ideologies of change and transition. As pointed by Maxwell, the teaching on the spirit of poverty and the working of Talents resonates with the ideas of self reliance, indigenous business and black empowerment propounded by the ruling party and state controlled media.<sup>99</sup> The intriguing question which most people in ZAOGA have avoided is the questioning of authority if the leadership is corrupt and unjust. This was the general expectation at a time when Zimbabwe is undergoing hardships that primarily are caused by ineptitude, corruption and misuse of funds by leaders (besides the alleged ‘sanctions’ by the Western countries). Expectations were and remain high that religious leaders would come to the fore-front to condemn corruption perpetrated by ZANU PF supporters and war veterans. This would be similar to what

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<sup>97</sup> Ezekiel Guti at Chibuku Stadium in Chitungwiza discouraging his church from imitating Western culture on 27 Oct. 2003.

<sup>98</sup> Ezra Chitando, “In the Beginning was the Land”: The Appropriation of Religious Themes in the Political Discourses in Zimbabwe, *Africa*, 75 (20), 2005, 237.

<sup>99</sup> David Maxwell, “Delivered From the Spirit of Poverty?”, 359.

the biblical Prophet Nathan did to King David in the book of 2 Kings 17.<sup>100</sup> This applied with greater force to those who were regarded as the President's advisors. The expectations followed the condemnation of the acts by civic society and many members of the public. Many Christians thought that the church would at least voice out her humanitarian concern as public opinion had taken the lead. A worried anonymous Christian expressed these insightful views in the *Daily News*. The letter writer captures the political, social and economic situation on Zimbabwe and the imagination of the majority at the time. The Christian condemned pastors' support for President Mugabe's second wedding which s/he believed was against Christian ethics among many other criticisms. S/He concluded by saying:

...Lastly I would want to bring the attention of pastors, priests and bishops of all denominations that we are waiting for your urgent condemnation of lawlessness, violence and murder of innocent people.<sup>101</sup>

Guti does not regard this as his most pressing responsibility. According to him, Africa's future is not in the hands of politicians, economists or financial institutions. Rather, it is, "in your hands, a man or man of God in prayer,"<sup>102</sup> and many church leaders in ZAOGA point to 11 Chronicles 7:14. The verse calls for humility and prayer before God and turning away from wicked ways in order for God to heal the land. The verse has been used as the basis to intercede in prayer for the nation for restoration of peace, unity and stability in Zimbabwe. Apparently critics have pointed out that the verse does not apply, since it has nothing to do with political obedience (especially corrupt political leaders). Several scholars have noted how the Bible is deployed, even out of context, by religious leaders in Zimbabwe.<sup>103</sup>

At fellowships, people emphasize respect and support for those in authority because "they are ordained by God." However, critical minds are

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<sup>100</sup> See 2 Kings 17.

<sup>101</sup> A worried Dzivaresekwa Christian, in the *Daily News*, Harare, Friday 26 May 2000, 11.

<sup>102</sup> Gutu, *The Church and Political Responsibility*, 80.

<sup>103</sup> See e.g., Ezra Chitando, "If My People..": A Critical Analysis of the Deployment of 2 Chronicles 7:14 During the Zimbabwean Crisis *The Bible and Politics in Africa*, 7, ed. by Ragies M. Gunda & Joachim Kugler, Bamberg, UBP, 2012, 274-289, Ragies Masiwa Gunda & Joachim Kugler, "Introduction", *The Bible and Politics in Africa*, Bamberg, UBP, 7, 2012.

neutralized by powerful leaders in the church who are keen to cite Guti's support for the status quo. Some members of the church claim that Guti advises the President on spiritual matters (although Mugabe seems to be a member of all churches in Zimbabwe!) Some of these members have calendars that have photographs of Guti and the President in their homes, as well as photographs of Eunor with Grace, the President's wife. This is the case in most ZAOGA churches and also at the headquarters in Waterfalls. This display of closeness to Mugabe is Guti's own way of demonstrating his political connections at the highest level. On the other hand, Mugabe seeks to derive political mileage from his association with 'a man of God.' Guti has indicated his ideological affiliation to Mugabe's ideas and approaches openly. When prominent businessman and elder in ZAOGA, Nicholas Vingirai externalized foreign currency at Inter-market Building Society and fled the country, Guti was quoted saying to/asking leaders, "What shall I say to the President if people born again are involved in such dirty deals, yet he has allowed us to serve God freely in this country?"<sup>104</sup> On television, the President has condemned those who claim to be Christians in order to cover up their corrupt behavior. The support to the ruling governments is a way to gain sympathy, search for respect and advantage for their religious activities. The Vice President, John Nkomo, addressed a ZAOGA gathering and gave a long speech praising Guti and ZAOGA for praying for Zimbabwe and also putting Zimbabwe on the international map. Nkomo said:

The government of Zimbabwe stands by you and continues to create a conducive environment. Together we cannot fail. With the church we cannot fail. Deal not only with spiritual and physical healing but also with topical issues such as the purpose of the inclusive government of Zimbabwe to establish peace and stability.<sup>105</sup>

In turn, Guti announced that he saw Bibles in Nkomo's house. He said that this showed that Nkomo was a Christian. Guti declared that he was ordaining Nkomo to be ZAOGA elder in Bulawayo Church (although Nkomo was a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church). Guti also thanked President Mugabe (in absentia) for allowing churches in Zimbabwe to operate freely. Another example that brings out ZAOGA's willingness to be associated with the ruling elite relates to the role played by

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<sup>104</sup> Ezekiel Guti at Pastors Deeper Life Conference, Apr. 2001.

<sup>105</sup> Vice President John Nkomo giving a speech at ZAOGA 50th Grand Jubilee Celebrations at Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium, 22 Aug. 2010.

Grace Mugabe, the first lady. She was invited to the Harare International Conference Centre by ZAOGA in 2002 for the Gracious Women meeting. At the close of the convention she was given a token of appreciation. It is also claimed that the first lady's aunt, who is an overseer in the church, goes to State House with other women for prayers towards national elections for divine peace in Zimbabwe. Support for the government is, therefore, unconditional in ZAOGA.

Yet, another example relates to the highly controversial destruction of houses and informal markets in Zimbabwe's urban areas. "Operation Restore Order" (*Murambatsvina*) took place in May 2005, soon after the Parliamentary elections. The exercise was regarded as a "clean up" because flea markets had become dens of illegal foreign currency deals and that there had developed illegal shacks in many suburbs, which also attracted thieves.<sup>106</sup> The operation displaced many people out of their jobs and accommodation. The most affected were women and children.<sup>107</sup> It was condemned by many people in Zimbabwe and those outside as inhumane.

Again, Guti turned a blind eye, even though many members of his church were affected. Just like the Third *Chimurenga*, it was a noble operation, but the unfair selective criteria and the social consequences called upon religious leaders to intervene. Yet, they remained silent. As if it were not enough for the affected people, some leaders in ZAOGA condemned the disgruntled and pointed that they had simply to pray to God. In the church's point of view, what the government was doing was according to the divine will. The same applies to the exorbitant prices of basic commodities. ZAOGA encourages members to be self-reliant so that God blesses them, instead of condemning those in authority who do wrong. This supports the view that Pentecostals tend to demonize poverty and are blind to economic and social factors that breed poverty. While ZAOGA has supported the ruling party, Guti appears to be an opportunist in two ways. First, he got help from the West but at the same time, he joins Mugabe in castigating the West and challenging the superiority of the white race through the theology of black empower-

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<sup>106</sup> *The Zimbabwe Independent*, Harare, 24 June 2005, 13.

<sup>107</sup> See e.g., Sophia Chirongoma, "An Exploration of the Impact of Operation *Murambatsvina*, Especially on those affected by HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe", Ezra Chitando & Nontando Hadebe, (eds), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva, WCC, 2009, 71-94.

ment and suggesting the superiority of the black race. In *African Apostle*, it is stated that ZAOGA has no founding oversight of a white person, rejects the help of anyone who helps or anyone who has colonial strings attached to the white man.<sup>108</sup> This is evidence of how Guti's teachings resonate with the political discourses of Mugabe that are at times anti white/anti Western.

That stance makes Guti win and develop a cordial relationship with ZANU PF. He thus fills the gap left by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), who have been very vocal against Mugabe and the injustices perpetrated by the ruling elite. Guti, backed by Romans 13, advances the prayer ministry for political leadership and Zimbabwe due to his belief that prayer is the panacea for every challenge.

## Authoritarian and Totalitarian Government

This section argues that authoritarianism is manifest in American Pentecostalism and ZAOGA appears to have borrowed this total and authoritarianism in leadership styles. It seems fit to begin this sub-section by quoting the revealing insights of Gifford. While Gifford makes reference to the authority type of neo-patrimonialism in African states, he aptly describes authority in ZAOGA. He describes patri-monialism as:

...the kind of authority that a father has on his children. In the lower hierarchy are not subordinate officials with defined powers and functions of their own, but retainers whose positions depend on a leader to whom they owe allegiance. The system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties rather than by a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions.<sup>109</sup>

Positions of power cannot be rotated, except under the sanction of Guti himself. The distinction between private and church property can hardly be recognized. Maxwell has also described the hierarchy of ZAOGA in detail. At the apex is Guti who is addressed by various titles such as 'Archbishop', 'Apostle and Servant of God' and his wife as 'Our Mother' and has also assumed the titles, 'Dr' and 'Apostle Eunor.' Guti has also assumed the title 'African Apostle'<sup>110</sup>. This title is significant in an en-

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<sup>108</sup> Erwin, *African Apostle*, 141-142.

<sup>109</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, 119.

<sup>110</sup> Maxwell, "Catch the Cockerel before Dawn", 265.

deavor to unpack the authoritarianism that characterizes ZAOGA. The title portrays Guti as a spiritual father of the entire continent of Africa, going beyond the borders of his Zimbabwean churches. Guti claims that God told him that he would lead many people to heaven. The title also justifies the evangelistic nature of ZAOGA in which Guti always travels to oversee churches in the manner of the Apostle Paul in the Bible. It is also probably why Guti emphasizes teachings on empowerment of the black race. It is important to note that the title ‘African Apostle’ was also given to John Lake who is regarded as the father of Pentecostalism in Africa. Lake was associated with the Zion City of J. Dowie.<sup>111</sup>

Thus, Guti’s designation as the ‘African Apostle’ serves to position him as the spiritual father of Christians, even of other denominations. Mwaura and Parsitau point out that the structures and authority in these movements reveals not an egalitarian structure influenced by a democratic spirit, but a hierarchical structure that invests a lot of authority on the founder bishop or pastor and is problematic for ‘ordinary’ adherents who are deprived of creative imagination, capacity for dialogue, critical spirit and an increase in appeals to obedience, submission, renunciation and humility.<sup>112</sup> Guti’s claim to have had several revelations in Ngaone and Vumba and the appropriation of the title can be understood within the framework of power contestation that characterizes the early years of ZAOGA. It is also an outcome of the desire to command unquestioned authority, given the fragmentation that often characterizes Pentecostal movements. These claims help him to monopolize his hold on ZAOGA and facilitate the exclusion of his co-founders. This fits Daneel’s description of the AIC leader but also applicable to ZAOGA (see chapter two). Guti assumes the status of a chief. Under him are bishops, overseers, pastors, elders and deacons. Each group reports to those who are immediately above their post. Maxwell rightly notes that the respect that is given to Guti is almost like that which is given to the President.<sup>113</sup> One critic in the church also claimed that opposing Guti is just as good as opposing ZANU PF because, “you can’t win.”<sup>114</sup> This can be confirmed by analyzing the similarities in leadership style. Songs have been composed in praise of President Mugabe. In ZAOGA it is not praise to Guti

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<sup>111</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, 119.

<sup>112</sup> Mwaura & Parsitau, “Perceptions of Women’s Health and Rights”, 178.

<sup>113</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel before Dawn”, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Tawanda Murera, ZAOGA Baines City Assembly 2 Sep. 2009.

but a plea to God to guide, protect and give him wisdom to guide the church. Some of the songs include;

<i>Muranda wenyu Ezekiel</i>	Your servant Ezekiel
<i>Ndimi munomuziva Jehovah</i>	You know him Jehovah,
<i>Baba muchengetei x2</i>	Look after him Jehovah <sup>115</sup>
<i>Jehovah,</i>	

*Madzimai akamirira baba Guti* (repeating the same words).<sup>116</sup> (Women represent Ezekiel Guti wherever they are/ women ‘wait for’ Ezekiel, to welcome him or to hear from him.)

The church designed regalia that had images of Ezekiel and Eunor Guti, in preparation for the Jubilee celebrations in 2010. It is always stated, “If it were not for Ezekiel we would have been lost; in darkness or ‘wandering in the world.” Thus great joy accompanies the arrival of Guti at ZAOGA meetings (see appendix 6). This seems to challenge the biblical notion of God’s grace and displaces God’s act of love and salvation offered to humanity by elevating Guti to the role of having saved people through the founding of ZAOGA. ZAOGA regards prayer seriously (see also appendix 5). Every Sunday, during the time of devotion prayer and before the days’ work at the headquarters in Waterfalls, members pray for Guti and his family. When Guti travels in Zimbabwe, he is escorted by bishops, elders and other influential people who are members of the church. Maxwell puts it across lucidly: “Guti’s authority is boosted by civic ceremonial displays, the motorcade, the staged entry and exit, the Birthday Gift and the globalization of his photo portrait,”<sup>117</sup> which members claim expels demons. Biri has likened contributions of the Birthday Gift to *Zunde ramambo*. *Zunde ramambo* refers to contributions that are made to the traditional king by his subjects, mainly in the form of grain or cattle. The king would distribute these to the needy families, widows and orphans<sup>118</sup>. In ZAOGA it is claimed that Guti distributes these to the needy churches especially the Forward in Faith churches (ZAOGA outside Zimbabwe).

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<sup>115</sup> ZAOGA devotional song.

<sup>116</sup> ZAOGA song; meaning depends on the occasion.

<sup>117</sup> Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel before Dawn”, 265.

<sup>118</sup> Biri, “The Silent Echoing Voice”, 2012, 51.

The regalia that have images of the leader (Mugabe) are popular in ZANU-PF and ZAOGA appeared to have borrowed this concept from the political field. The elevation of the leader to a ‘Messiah’ was also a defining feature of ZANU-PF where the slogan, “*VaMugabe chete chete!*” (Mugabe only)<sup>119</sup> confirms his uncontested position. According to Maxwell, successful businessmen, family members and those from the Ndau sect occupy special posts in the church, an issue which was attacked way back by *Parade* in 1996.<sup>120</sup> The criticism seems to be true in view of Guti’s brothers, cousins, son, sons-in-law, wife and many other relatives who occupy strategic and important positions in the church. Some members of the church defend that by arguing that the Ndau people managed to capture the vision of Guti right from the beginning. The growth and expansion of the church has seen some veteran leaders quitting ZAOGA to form their own churches because of several reasons. Authoritarianism has often been pointed out by critics. However, when such an incident occurs in ZAOGA leaders are not comfortable to disclose the details (see earlier section in this chapter).

Guti has the final say on matters which intrigue the ‘Day to Day Council’ that examines and judges cases in ZAOGA. If he is out of the country, serious issues are shelved until he comes back. Mugabe does the same, and this includes graduating ceremonies at all state universities, for ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe. It is emphasized that there is need to pray for Guti so that God gives him wisdom since all important decisions and solving problems throughout established churches await him. God is addressed as the ‘God of Ezekiel’. It is, therefore, sustainable to charge that ZAOGA is a “cult” sustained by a heavily edited sacred history in which Guti stood out ‘as the sole agent in the movement’s past and the present.’<sup>121</sup> The study agrees with Maxwell’s depiction of ZAOGA as a ‘cult’ in the sense that the church cannot survive without the leader who overshadows almost all activities within the movement. The heavily regulated and bureaucratic nature of ZAOGA is typical of American Pentecostalism which is authoritarian and so much centralized (in the sense that no decisions can be made without Guti’s sanction and approval),

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<sup>119</sup> See e.g. Ezra Chitando, “In the Beginning was the Land”: The Appropriation of Religious Themes in The Political Discourses in Zimbabwe, *Africa* 75, (20), 2005.

<sup>120</sup> See e.g., David Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel before Dawn”, 265-266.

<sup>121</sup> Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 4.



where the founders of ministries have the final authority in all the matters.

ZAOGA *Guidance, Rules and Policy of the Local Assemblies* also show Guti's unquestioned authority and powers. Article 10 says that, "The founder/President shall exercise all powers which are not delegated to the Executive concerning any matter".<sup>122</sup> The church's sacred history has probably given rise to this authoritarian nature of ZAOGA because 'Guti alone and not with any other person' has founded ZAOGA and he teaches and instructs all ministries (see for example, appendix 7). This exclusivist narrative, dating back to Mutema Ngaone village in Chipinge and Vumba mountains where he stayed for a while gives Guti exclusivist claims over the movement. Guti teaches that in Marondera he endured hardships such as hunger in obedience to God. While there are bishops, overseers (appointed by Guti himself) and pastors, Guti appears to have looked for an ecclesiastical model that left him towering over the church and protectionist henchman surrounding him and occupying high offices. The 'narratives' outside the city of Salisbury (Harare) bolster this exclusivism. Consequently, this appears to have given rise to the construction of ZAOGA as a family or personal property. No outsider can question or contest any development or decision in the movement if Guti has sanctioned it. Thus, ZAOGA is linked "through numerous capillaries of patronage and influence"<sup>123</sup> to Guti, especially pastors, who get a share of Guti's favors. The naming system in ZAOGA deserves critique because it is an area that appears to display authoritarianism and at the same time the influence and significance of Shona naming system.

## The Naming System in ZAOGA

The significance of pursuing the naming system in ZAOGA is threefold. First, it is to establish the patterns of continuity from Shona religion and culture. Second, it enables an assessment of the influence of American Pentecostalism. Third, in assessing both continuity from Shona religion and culture and the influence of American Pentecostalism, it unravels aspects of authoritarianism. Guti has localized his church by capturing

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<sup>122</sup> ZAOGA *Rules and Policy: Local Assemblies*, Harare, EGEA, 1990, 3.

<sup>123</sup> See Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, London, Longman, 1993, 15-179.

the name of Zimbabwe. This emphasis on the names shows “the new development that encompasses the growth of self-awareness and selfhood of local Christian communities, shaped by enduring sectarian tendencies”.<sup>124</sup> This is in line with what Verstraelen calls self discovery or realization.<sup>125</sup> Guti has emphasized local presence, negating the foreignness of the church in order to show that the worship of God is incarnated in the Shona culture. ZAOGA is referred to as *chechi yababa* Guti (Guti’s church). Members of the church address God as “God of Ezekiel Guti” in contrast to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Bible.

Guti has written a book to justify that address because there has been criticism that members of the church worship him. Guti argues that he is an “African Apostle” and that there is nothing wrong in contextualizing the word of God because he is the leader who was raised by God to lead people in Zimbabwe, just like the patriarchs in the Bible who were raised by God to lead the children of Israel.<sup>126</sup> Guti further argued that ZAOGA did not see Abraham but sees him. Consequently, they have to acknowledge him through praying to the “God of Ezekiel.” ZAOGA hospital has been named after Guti’s mother, Dorcas. It is referred to as Mbuya Dorcas Hospital. Remembering and honoring the dead and naming descendants after them is significant among the Shona. Guti’s mother is elevated in ZAOGA through constant reference of her name and appreciation of her role as a woman who bore “the man of God.” It appears that this parallels ancestor veneration in Shona religion and culture. Thus, it becomes difficult to distinguish between appreciating her role in Guti’s life and venerating her as an ancestor. These are marks of authoritarianism that increases Guti’s hold on the movement.

We note the significance of naming system among the Shona whereby one communicates thoughts and feelings through naming. In addition, Guti’s name, Handinawangu (I do not have my own), has been interpreted theologically to mean that Guti loves everyone and that this is why God chose him to be the founder of ZAOGA and the zeal he has to preach the gospel.<sup>127</sup> Yet, the name could have been given out of the tensions that characterize Shona families that are polygamous. Chil-

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<sup>124</sup> David Maxwell, “Catch the Cockerel before Dawn”, 256.

<sup>125</sup> Frans J. Verstraelen, *Christianity in a New Key*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1996, 74.

<sup>126</sup> Ezekiel Guti in his letter to ZAOGA Churches, 2004.

<sup>127</sup> Erwin, *African Apostle*, 11.

dren's names often brought out the rivalries and parental expectations.<sup>128</sup> As it is often known that the husband might favor other younger wives, the possibility is that Guti's father might have communicated the message that he loved all the wives and their children equally. This name has been interpreted and taught in ZAOGA sermons as proof that Guti was chosen to found the movement because he loves all people. This further discredited core-founders because there is no mention of the part that they played in the founding of the movement.

The naming system suggests that ZAOGA and all properties are Guti's personal property. This includes Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University in Bindura (ZEGU), Ezekiel Guti Farm in Harare and Ezekiel Guti Primary School in Mashonaland East province. This gives Guti absolute control, monopoly and hold over the movement. It appears the naming system has been deliberate in order to deal with succession issues (that linger because of Guti's age at the time of writing), creating a dynasty. Thus, the naming system in ZAOGA appears to reflect a bias towards the Shona naming system. However, this naming system is not foreign to American Pentecostalism. Patriarchs of Pentecostalism and their descendants have also named their churches or ministries after themselves. For example, Oral Roberts founded Oral Roberts Ministries, Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association and Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. One wonders whether or not Ezekiel Guti Evangelistic Association and the establishment of a University is an imitation of Oral Robert's exploits. Kenneth Haggins Ministries (Kenneth Haggins went to Oral Roberts University), Kenneth Copeland has established Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Jimmy Swaggart has Jimmy Swaggart Ministries among many others. The American Tom Deuschle has established Celebration Ministries International in Zimbabwe. Instead of naming the movement, several apartments of Celebration Ministries have the name 'Deuschle', for example, Deuschle Suite and Deuschle Lounge. Given the transnational and global character of Pentecostalism, Guti's studies at Gordon Lindsay's Christ for the Nations Institute made him vulnerable to popular ideologies in American Pentecostalism especially, the idea of consolidating power.

Since names designate ownership, the consolidation of power over the movement through the naming system sourced both from the Shona traditional paradigm and also influence of American Pentecostalism

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<sup>128</sup> Pongweni, *What's in a Name?* 24-25.

appear to be working in Guti's favor. Because his only son's name is Ezekiel, his grandson is also named Ezekiel and there is a lot of speculation that Guti might be in favor of his grandson to take over the movement.<sup>129</sup> However, this might be a difficult move given the age of Ezekiel III and given the fact that some co-founders are still alive and many who have joined and contributed to the movement for many years. Nonetheless, the significance of this lies in the fact that the move to position a successor adapts to traditional forms of leadership patterns.

If we examine most American tele-evangelists, they are founders of almost all ministries in the church and portrayed as gifted in almost every area of life. For example, they are teachers, evangelists, healers who have established 'healing colonies'/schools and pioneered social activism. Oral Roberts and J. G Lake Ministries are good examples. This is significant because no member of the church can claim authenticity to any ministry in the movements. Thus, attention and focus of the activities rotates around the founding figure. This confirms Anderson's observation that names in South African Zionist/Apostolic churches mediate the influence of the founder.<sup>130</sup> This also confirms and fits Robbins' description that Pentecostalism focuses on the authority of the founding pastors, restored and embraced the authoritarianism of the traditional popular religion, becoming a "Catholicism without a priest."<sup>131</sup>

## Bible Colleges

Guti always says that he has hunger for lost souls to come to the kingdom of God and it is only through training people to equip them with the word of God that will help further the gospel. He has established Bible colleges in different parts of the region, with the most popular being in the Glen Norah suburb in Harare, AMFCC (see appendix 4) and an affiliate of Rice University of America. Other Bible colleges are found in Chiredzi and Nampula in Mozambique. It was announced that ZAOGA has managed to establish five Bible colleges within fifty

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<sup>129</sup> There is a lot of speculation in ZAOGA after Guti ordained his grandson Ezekiel III at one of the Deeper Life Conferences in 2006 and informally declared that the boy would take over leadership in ZAOGA.

<sup>130</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 2000, 40.

<sup>131</sup> Joel Robbins, "Globalisation of Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, 2004, 134.

years.<sup>132</sup> Bible studies trainings in several districts are established and those who undergo training graduate at AMFCC College. District Bible studies are open to all members of the church every Wednesday. Perhaps Guti embraced the idea from the training institution, Dallas, where he trained and visits often. These visits have led to Guti's contact with influential people in the Pentecostal world, for example, Mrs. Gordon Lindsay, President of Christ for Nations Institute and Jerry Harner the Dean of Biblical Studies at CBN University.<sup>133</sup> The exposure in the United States could have led to both direct and indirect contact with either precursors of Pentecostalism or their teachings. It is also quite interesting to note that Guti is depicted as "African Apostle", the designation of John G Lake. While it points to the quest for monopoly in a bid to counter achievements by pioneers of Pentecostalism, it has undercurrents of black consciousness and deliberate rejection of Western religious hegemony.

However, while some processes in ZAOGA can be attributed to Guti's exposure to American Pentecostalism, as reflected in the aspects discussed above, this study takes a middle path. It has to be admitted that Guti has demonstrated remarkable creativity in appropriating these influences. It is true that Guti is influenced by/borrows from global Pentecostalism, but he adjusts the beliefs/material to reflect his own context/reality. He is not "blind" in his appropriation of external influences. This is where Guti and ZAOGA leaders have demonstrated their capabilities of contextualizing the Gospel which in one way or the other facilitated the resilience of Shona traditional religion and culture in the church.

## Conclusion

The above analysis shows that it is vital to give attention to external links in the analysis of African Pentecostalism. ZAOGA draws both material and ideological resources from the American-dominated global born again movement, although it casts these in local idioms. ZAOGA's capacity for self renewal has partly been a result of influence of modernity

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<sup>132</sup> Washington Rupapa announcing at ZAOGA 50th Grand Jubilee Celebrations at Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium, 21 Aug. 2010.

<sup>133</sup> Takavarasha, *The Remained Unspoken*, 1-2.

and constant contact with American Pentecostals, often claimed as new revelations from God through Guti by some members. The influence of American Pentecostalism on Guti and his church is important. However, its magnitude or extent is going to be assessed against Shona religion and culture in order to establish its resilience among the Pentecostals. While the American influence is significant, Guti's past seems equally important in terms of influencing the beliefs and practices of ZAOGA. The theological narratives surrounding Guti's past form and inform ZAOGA values, their dispositions and how they see Guti and the church. The next chapter proceeds to examine ZAOGA's contextualization of the Christian faith in the context of Shona religion and culture.



## 5 | ZAOGA and Shona Religion and Culture: Contextualisation of Christian Faith

### Introduction

The previous chapter examined the significance and influence of Guti's background to ZAOGA and considered the location of ZAOGA within the broader perspective. These included the global Pentecostal movement, examining the rise of Guti and ZAOGA and how these have interacted with American Pentecostalism. This chapter builds on this and raises the question of contextualization by exploring selected themes in Shona religion and culture. This is done in order to expose how Guti and ZAOGA have contextualized some aspects of the Christian faith.

The word contextualization has diverse connotations and meanings but in this study, it means to make the message meaningful, relevant, persuasive and effective within a respondent culture,<sup>1</sup> (see chapter one). The aspects of Shona religion and culture are examined in order to establish how they have been re-packaged by ZAOGA. Chapter three provided an analysis of selected Shona beliefs and practices. In this chapter, these Shona beliefs and practices are examined in the context of ZAOGA in order to establish their resilience among the Pentecostals.

The following themes have been considered:

- a. Value of words prior to death or on deathbed
- b. Avenging spirits
- c. The role, status and significance of women
- d. Belief in unnatural events
- e. Belief in witches and witchcraft
- f. liturgy and salvation

As the resilience of the above themes is established, the two underlying questions guiding the analysis are: what is the attitude of ZAOGA towards the value of words spoken prior to death, avenging spirits, witches and witchcraft, unnatural events and what actual difference has ZAOGA made in upholding and defending the integrity of women? On liturgy

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<sup>1</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 21.



and salvation, I assess the significance of Shona traditional religion and culture in shaping ZAOGA liturgy and the conception of salvation. In this way the resilience of the indigenous religion and culture can be assessed through establishing how ZAOGA has negotiated the 'old' in their contextualization of the Gospel.

## Value of Words Spoken Prior to Death or on Deathbed

In the earlier chapter (chapter three), it was noted that the Shona value the words spoken by a dying person and that they do not take for granted the spoken word or break a verbal oath as a verbal last testament of a dying person. The words would not be subtracted, added or qualified because they are powerful. Then there is need to establish whether or not in the Bible we encounter the same value that is attached to the words spoken by a dying person. The reference to the Bible is significant because ZAOGA claims that their teachings are solely derived from the Bible and this claim is over-emphasized. In the Old Testament King, David's last words were that Solomon his son should succeed him on the throne (I Kings 1:30-2:9). From an analytical perspective of Israelite tradition, Solomon was not supposed to be the heir because he was not the oldest living son of David but Adonijah.<sup>2</sup> However, the last words of the king concerning the heir were carried out. Also, Shimei had cursed David (I Kings 2) and King David gave a decree on the death bed to revenge his enemy Shimei. People valued the last words of David and his will was carried out and Solomon became king (but against the authentic Israelite tradition of installing the oldest son) and Shimei was killed. This is because of the value that is attached to the last testament of a dying person in Israelite culture.

Guti has also taught that in the traditional religion and culture, people value the last words spoken by a dying person and treat them as sacred. Guti regrets that it is not so among Christians because they do not value the last words that Jesus commanded when he was about to die.<sup>3</sup> According to Guti, the last words of Jesus were expressed in the command to love one another. However, many Christians do not value those words. Guti declared that he would not stop preaching the message of

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<sup>2</sup> See the full details of Israelite culture and the full story in the Bible, particularly I Kings-2 Kings.

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel Guti teaching at Deeper Life Conference at AMFCC in Glen Norah, Apr. 2004.

love until people practice it.<sup>4</sup> Guti has always made reference to John 15:17 where Jesus gave his disciples the last commandment, “This is the new commandment that you love one another as I have loved you” as the greatest of all things. Guti also quotes scriptures like John 3:16 which say that God so loved the world that he gave it his only son Jesus, as well as 1 Corinthians 13 which depicts love as the greatest of all the things. For Guti, this is the core of the gospel of Jesus that he emphasized when he was about to die.

Pursuing the aspect of love as the last words that Jesus commanded his disciples, Guti teaches that if one loves one’s neighbor, he/she has to desire to see him or her prospering.<sup>5</sup> In pursuit of this, members are encouraged to give offerings to those who do not have in the church, so that they would be blessed and prosper together as the body of Christ.<sup>6</sup> It is selfish to give offerings to God and ignore one who has nothing to give because the purpose of giving is for God to bless the ones who give (“give and it shall be given unto you”). According to Guti, God told him that his church had excelled in working hard, supporting the ministries and in evangelizing but that it lacked the important aspect of love that Jesus commanded when he was about to die.<sup>7</sup> In order to demonstrate that he pays allegiance to the last words commanded by Jesus to love one another, Guti claims that he uses money from the ‘Birthday Gift’ and other offerings to buy ZAOGA F.I.F mission houses, to meet the travel expenses and to give to those who are in need. Guti encourages members to love and take care of orphans, the needy and widows. In order to realize this, ZAOGA has established children’s homes in Zimbabwe and Big Sundays for single ladies and Child Evangelism, where money is raised for these ministries.

One critical observer of ZAOGA admitted that it is the only Pentecostal church that has touched people from the grassroots level and continues to demonstrate love by being sensitive to the poor, widows and the needy as compared to other Pentecostals in the country.<sup>8</sup> Many informants showed that they agreed with Guti’s teaching. The following examples

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<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel Guti preaching in Harare Gardens at ‘Deliverance Expo’ on 5 Apr. 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel Guti on Ezekiel T.V on 3 Jan. 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel Guti teaching at Deeper Life Conference at AMFCC, Glen Norah, 22 Apr. 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Guti, teaching at Deeper Life Conference, Harare, AMFCC April, 22 Apr. 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Munetsi Ruzivo, Univ. of Zimbabwe, Harare, 24 March 2012.

below are interviews that were conducted in relation to Guti's emphasis on the significance of words spoken prior to death. They confirm the line of thinking of the members of the church concerning the value of words spoken prior to death.

One elder said:

A person dying is already saying farewell and once s/he breathes his/her last, he/she is no longer your relative. Whatever is said must be done because *ingozi* (avenging spirit) if you do not, especially *amai* (mother). She is not your relative so what the man of God (Guti) teaches about valuing the last testament of a dying person it is important.<sup>9</sup>

His fear was based on the belief that once a person dies, he/she he becomes unpredictable and can be harmful. This finding gets affirmation in E. B. Idowu's explanation. He says that it is an obligation that children should always respect their parents in this life; how much more when they are dead?<sup>10</sup> The view finds further affirmation by findings gathered during counseling sessions at ZAOGA Baines city assembly church in Harare.

One young man complained to the counselor that his mother was very nagging and as a result he decided to move away from home. The mother told him not to set his feet at her funeral. This young man panicked because his mother's words scared him as he took them seriously, especially since the mother had vowed that it would not go well with him for the rest of his life. Essentially, he was afraid of the curses pronounced upon his life by the mother.

The counselor challenged the young man for disrespecting and being impatient with his mother. She quoted Ephesians 6:2-3 which says that; "Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise) that it may be well with thee and thou may live long on earth." She further drew from the Shona culture by reminding the young man that if his mother died an angry woman, he would bear the negative consequences and not prosper in life. She then implored him to go and ask for forgiveness.<sup>11</sup> When members of the church explain, they are

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Jameson Mutepfa, Harare, 8 Oct. 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Bolaji Idowu, quoted by R. C. Mitchell, *African Primal Religions*, Illinois, SCM Pr., 1973, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Counseling session observed at Baines City Assembly, Harare on 10 Feb. 2010.

always drawing examples from their past experiences or people they know about the consequences of not respecting traditional beliefs and practices. One notes that the traditional belief regarding the value of words spoken prior to death remains significant and accommodated in ZAOGA. Interviews and testimonies with some members of ZAOGA on Campus at the University of Zimbabwe indicated that the respondents also attach value to the words spoken by a dying person. The response and testimony below is self explanatory:

Jesus did not teach anything that was totally new. When Jesus gave the new commandment to love one another before he died, he was actually setting an example to all people that they should value the last words spoken by anyone who is about to 'depart'. If this belief existed before Jesus, he was simply emphasizing what was already existent and expected in society. The good thing is that, even among *isu vana Samaz* (referring to the Manyika tribe) we believe it *saka Jesu aitaura zviru mumap medu*. (Jesus taught what we believe as Manyika people). Being a Christian means I am at an advantage because both my culture and Jesus are my teachers.<sup>12</sup>

We can note both acknowledgement and affiliation to the traditional belief and at the same time to what Jesus taught. The informant insists that these are not contradictory but that they are in perfect harmony. Another prominent businessman in Emerald Hill, Harare, gave two testimonies during a Sunday service. He narrated that he was the most favored son-in-law to his mother-in-law. The mother-in-law emphasized that she wanted him to buy a coffin for her and to meet all funeral expenses in order to demonstrate the last act of love to her when she died. The businessman told the church congregation that he made sure he bought the coffin and met all the funeral expenses by himself at the mother-in-law's funeral.<sup>13</sup> It appears that this man still held on to the Shona traditional belief of valuing the last testament of a dying person.

ZAOGA members interviewed drew their teachings from both religions. Shona religion and culture offers something that is not unique. It echoes biblical narratives in the Old Testament. If the two religions share beliefs that resonate, then it means that ZAOGA continues to source from the traditional paradigm. It is worth noting how Guti has managed to

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Kenny Masara, ZOC Member, Harare, Univ. of Zimbabwe 7 Feb. 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Lovemore Makaza giving a testimony at a Sunday Service, No 6 Assembly, Emerald Hill, ZAOGA Marlborough District, 28-08-2010.

exploit the Shona traditional belief in the value of the spoken word by a dying person and couch it into his proclamation of the Christian gospel in a way that ZAOGA Christians are familiar with. It appears most Christians did not find it hard to accept Guti's teaching because it is also part and parcel of Shona culture. In the light of this, one might be challenged to re-evaluate the contribution that Shona culture has made to the lives of many Christians amidst the adversarial stance towards it and the claim of a 'total break from the past' by Pentecostal Christians. We would expect Guti and members of the church to quote from the Bible, but almost all of them seem to be interested in drawing their examples and arguments from Shona religion and culture.

It is, therefore, necessary to find out whether Guti and his church are not aware of the biblical culture. Are they more indebted to the Bible or to the indigenous religions and cultures? The fact that the informants drew their examples from Shona cultural beliefs should not be taken for granted. It seems to be a pointer to the value that they still ascribe to Shona religion and culture in their lives. Either, the Shona belief is pregnant with Christian meanings or there is a commonality that runs through the two religions or it can be both. In the following section, I examine ZAOGA's response to *ngozi* (avenging spirits).

### **Belief in Avenging Spirits (*Ngozi*)**

In chapter three it was pointed out that *ngozi* is one of the most feared spirits among the Shona and that rituals are carried out to appease the angry spirit. This subject is one of the most controversial issues among the Shona as it is part of the divisive subject of the theology of the dead within Christian circles. Different people define *ngozi* in various ways. Some believe it is the spirit of the person who has been murdered which comes back to seek revenge to the offender.<sup>14</sup> Others believe this spirit comes to punish the wrongdoer or members of his (mainly the culprits are male) family by causing illness or death.<sup>15</sup> However, others insist that only people who would have reached the marriage stage (mature age) can come back as avenging spirits.<sup>16</sup> An avenging spirit can there-

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<sup>14</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 2007, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion*, 41.

<sup>16</sup> Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion*, 41.

fore be defined as an aggrieved spirit of a dead person which comes back to seek revenge upon the wrongdoer by causing illness, suffering, misfortune or even death to the offender's family.<sup>17</sup> This is confirmed by Bourdillon when he says that such a spirit usually punishes the individual (wrongdoer) through his family by causing a succession of deaths followed by a serious illness in other members of the family.<sup>18</sup>

Among the Shona, particularly for a murder, a large fine in cattle must be paid to the family or bride-price payment when the grievance concerns debts.<sup>19</sup> It should be noted, however, that the phenomenon of avenging spirits (positively acknowledged as avenging power(s) among the Shona) is widely denounced and regarded as demons (evil spirits) within Pentecostal circles. Many pastors admit the reality of sickness and deaths but remain adamant that *ngozi* is not real. However, the researcher's inquiry shows mixed feelings about *ngozi* among ZAOGA pastors, other leaders and members of the church. For example, one informant who is a pastor said:

There is nothing like *ngozi*. They are demons which disguise themselves as the dead person because demons can imitate a dead person since they know everyone and the life of that person before he or she died.<sup>20</sup>

This pastor's view represents that of many ZAOGA Christians. The premise for that claim is Psalms 6:9 which say that the dead know nothing and have no relationship with the living. They argue that demons take advantage of the people's beliefs and expectations. They then disguise themselves as the deceased person through imitating what s/he used to do while s/he was alive. However, many ZAOGA Christians, including some pastors, seem to deny the existence of *ngozi* theoretically, yet believe in it. Bishop Christopher Chadoka, one of the prominent pastors in ZAOGA and close to Guti, was quoted by an informant in Kariba as having said that there is no person who is better than one who comes to church after solving all his or her problems. He/ She will be a better Christian.<sup>21</sup> Chadoka was not clear on the type of problems that

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<sup>17</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 233.

<sup>18</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 233.

<sup>19</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 233.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with pastor George Bhubho, No 3 Eastern Highlands, 18 Sep. 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Tsitsi Sampakaruma, Kariba, 3 July 2001.

people need to solve before coming to Jesus. However, some Shona Christians secretly perform the appeasement rituals. Some go out of the church and come back to join the church after solving their problems. This seems to be confirmed by one informant in Kariba who quoted those same words by Chadoka as she claimed that she strongly believed in the existence of *ngozi*.<sup>22</sup> Another pastor interviewed in Harare confidently declared that:

...*ngozi* is real among the Shona. It does not matter how much we pray. The solution is to carry out necessary appeasing rituals then one can serve God with a clean conscience. I know that when we are on the pulpit we want to give the impression that *ngozi* is easy to handle...<sup>23</sup>

He further gave examples of the cases of *ngozi* that he knew and declared: “*Tiri vanhu vatema, chokwadi Jesu anotakura mitoro but wengozi musatamba nawo*. It does not matter *kuti tingaite nharo dzakadini, inonzi ngozi*”<sup>24</sup> (We are blacks/Africans, Jesus bears burdens but *ngozi* is deadly. We might argue but *ngozi* is deadly).

In the Eastern Highlands, one ZAOGA elder expressed her confusion because of what was taught by their pastors. According to her, during Bible study, one came and argued that there was no *ngozi*. However, another pastor came and taught that *ngozi* exist and that if the affected members were Christians, they have to go and perform the traditional rituals of appeasement. Guti’s teaching on the subject of *ngozi* seems to create some problems that warrant further analysis. Guti teaches that *ngozi* does not exist because a dead person awaits judgment. However, because the murder is wrong and the culprit has sinned before God, there is need to go and acknowledge responsibility and ask for forgiveness.<sup>25</sup>

Many ZAOGA Christians who acknowledge Guti’s teaching defend it by claiming that the premise of the argument is that, one apologizes to the affected living members but not to the dead person. According to these

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Tsitsi Sampakaruma, Kariba, 3 July 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with a ZAOGA anonymous pastor, Harare, 22 Feb. 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with elder Stanley Mwatsiya at No 3 Assembly Eastern Highlands, 14 Dec. 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Guti teaches his church that the so-called avenging spirits are deceptive spirits because when a person dies, s/he awaits judgement and cannot come back to haunt the living.

respondents, the dead gains nothing from the token (a virgin girl) as it is commonly believed and practiced in Shona culture. Some questions can be raised in response to this teaching and arguments surrounding it when we draw an analogy with beliefs and practices among the Shona.

In the Bible, the first murder story is that of Cain and Abel in Genesis chapter four. T.H. Gaster throws some light on this event. He points out that 'blood is life' and it is in this respect an alternative to the spirit which gives life. Abel's blood cries from the ground therefore, it can be argued that it is his spirit or ghost calling for vengeance.<sup>26</sup> However, the ghost of Abel is not alluded in the biblical narrative, but the blood. The idea of the blood of a murdered person demands satisfaction is attested to in the Bible. In both the Ancient and Modern Near East Palestinian Arabs believe that when man's blood seeps into the ground, a special spirit arises, known as 'the lie-in-want' (*rasad*) which haunts the spot and can be heard every evening.<sup>27</sup> The Israelites also have the legend that the blood of the murdered priest Zechariah (II Chronicles 24:20-22) continued to bubble up.<sup>28</sup> The above verses give the implication that the spirit of a person who is murdered does not rest but in some way or the other continues to intrigue those who are living. The Bible does not talk of appeasing *ngozi* the way the Shona people conceive the aspect but that God will impute the blood of the innocent Abel upon Cain. If God would impute that on the perpetrators then that means that it is totally different from the Shona concept of redressing (*kuripa*) the crime. While the study does not intend to dismiss Israelite conception of the 'calling blood', it critiques ZAOGA's teaching on avenging spirits.

Research shows that the teaching in ZAOGA is based on Psalms 115:17 'the dead do not praise God and know nothing', but seems not to engage the above passages in the Bible that appears to be important on the subject of murder and the consequences. This therefore, calls us to be critical of the faith of the Pentecostal believers whose theologies are based on selective scriptures to suit their desired agenda, which normally aligns with cultural dictates.

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<sup>26</sup> Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth and Legend and Custer in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir J.G Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament*, London, Gerald Duckworth, 1969, 23, 65.

<sup>27</sup> Gaster, *Myth and Legend and Custer in the Old Testament*, 1969, 65.

<sup>28</sup> Gaster, *Myth and Legend and Custer in the Old Testament*, 66.



Therefore the question that can be raised is: if Guti and members of his church are basing their conception of *ngozi* from the Bible, have they made references and explanations from it? It is also prudent to presuppose that the silence about the biblical narratives either shows ignorance or that there is something different from Shona culture that is found in the biblical text. In both cases this has led to the innovative teaching based on the Shona culture. One would question whether the token to say sorry, though is not a virgin girl is not an act of appeasing the avenging spirit. ZAOGA has not prescribed the token to be given to the aggrieved family.

As noted in an earlier chapter three, the traditional solution is to part with cattle or/and virgin girl. In recent years, because of external pressures and a combination of modernity and “foreign” religions and cultures, most Shona beliefs and practices have been transformed as a result of the challenges. Where material things were previously valued, cash has become the medium of settling the traditional rituals. If members of the church give cash and cattle in the name of the Christian ethics of admitting wrong and saying sorry, can we therefore conclude that the church is not participating in the Shona belief and practice of *kuripa ngozi* (appeasement)? My argument is that this teaching opens an avenue for resuscitating the ritual of appeasing an avenging spirit, following unsuccessful suppression in the church.

Can it be concluded that there is a possibility that Guti and other pastors might have assessed the strong influence or belief in *ngozi* which is deep seated in the hearts of his congregation? Could it be that, in order to deal with it, they decided to formulate the notion of appeasing the deceased by giving a token to the living? In their formulation, it is the meaning of the token that separates it from the indigenous ritual process. This type of teaching does not encourage converts to leave the church but lures them to practice their traditional rituals (settling the crisis) under the Christian umbrella of admitting wrongs, asking for forgiveness and settling crisis. The section below proceeds to consider the role, status and significance of women in ZAOGA.

## **Role, Status and Significance of Women**

It is important to quote the observation by Constance Jones that has direct relevance and application in our analysis of ZAOGA:

As the literature on new religious movement shows, women join new religions with both extremely conservative and radical gender ideologies. Feminist scholars ask how and why contemporary women find meaning in these diverse contexts and how their socialization into the larger patriarchal culture affects their affiliation.<sup>29</sup>

This is an important observation since the investigation is on ZAOGA women whose experiences are diverse. This diversity and their varied socio-cultural and economic backgrounds is important in the light of seemingly contradicting conservative and radical gender ideologies that ZAOGA espouse and how it affects the lives of these women. This section cross examines the role, status and significance of women in ZAOGA. Even within same religious contexts, significant differences of power and subjective experience occur among women. The underlying questions are: Did the women in ZAOGA escape the traditional roles and obligations assigned to them by society? Are there changes, if any, that ZAOGA has instigated on the role and status of women, in a bid to resolve the crisis of gender disparities? How and to what extent does the church's position on the role, status and significance of women either differ from or is similar to Shona religion and culture?

## Aspects of Affirming and Celebrating Women

The general assumption is that women are oppressed in almost all world religions.<sup>30</sup> However, a survey of the role and status of women among the Shona reflects otherwise. According to Bourdillon, it is a misconception that women had little or no status among the Shona, although we cannot be blind to the deficiencies which found clear expression especially on formal, legal and ritual occasions.<sup>31</sup> The following examples show the positive role and status of women among the Shona.

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<sup>29</sup> Constance Jones, "Feminist Research in Sociology of Religion". Arvind Sharma, ed, *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies*, NY, State Univ. of NY, 2002, 75.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g., the works by The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, eds, Hinga, T.M, Mwaura, P. & Ayanga H. Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2008 and *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, eds, Phiri, I.A et al., Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 1976, 50.

*i. Mombe Youmai* (motherhood cow—a cow given to the mother-in-law as part of bride price). When a girl child is married, the son-in-law acknowledges and appreciates the special role that his wife’s mother played in the up-bringing of her daughter. He gives the mother-in-law a cow to honor her. The woman also acquires status at marriage and the bride price expresses and enhances her value and brings wealth to her family.<sup>32</sup> This practice is taken seriously by the Shona and it is believed that there would be repercussions if the son-in-law does not pay this cow until the death of his mother-in-law.

*ii. Mbudzi Yemasungiro* (a goat given to the mother-in-law as part of the bride price). Besides giving the cow to the mother-in-law, the son-in-law also gives a goat when the wife gives birth for the first time (*mbudzi yemasungiro*). The important role of the mother is also acknowledged in this practice.

*iii.* A child cannot strive and beat his mother. This attracts heavy penalty in the form of what is known as *kutanda botso*. Vincent Mulago points out that respect for parents is a mark of African ethic, fully in line with one of the Ten Commandments.<sup>33</sup>

*iv.* The avenging spirit of an ill-treated mother may require the offending child to humiliate himself by dressing in rags and beg grain for a feast in her honor, in which a beast should be killed and from which the offending child must be absent.<sup>34</sup> This gives weight to the claim that children are not related to their mother because they do not share the same totem.

*v.* The offending husband may also suffer if he ill-treats his wife. He has to live in his dead wife’s room, keeping it clean and performing the duties that the wife used to perform.<sup>35</sup>

The significance of a woman is also expressed in the following proverbial sayings:

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<sup>32</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 1976, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Vincent Mulago, “Traditional African Religion and Christianity”, *African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society: Essays in Honour of John Mbiti*, ed. by J.K. Olupona, Sulayman, S. Nyang, 1993, 131.

<sup>34</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 1976, 50.

<sup>35</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 50.

*Musha mukadzi* (a home can only be established when there is a woman). This is mainly because women have more influence in the household than the *dare* (traditional council) and play a significant role in the up-bringing of children, as well as looking after the whole family. That accords well with the Proverbs 31:10-31 woman who is industrious and is praised by her husband.

vi. *Kuroora kunounza chiremera* (a man acquires dignity when he marries).

vii. *Ngozi yaamai igodzamuto* (a mother's avenging spirit is very dangerous and deadly).

### Patriarchy Amidst Liberative Gender Ideology

The above sayings and proverbs affirm and acknowledge the significance of women. However, in spite of all this acknowledgement of the significance of women in the home and society, it seems women remained under the patriarchal grip and their wellbeing remained at the mercy of men. For example, on *mombe youmai*, as an expression of gratitude of the patrilineal family to the woman as child bearer, the custom of giving *mombe youmai* goes on to this day. This celebration of fertility can force women to become child bearing machines. Therefore, *mombe youmai* might be a form of thanks but not a mechanism of giving authority to the woman.<sup>36</sup>

Madiba makes a point on the burdens that women in Africa carry and this also relates to Shona women. She points out that women work a double shift, in the home and at her place of employment.<sup>37</sup> Oduyoye says that a free woman conjures up negative images and that she spells disaster. Denouncing singlehood and the satirizing that accompanies this state has led many women to endure hardships in marriage and the single to choose to escape the social opprobrium of having no husband.<sup>38</sup> According to Ian Ritchie, one indicator of advancing status of

<sup>36</sup> Isabel Mukonyora, "Women in Ecology in Shona Religion", *Word and World*, xix, 3, 1999, 277.

<sup>37</sup> Daphne Mayope-Madiba, "Women in African Traditional Religions", Musimbi Kanyoro & Nyambura Njoroge (eds), *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*, Nairobi, East African Publ., 1997, 275.

<sup>38</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 1995, 4.

women in Africa is the increasing acceptance of the ordination of women to leading roles in the ministry of various denominations.<sup>39</sup> The question is: can we take the ordination of women as the yardstick to judge the status accorded women?

Therefore, the teachings of Guti and his wife are considered because of the large numbers of ordained women in leadership positions in their church to see the actual difference it has made to women. Guti is the founder of Gracious Women's Fellowship International,<sup>40</sup> whose teachings are examined in considerable detail. The founding of a woman's ministry by a man needs not escape our critique. Guti always praises women and acknowledges the role they have played in supporting the church, especially single women who meet regularly to pray specifically for Guti without any hindrance.

He claims that there is something important that God has put in a woman. When she cries God hears her and that alone should teach women that they are special before God and they should not look down upon themselves.<sup>41</sup> Guti has consistently argued that both men and women have to be equally responsible. Article 18 of ZAOGA *Rules and Policy*, does not permit divorce in ZAOGA.<sup>42</sup> Guti explains the expectations of both men and women in marriage and encourages men to continue courting their wives and women to respect and submit to their husbands both in his teachings and publications.<sup>43</sup> However, Guti delivered an astounding message that seemed to contradict what he said earlier on. While the message applied to women in general, it had more direct relevance to single women. Thus:

At our Bible school we have many ladies who are not married and it is because of *mafambiro avo pamberi pevarume* (how they behave in front of men). That is why they are not married. You have three or

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<sup>39</sup> Ian Ritchie, "African Theology and the Status of Women in Africa", (a work in progress) presented at the Canadian Theological Society, 25 May 2001, 7.

<sup>40</sup> R. M The Takavarasha, *Remained Unspoken in The African Apostle*, Harare, EGEA, 7.

<sup>41</sup> This is a teaching that Ezekiel Guti emphasizes, especially when greeting/ addressing women in the church.

<sup>42</sup> Ezekiel Guti preaching at ZAOGA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grand Jubilee, Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium, 22 Aug. 2010.

<sup>43</sup> See e.g., *Does Your Marriage Look Like this?*, Harare, EGEA, 1992, *Strategies For Saving Marriages for this Generation: Marriage Teachings for Couples and Group Seminars*, Harare, EGEA, 1992.

four boyfriends! Women, behave properly! Men are fighting in the world because of you. Some of you women are here but somebody has been killed because this one was saying, “she is mine” and the other was saying the same.<sup>44</sup>

By citing *mafambiro* (behavior), Guti was condemning women with a strong, outgoing character which he claims challenges men. He was also suggesting that men are naturally repulsed by that behavior because of an ego that is within them, since traditionally women are expected to have a docile and submissive character. Guti gave the example of a ZAOGA pastor, ladies’ advisor, who reached her early forties without being married in 2001 (but is now married to a fellow pastor) because she had a character that challenged and put off men from proposing love to her. The upbraiding of those who were not married appeared to have a bias towards the traditional cultural construction of marriage. The cultural construction of the institution of marriage in Africa and the role of women within that institution is that women are expected to marry and produce children. Though there might be nothing wrong with this expectation, it takes negative proportions when it is assumed that this is the sole purpose of being a woman and that in the event of a woman failing to fulfill the role, she becomes a social outcast or misfit.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, Guti blamed women for the fighting that is in the world, which he believed was caused by lusting and rivalry over women. Women who double-crossed men were condemned but Guti was silent on men who did the same, especially those who cheated their wives. Guti seemed not to be concerned about that when it came to the issue of Christian morals. This attitude seems to fit in earlier descriptions in Chapter three of Shona traditional marital relations that a man’s promiscuity is not an issue, but that the promiscuity of a woman is tantamount to destroying the whole village. Mwaura also has useful insights related to the condoning of male promiscuity. She argues that beliefs about masculinity and femininity encourage men to be promiscuous and women to be passive and ignorant about matters of sexuality.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Guti preaching at ZAOGA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 22 Aug. 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Hazel Ayanga, “Religio-Cultural Challenges in Women’s Fight Against HIV/AIDS in Africa”, Teresia Hinga, A. N. Kubai, P. Mwaura & H. Ayanga, eds, *Women, HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2008, 38.

<sup>46</sup> Mwaura, “Violation of Human Rights of Kenyan Women”, 2008, 128.

Guti went further to criticize women by citing what happened when he visited one of the Forward in Faith (ZAOGA churches outside Zimbabwe) churches in Canada. During the meeting, one man told Guti to rebuke women who were dressing ‘provocatively,’ exposing their breasts and thighs, which was disturbing to most men in the church.<sup>47</sup> One lady answered back and also asked Guti to warn the men to dress properly, not to leave their chests and tummies outside.<sup>48</sup> Guti taught that this woman was ignorant of the way God created them (women). They were created for men, who always want “something that is on them.” According to Guti, “*Ukarega kupfeka zvakanaka anochiba*” (if you don’t dress properly he will steal), implying the use of force or violence. That is why, according to Guti, most women are raped. This teaching is one sided and appears to condone the violation of women’s rights over their dressing and bodies. It also overlooks the circumstances and consequences surrounding most rape victims and survivors, such as the innocent children, women in marriage and is also not sensitive to the dreadful consequences. The Canada event that Guti narrates confirms the observation by Kalu that Pentecostal ministries design rituals for identification akin to witchcraft detection strategies to ferret such females before they do any damage; evidence of a lurking patriarchal ideology. Therefore, rational and decorous rules are adopted to ensure that females are properly dressed.<sup>49</sup> However, it appears ZAOGA has deviated from the AFM which has strict dress code for women and denounces female members who put on trousers, especially if they are leaders. AFM female leaders have to cover their heads when they want to teach/preach or even when standing at the pulpit. Pentecostals usually cite scriptures, especially Pauline teachings, in order to give weight and credence to their teachings concerning the role and status of women.

## Deployment of Scriptures

Scriptures that have been used in ZAOGA to encourage women to “rise up” include Genesis 1: 27-29. ZAOGA teaches that God created man and gave him dominion over every living creature but that man should not

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<sup>47</sup> Guti, preaching at ZAOGA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 22-08-2010.

<sup>48</sup> Guti, preaching at ZAOGA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 54.

have dominion over women.<sup>50</sup> Hence, Guti's teaching on the issue of rape and the Canada event is a direct violation of the verse and to point out that women were created for men is a misrepresentation of the scripture. Some female scholars believe that the two Genesis stories do not provide the basis of the denigration of the woman. Rather, certain elements in the story have been both misinterpreted and ignored because of pre-dominant patriarchal ideology.<sup>51</sup> What then is the reward for women who have labored so much in Pentecostalism?

According to Kalu, there are four prominent categories of female discourses within African Pentecostalism: "founders, sisters, first ladies and jezebels".<sup>52</sup> There are female founders of denominations and 'sisters' who are endowed with Charismatic gifts who get opportunity to minister at the ritual level without challenging the patriarchal base of the polity, the wives of pastors are 'first ladies' who mobilize and deploy evangelical power and the 'jezebels' are those women who seduce male pastors.<sup>53</sup> This study limits its analysis to "first ladies and sisters", because these are directly applicable to the study.

In ZAOGA, the wife of Guti portrays the role of "first lady" and she is referred to as "mother". No one should refuse anything that she wants. Apart from her teachings in *Gracious Woman* and the books that she writes, the church media (Ezekiel TV) and the print media also perpetuate the image where she becomes more visible. Other pastors and leaders are "sisters" who are active in the affairs of the church.<sup>54</sup> These "sisters" in ZAOGA are endowed with charismatic gifts and are given the opportunities to minister those gifts at the ritual level, without challenging ZAOGA's patriarchal base. Enlarging the female role at ritual level is significant to assess empowerment because empowerment is related to emancipation and development.

Guti's wife picks Guti's theme of submission in her teachings to women by emphasizing that women should submit to their husbands because God's desire for women is to see her yielding to the authority of the

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<sup>50</sup> ZAOGA teaches women to rise and that they should not be dominated by men because no human should dominate the other.

<sup>51</sup> See e.g., Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: a Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, NY, Crossroads, 1983.

<sup>52</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 152.

<sup>53</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 152

<sup>54</sup> Obgu Kalu, "The Third Response", 147.



husband (Ephesians 5:22), to sleep with the husband because she has to fulfill duty (of sex) in order to please him.<sup>55</sup> She gives her own example by saying that she does not express her opinion when Guti has made a final decision. She would cook for him even though she was a nurse and would be tired. Even if she would be woken up at midnight to write the things that he wanted.<sup>56</sup> Women have to wake up early and do household duties before they go to work and should strive to be a Proverbs 31 woman (verses 10-31 describe a hardworking woman who is praised by her husband). Eunor Guti goes further by saying that a good way to measure respect to one's husband is to find out from the question, "Am I treating my husband as I would treat Christ?"<sup>57</sup> Guti's wife encourages women to endure hardships in marriage, even with a promiscuous troublesome ill-treating husband.<sup>58</sup> According to Rekopantswe Mate, the Family of God:

...teaching on submission is selective, if it is in godly endeavors, contrary to ZAOGA, the teaching on submission is not selective because women whose husbands use brute force, are drunkards and come home late are advised to endure, wake up and cook for them during those late hours.<sup>59</sup>

This seems to contradict Eunor's motto, "Not above the husband, not under him but side by side with him" that features on most ZAOGA posters when they advertise women's conferences. Lovemore Togarasei notes that women are taught that it is because of their passivity in matters of sex that their husbands go out and bring back HIV/AIDS.<sup>60</sup> Maxwell has also made similar remarks on ZAOGA:

Although ZAOGA offers security, women and youth remain vulnerable, especially in the context of HIV and AIDS because ZAOGA

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<sup>55</sup> Guti, *Wise Woman*, 2006, 21.

<sup>56</sup> Guti, *Wise Woman*, 21.

<sup>57</sup> Guti, *Wise Woman*, 21.

<sup>58</sup> Guti, 21-22.

<sup>59</sup> Rekopantswe Mate, "Wombs as God's Laboratories: Pentecostal Discourses of Femininity in Zimbabwe", *Africa*, 72 (4), 2002, 565.

<sup>60</sup> Lovemore Togarasei, "Cursed be the Past: Tradition and Modernity among Modern Pentecostals in Zimbabwe", *BOLESWA Journal of Theology, Religion & Philosophy*, 2, 2006, 12.

seems to accept a husband's adulterous liaisons and women are still required to fulfill their sexual duties to such aberrant husbands.<sup>61</sup>

This is in spite of the fact that Guti wrote that God hates adultery, fornication, infidelity and divorce.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the contradictions bring about an almost insignificant change in gender relations. In an open interview and discussion on the challenges that most women faced, after the Thursday meeting, two women gave their narratives. One of them said:

The problem is that our husbands know the teachings in ZAOGA, especially on Proverbs 31 and submission. My husband complained to the pastors that I do not respect him, ask advice from him and that I just make decisions on my own. He knows how *amai* (referring to Eunor Guti) teaches on submission and he wants to capitalize on that, yet I am doing most of the things at home. I think it is time for our pastors to teach our husbands to be practically responsible.<sup>63</sup>

Another one added:

My husband does not even make an effort to look for a job. I do everything at home, paying the school fees for the two children at boarding schools, paying the rentals, buying food. He just claims that God will open doors for him one day. What type of doors to a lazy person? Surprisingly, he also wants me to take care of his ailing mother. Honestly *mhamha* Guti (referring to Eunor Guti) should revise her teaching on submission. It's too much!<sup>64</sup>

In the rural areas one woman said:

*Isu hedu tinonzi takasarira vekumusha asi handizvoba. Murume wangu anofarira doro chaizvo, haaende kana kumunda chaiko. Proverbs 31 akanaka uye tinodzidziswa kushandira mhuri dzedu. Proverbs 31 akanaka asi Mwari akati murume ngaaita usimbe here?*<sup>65</sup>

(People say those in the rural areas are backward but it is not true. My husband likes beer and does not even go to the fields. Proverbs 31 is good and we are taught to work for our families. Proverbs 31 is

<sup>61</sup> David Maxwell, "The Durawall of Faith': Pentecostal Spirituality in Neo-liberal Zimbabwe", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 35 (1) 2005, 14.

<sup>62</sup> Guti, *Strategies for Saving Marriages*, 1992, 37.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Beulah Kanyenze, Harare, 25 July 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Memory Kaseza, Harare, 25 July 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Alice Mandimu, Harare, 25 July 2010.

good but did God say a man should be idle/lazy if he is the head of the family?).

These complaints have a twofold significance; they reflect the grievances that some ZAOGA women harbor in relation to the burdens they carry as a result of neglect by their husbands. They also show the bias that does not challenge male dominance and irresponsibility in the home. For Guti's wife (and other leaders who have adopted her teaching) one's husband is a perfect "shoe." Even if that "shoe" is irritating, women have to do their best to protect their husbands from looking for other women because "in a man there is that ego that needs to be given its place and even if he is wrong he can tell the wife to be quiet."<sup>66</sup> Eunor Guti, therefore, urges women not to try to change their husbands but to love them and give them treats and to continually pray for the situation to change.<sup>67</sup>

However, at some point, Guti appears to be sensitive to the needs of a married woman. In most of his publications that include his recent book, *Wise Man: Man of Integrity*, he encourages men to be responsible for their families and to love their wives.<sup>68</sup> This book appears to be a summary of his vast previous publications that centre on marriage, focusing on responsibilities in marital relations.<sup>69</sup> He also writes that things that bring sorrow to the woman are; *kuneta, kudzvinyirirwa, kuiswa kurutivi, kushaikwa korudo, kunetsa nezvemari, dambudziko revana zvavanoita, dambudziko ravatezvara nevamwene* (tiredness, oppression, sidelining, lack of love, financial problems, troubling children, and in-laws). To men he says: "*Kuva murume ndiko kuva munhu anodzivirira, achishanda kuti zviratidze kuti une hanya nemhuri yake*" (To be a man is to protect, work hard to show that you care for your family). He adds that, "*mukadzi ishamwari yakanaka pabhizimusi kupfuura vese uye zvinokosha kuteerera mukadzi pane zvekunamata*" (A woman is a friend in

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<sup>66</sup> Guti, *Wise Woman*, 66.

<sup>67</sup> Guti, *Wise Woman*, 66.

<sup>68</sup> Ezekiel Guti, *Wise Man: Man of Integrity*, Harare, EGEA, nd.

<sup>69</sup> Ezekiel Guti, *Wise Man: Man of Integrity*, Harare, EGEA, nd, 35. Guti has written many books encouraging men and women to be responsible in marriage. It is important to highlight that most of the books are replete with repetitions, especially on gender relations. For example, the teachings on submission of wives, courting wives, managing finances and correct code of conduct. As mentioned before, we cannot explore all of them.

business and it is important to listen to her in matters of praying). He adds that “*Murume ndiye anofanira kuva nepfungwa kudarika iye muk-adzi*”<sup>70</sup> (A man should have sharper ideas than the wife).

In the teachings above, a woman is depicted as a second class citizen because she is not expected to think the way men think. Thus, in spite of women’s intelligence and organizing capabilities, the effect of such a teaching encourages them to hide their intelligence and capabilities in an endeavor to give way to “men who should have sharper ideas” than them. However, Guti encourages men to love, work and protect their families. He acknowledges that women establish businesses and pray but there are challenges of oppression, sidelining, carrying too many burdens, as well the problem of children and in-laws. Guti also teaches men not to stop courting their wives and to pay *lobola* to the in-laws. The husband must pay all the debts so that both the wife and her parents will not resent him.<sup>71</sup> Here, Guti is addressing the thorny issue of paying the bride-price. The question of bride price, particularly the giving of the cow and goat to the mother-in-law, has been a bone of contention in the church, with some arguing that it is contrary to God’s word. Moreover, when the cow and the goat are paid, traditional rituals accompany such payments.

This means both parties will be participating in the traditional rituals, hence, some men found an excuse not to pay bride price in the name of refusing to compromise their Christian faith by giving cows or goats to their in-laws. However, Guti teaches men “to give unto Caesar that belongs to Caesar” because they cannot impose rules but to take orders from in-laws.<sup>72</sup> It appears that Guti supports the traditional marriage as he sees nothing wrong in complying with the requests of the in-laws. This applies to the practice of *kusungira*. If the in-laws want their daughter to abide by their rules during her first pregnancy, the son-in-law has to respect that. This goes hand in hand with *mombe youmai* (the mother-in-law’s cow).

Guti further says:

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<sup>70</sup> Guti, *Kunzwa Kunonetsa*, (It is Difficult to Understand each other in the Home), 11.

<sup>71</sup> Guti, *Strategies of Saving Your Marriage*, 36.

<sup>72</sup> Ezekiel Guti always encourage ZAOGA men to marry and pay all the bride price to the in-laws.

Men and women are different, not equal in function or needs or position but equal in importance...Man has two major needs, lordship and the wife has to give this position, need to be respected, honored and revered. A woman needs security...This is why she was made from the portion from left side of a man next to the heart and just under the arm to be well secured, protected and loved...the other important thing is love (Ephesians 5:25).<sup>73</sup>

While Guti's teaching above appears reciprocal in marital relations, the problem appears to be centered on the issues of lordship of husbands and submission of wives. Guti adds that the woman should submit to her husband and not challenge his leadership, but to reinforce his masculine image, concentrate on the positive<sup>74</sup> because submission is a choice that brings honor to the woman.<sup>75</sup> Guti sharply criticized women who refuse to have sex with their husbands for one reason or the other:

You left your parents because you loved him. If you heard that he did not have a pipe (referring to the male sexual organ) were you going to marry him? I asked many young women and their answer was 'no.' So, why do you refuse your husband sex? It is because you don't understand what you were created for? He paid all the cattle (part of bride price among the Shona), not for anything else but for that 'hole' (referring to woman's sexual organ).<sup>76</sup>

However, one can pick Guti's line of thinking concerning what a woman is expected to do in a marital relationship and this correlates with Eunor's teachings that a woman should have sex to fulfill duty. This denies women the right and liberty to make choices concerning sex in marital relations. The question that can easily be posed is: are men not expected to fulfill duty in a given marital relationship? With regards to women who refuse to have sex with their husbands, should we criticize them in this HIV and AIDS era? What about the socio-economic hardships they face? This is one area in ZAOGA that Gifford's words find justification, that Pentecostalism lacks sociological awareness,<sup>77</sup> it ig-

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<sup>73</sup> Guti, *Does Your Marriage Look Like This?*, 1992, 34-37.

<sup>74</sup> Guti, *Strategies For Saving Marriages*, 39-40.

<sup>75</sup> Guti, *Kunzwa Kunonetsa*, 12.

<sup>76</sup> Ezekiel Guti preaching at ZAOGA 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebrations at the National Sports Stadium on 22-08-2010.

<sup>77</sup> Paul Gifford, *The Religious Right in Southern Africa*, Harare, UZ Publ., 1988, 90.

nores the real social issues and economic realities on the ground and emphasizes that God is able in all circumstances.

Hence, it appears bias is perpetuated against women in both Guti and his wife's teachings. This bias has been inherited by the pastors in the church since most of them espouse the same teachings and read and quote from books by the Gutis. The bias justifies Tabona Shoko's observation that among the Shona marital fidelity in a man is not questionable,<sup>78</sup> and that patriarchy can be traced through language.<sup>79</sup> The qualities that ZAOGA idealize, especially for women, are those of a victim, sacrificial love, passive acceptance of suffering, humility and meekness. Jesus is a model that reinforces a scapegoat syndrome for women. Jesus takes orders from the father, alluding to submission. The characteristics of the Holy Spirit as a helper are should be a model for women in ZAOGA. The Holy Spirit is gentle, meek and persistent and women should display the same characteristics. Thus in ZAOGA the models of both Jesus and the Holy Spirit reinforce the scapegoat syndrome.<sup>80</sup>

### Talents: Discouraging Idleness

ZAOGA has endeavored to empower women and raise their status through self-reliance by engaging in Talents (mentioned in chapters two and four). However, the teaching accompanying the work of Talents shows that the church wants to avoid complaints by women who claim that their husbands do not look after the family by encouraging women to be industrious. That is why to complain or report a husband's irresponsibility and infidelity to leaders meets this response/question: "What are you doing on your part instead of complaining?" According to Eunor Guti, the wife should wake up around 4 am and 5 am, help the husband to bath and dress, prepare him food and "accompany him half way out" and then concentrate on the children and see to their needs.<sup>81</sup> She adds that, "Do not argue with him, but all the time commit every-

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<sup>78</sup> Tabona Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe: Health and Well-Being*, England, Ashgate Publ., 1997, 21.

<sup>79</sup> Mercy Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis 1995.

<sup>80</sup> Teresa Hinga, "Jesus Christ and the Liberation of Women in Africa", Mercy Amba Oduyoye & Musimbi Kanyoro, eds, *The Will to Arise*, NY, Orbis, 1992, 185.

<sup>81</sup> Eunor Guti, *Lessons for Women's Fellowship*, Harare, EGEA, 2007, 19.

thing to the Lord for your success, regardless of the time he arrives home always welcome him warmly.”<sup>82</sup> This study questions the teaching in ZAOGA that prayer is the answer and panacea for all the needs of a woman and to all her problems. Yet, there appear to be other avenues of redressing those challenges, such as questioning some aspects of patriarchy that characterize many marital relationships, especially on submission that infringes with decision making not only in the home but also in the church.

## Women and Decision-Making

It is also important to note who controls the flow of information in ZAOGA. There are indeed notable strides of ordaining women to leadership positions as overseers, pastors, elders and deacons and chairpersons of congregations. Women can baptize and do all pastoral responsibilities, like their male counterparts. But who controls the flow of information and makes important decisions? Women are not involved when it comes to making decisions by their exclusion from ZAOGA’s Day to Day Council which has a lot of powers to make decisions and judge important matters. This is typical of the Shona traditional councils where women are excluded. The hierarchical nature of ZAOGA also shows that men occupy all key positions in the running of the church’s affairs, although women’s active participation is always acknowledged. In ZAOGA, Guti’s position reflects the fusion of three images: the symbol of the divine, an idealized parental image and an idealized self. This means that when members of the church internalize these images of the leader, one’s ego ideal and one’s understanding of gendered relations become blurred.<sup>83</sup> Again, it breeds a patronage network and top-bottom flow of resources. Thus, the exclusion of women in the council consolidates the patriarchal ideology. The primary role of female leaders appears to be intrinsically linked to their relationship with husbands. It appears Eunor simply teaches what her husband Guti has espoused in both his books and sermons. To further demonstrate the significance of the link between the female leader and her husband, a prominent female pastor’s husband had an extra marital affair. When the wife was asked to teach at a ladies meeting, she responded:

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<sup>82</sup> Guti, *Lessons for Women’s Fellowship*, 20.

<sup>83</sup> Kalu, “The Third Response”, 9.

I cannot stand up to teach the flock of God. How can I teach these ladies when my marriage is failing? I should manage my house and marriage first before I tell the children of God what to do.<sup>84</sup>

The woman's response affirms the popular idea that a man defines a woman and that a woman cannot make any meaningful contribution without a man or outside marriage (see chapter three on single ladies). Moreover, it is common knowledge that a woman only enjoys respect in her lineage provided she is someone else's *mutorwa* (stranger) through marriage. A divorced woman is unwanted at her husband's home and accepted with reluctance by her patrilineal home. Her children are regarded as the property of his husband and his ancestors.<sup>85</sup> This line of thinking is popular among the Shona. This helps us to appreciate that there are often quite distinct male and female subcultures within the larger culture and that these gendered cultures are far more defining of individual character and religious expression than the shared aspects of the wider culture and religion.<sup>86</sup> Yet, in ZAOGA, Eunor Gutu and other female pastors, including prominent single ladies, have successfully organized and run huge gatherings such as conventions without men. This is evidence that women are capable of making important decisions and judge matters in ZAOGA, although they suffer exclusion from the Day to Day Council.

In the light of all this, I can reiterate the question that I asked at the beginning of the chapter: what actual difference has ZAOGA made in upholding and defending the integrity of women? The women's ministry appears as vantage points for challenging the old, male dominated order, patriarchal ancestor cults and indigenous religions which is liberating to women.<sup>87</sup> The ministry might be a better option for them to reformulate social relationships conducive for their interests and also an avenue to challenge patriarchal religion through the idiom of exorcism which is central in ZAOGA.<sup>88</sup> This is applicable because women feel free to participate in their conventions and fellowships. Article 15, of ZAOGA

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<sup>84</sup> A ZAOGA female pastor declined to teach at ladies meeting because her husband had an love affair with another lady, and it became well known in the church.

<sup>85</sup> Mukonyora, "Women in Shona Ecology", 278.

<sup>86</sup> David Kinsley, "Women's Studies and the History of Religions", Arvind Sharma, ed, *Methodology in Religious Studies*, NY, State Univ. of NY Pr., 2002, 4.

<sup>87</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 160.

<sup>88</sup> See Maxwell, *Christian and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*, 1999, 196-197.



*Rules and Policy* says that gifted women shall be allowed to preach the Gospel just like men. However, this needs caution in ZAOGA because female power points perpetuate the dominance of men and castigates those who question the headship of men. That is the area that needs to interrogation in ZAOGA in connection with the teachings and attitude towards gender issues such as male and female promiscuity, control of women’s bodies and their role in decision making.

## Tradition and the Control of Women’s Bodies

In Shona traditional patriarchal system women have little control of their bodies. As pointed out by Isabel Phiri, despite the magnitude of the dangers of the epidemic, women are unable to negotiate for safer sex, even if they know that their husbands have multiple sex partners they are powerless to come out of the relationship.<sup>89</sup> Tinyiko Maluleke has also cited the church and inherited cultures as having failed to handle sexuality constructively.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, a man’s promiscuity can find cultural excuses whereas a woman’s promiscuity finds downright condemnation. She is compelled to remain submissive even when she is in possible danger of contracting HIV from the husband. Thus, the epidemic has exposed some oppressive cultural practices whereby husbands enjoy advantaged social status to rule over women and discriminate against them on the basis of their sex and gender roles.<sup>91</sup> The teachings on unconditional submission negate the idea of a free woman. There are also some areas that do not need to be generalized but deserve scrutiny. Women meet on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays as “Go Quickly and Tell” or “Gracious Women” for prayer and teaching. Girls also meet regularly and those who are about to marry undergo specific teachings to prepare them for the new status and roles, especially through kitchen tea

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<sup>89</sup> Isabel Phiri, “African Women of Faith Speak out on HIV/AIDS Era”, Isabel Phiri *et al*, eds, *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2003, 12.

<sup>90</sup> Tinyiko Maluleke, *Towards a New theological Education in Curriculum for the Twenty-First century in Africa: HIV/AIDS and the New Kairos*. Report on the HIV/AIDS Curriculum Development Consultation for Theological Institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa: Nairobi: MAP International.

<sup>91</sup> Cletus Chukwu, *Applied Ethics and HIV/AIDS in Africa: A Philosophical Discourse*, Eldoret, Zapf Chancery, 1995, 64.

parties. These kitchen tea parties are the platform for the teachings relating to sex and pleasing the husband.

The researcher observed that although ZAOGA runs bachelor's parties for young men who are about to marry, very few are holding bachelors' parties. The imbalance in the frequency of meetings becomes a cause for concern to some ladies who were interviewed:

We always have girls meetings and our mothers always meet, when do men and boys meet to receive their teachings and be accountable to their wives and families as heads of families? We just hear them making slogans, “boys *dunamis!*” and “men of integrity!” but their ministries are just dormant.<sup>92</sup>

The above response shows that teachings on marital and family issues centre around the girls and women in ZAOGA, more than on boys and men. Is it assumed that, as “heads,” they automatically know their sex and gender roles? The emphasis on the regular meeting and teaching of women and girls to become a Proverbs 31 woman is emphasized to the extent of challenging the biblical role assigned to Adam to also work for the family and the portrayal of the wife as a “helper” (Genesis 2). It also enables women to offer their best services in the home and also to ZAOGA, but little attention is paid to their voices. As argued, this is seen through women's exclusion from the Day to Day Council and Eunor's encouragement to women not to argue/express an opinion when the man has made the final say. The imbalances inherent in ZAOGA are not always ignored. A woman asked Guti, “When shall you teach these men and write books for them?” Guti responded by pointing out that he will write a book for them. The lady insisted, “We have books for women, we do not need a book for men but books for men because we have books for women!”<sup>93</sup> Books for women in ZAOGA navigate through the terrain of gender issues but emphasizing the role of women. She was calling specifically for books that focused on male responsibility (As a result of this incident, Guti has written *Wise Man* which was launched at Crowne Plaza Monomotapa in September 2012 to complement his wife's *Wise Woman*). Soothill has useful insights on Charismatics in Ghana that are applicable to Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. She points out that in terms

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<sup>92</sup> Anonymous Interviewee, City Assembly, Baines, Harare, 6-7-2010.

<sup>93</sup> This conversation took place at a leaders meeting where the church was asked to ask questions they felt were burning in their hearts to Guti, ZAOGA District leaders meeting, Harare 22 July 2010.

of gender, three main threads have helped to generate the empowerment model and distinguish the Charismatic Christianity from the older mission-style churches:

First, the removal of traditional barriers to female leadership and the exercise of official authority by women in the organizational structures..., second is its message of social change and social re-natal, important elements that are directed towards male behavior that may be damaging to women...third is its emphasis on personal development of individuals, especially encouraging women to build on their self-confidence and esteem.<sup>94</sup>

In the light of Soothill’s findings, one can at least appreciate ZAOGA for having opened space for female leadership and encouraging them to work. Soothill also points out that the radical nature of these Charismatics is how women are given the right to demand pleasure and sexual satisfaction and that the rhetoric is influenced by the trends within North American evangelism where personal development, sexual satisfaction and “feeling good” have been given a prominence unknown by previous generations, hence, echoes a transnational shift in virtues from self-denial to self-affirmation.<sup>95</sup> This is where ZAOGA also differs from the North American trends. Teachings on how to satisfy husbands are common among the Shona and ZAOGA preachers constantly make reference to “*pachivanhu chedu/patsika dzedu*”<sup>96</sup> (in our culture). Among the Shona, a woman is not supposed to express herself in matters pertaining to sex.

Also to strengthen the point that ZAOGA’s teachings on gender relations are not borrowed from North American Pentecostalism, some ZAOGA female pastors got angry with another male pastor. In response to questions by ladies at a youth gathering, the pastor told the ladies that they could also propose love to the man that they admired.<sup>97</sup> The female pastors condemned the message and argued that it was contrary to the

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<sup>94</sup> Jane Soothill, “The Problem with ‘Women’s Empowerment’: Female Religiosity in Ghana’s Charismatic Churches,” *Studies in World Christianity*, 16, 2010, 82-83.

<sup>95</sup> Soothill, “The Problem with Women’s Empowerment”, 2010. 86.

<sup>96</sup> When ZAOGA refers to things that are “morally acceptable”, they refer to Shona traditional religion and culture.

<sup>97</sup> A male pastor taught Marlborough district (23-10-2010) youth that ladies were allowed to propose love to men because times have changed, and they should not ‘die of love’ in silence as tradition prescribes upon women.

tradition of the Shona people. Thus, we note the conflicting messages in ZAOGA that show the zeal to pay allegiance to tradition and at the same time trying to move with modernity. This highlights the complex interaction of ZAOGA with Shona religion and culture as both continuity and discontinuity from the traditional paradigm manifests. The male pastor's message represents the "radicals" in ZAOGA who, in most cases, are resisted and neutralized by popular conservative minds. Constance Jones points out that:

Many new religions hold gender roles that are decidedly sexist. The association of the divine with masculine symbol of power has implications of gendering of religious experiences; paternalist theological images can be combined with male dominance to produce authoritarian control-socially constructed gender relations that often contain contradictions.<sup>98</sup>

It appears that ZAOGA encourages sexism, through its theological justification of assigning women inferior status to men in the church.<sup>99</sup> As pointed out by Denise Ackermann, the discourse on unconditional submission disempowers women in marriage and brings them under subjugation.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, the messages of social change that are directed towards male behavior that harms women appear to be built on 'soft masculinities' that do not practically make a follow up to make sure that the teachings are realized on the part of men: "soft masculinities" that are not radical.<sup>101</sup> The church teaches women to endure and pray. This finds resonance with the teachings on marital problems among the Shona. The woman is told to endure because "*Chakafukidza dzimba matenga*" (there are a lot of problems in marriages in homes but these are never known outside) and the woman has to conceal her problems. As a result, women often report a sense of submission to the husband (to the leader at times) that is often accompanied by feelings of exploitation and abuse. Consequently, there is lack of motivation to report vio-

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<sup>98</sup> Jones, "Feminist Research", 2002, 75-76.

<sup>99</sup> Denise Ackermann, "'Deep in the Flesh' Women, Bodies and HIV/AIDS: A Feminist Ethical Perspective", T. Hinga, A. Kubai, P Mwaura & H. Ayanga, eds, *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publ., 2008, 109.

<sup>100</sup> Ackermann, "Deep in the Flesh", 2008, 109.

<sup>101</sup> Ezra Chitando, "A new man for the new era: Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, masculinities and the HIV epidemic", *Missionalia*, 35, 3, 2007, 124.

lence because the leadership preaches the discourse of unconditional submission and emphasize prayer as panacea for marital challenges. Thus, I share the same sentiments as Ruth Marshall-Fratani when she points out that Pentecostals have failed to construct a redemptive theology and have failed to alleviate pauperism.<sup>102</sup>

I take a point of departure from Marshall-Fratani by pointing out that ZAOGA has succeeded in ‘empowering’ women economically and has partnered with the government in poverty alleviating programs, but this does not mean ZAOGA is immune to failure that allows the few to enjoy the facets of modernity to an obscene extent. As pointed out by Kalu, Pentecostal gender ideology is built on a wholesome perception of a woman, the family, love and marriage and in the light of this it appears these are burdensome to women. But, why do women continue to flock to the movement, even when women are in leadership positions, appeals to traditional gender roles keep women submissive and self-effacing?<sup>103</sup>

There is also need to be critical of the notion of an “umbrella” in ZAOGA. The ‘umbrella’ is mostly a male pastor who is assigned to teach, ‘guide’ and ‘protect’ single ladies because of the presumed burdens and loneliness that they might face, especially the widowed. This parallels inheritance of a widow among the Shona by one of the deceased husband’s kinsmen. While it appears that the church is sensitive to the plight of single women, it also gives the impression that women cannot manage their affairs on their own but need a man to help them manage or stand! Hence, in the light of this can we conclude that the Shona custom of taking care of the widow has displayed resilience by finding an avenue of expression through Christian guise in ZAOGA? Also earlier on, I raised the question of why women continue to subscribe in large numbers to such movements. Perhaps the answer to why women continue to flock to a movement that displays extremities might lie in this observation by Kalu:

Ethics for fidelity, respect for the woman, avoidance of sexual promiscuity provide confidence and security for the womenfolk. There is

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<sup>102</sup> Ruth Marshall-Fratani, “God is not a Democrat: Pentecostalism and Democratization in Nigeria”, Paul Gifford, ed, *The Christian Churches and the Democratization of Africa*, Leiden, Brill, 1995, 246.

<sup>103</sup> Constance A. Jones, “Feminist Research in Sociology of Religion”, Arvind Sharma, ed, *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women’s Studies*, NY, State Univ. of NY Pr., 2002, 73.

no restriction on gender and ministry, their gifts are acknowledged.<sup>104</sup>

This probably gives women a sense of “independence.” Kalu adds that there are four positions under which feminists could be labeled and these are rejectionists, loyalists, reformist-liberalist and reconstructionist.<sup>105</sup> It is beyond the scope of the study to engage all the positions that Kalu mentions. Therefore, attention and focus here is on the loyalist and reform-liberationist which are directly related to this study. ZAOGA female leadership fits the description by Kalu that most of them are loyalists who declare that God is not a democrat, emphasizes the traditional domestic responsibilities of women, at times built on Proverbs 31, thus accepting the dictates of the Bible without questioning.<sup>106</sup> They are also “elevationists” who want to improve or the quality of life through charismatic spirituality because the spirituality empowers them to confront society and use skills that are nurtured within the church in their daily lives and professions.<sup>107</sup> Apart from the lady who directly asked Guti to write books for men, the examples of grumbling female informants are in the category of liberationists who fight within the system, attacking but without confronting it directly and want both male and females to bear God-given roles which are different but reciprocal!

## Evaluating ZAOGA’s Stance on Women

It appears that ZAOGA suffers from double standards. By casting away traditional barriers to women’s leadership, it purports to offer new teachings on the status and role of women. However, ZAOGA continues to source and build on the traditional paradigm. This sort of tension between women’s familial roles and their status as individuals is a recurring theme in ZAOGA discourses on gender. It parallels the concerns and objectives of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Development that advocates the empowerment of women and stresses the

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<sup>104</sup> Kalu, “The Third Response”, 30.

<sup>105</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 151.

<sup>106</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 161.

<sup>107</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 161.

education of the girl child in Zimbabwe.<sup>108</sup> The positive perception on education and ‘empowerment’ of women appears attractive to women in their disadvantaged positions, but to what extent does ZAOGA offer something new? The challenge is how to balance ‘unconditional submission’ (and all that it entails) with ‘empowerment’ of women. It appears that ZAOGA simply echoes current political consensus, which has adopted the national gender development as its own.<sup>109</sup> ZAOGA socializes men to seek transcendence while women are expected to be submissive. Though ordained in leadership positions, both rural and urban women experience curtailed access to modes of influence and to complete acceptance by all congregants.<sup>110</sup> Women are effective in their positions of leadership but the persisting inequities limit their participation. Within ZAOGA, women serve as bishops’ wives, overseers’ wives, pastors, elders, deaconesses and ministers of various ministries and faiths, but their actual power has suffered from the conflict between charisma, which often women display, and bureaucracy, which men often lead as women are required to submit. Yet, taking every part in context, the Bible cannot be said to advocate patriarchy.<sup>111</sup> However, from the teachings of ZAOGA and the responses of interviewees, both rural and urban women in ZAOGA appear to be under a patriarchal hold.

## Belief in Unnatural Events

Having analyzed the contradictory status of women in ZAOGA, this section will examine the persistence of the belief in unnatural events. It has to be highlighted that the subject of unnatural events is highly contestable, in terms of terminology and meanings. Are unnatural events miracles or mysteries? I cannot account for the terminological challenges, except to highlight that the study will utilize the term ‘unnatural events’, which it also construes as mysterious. In chapter three it was

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<sup>108</sup> See e.g., The Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre & Network (ZWRNCN), an information based organisation committed to gender equality and equity, Speech by Dr Olivia Muchena, Women Affairs, Gender & Community Development Minister in Zimbabwe, 27-7-2012.

<sup>109</sup> See Soothill, “The Problem of Women Empowerment”, 2010, 86.

<sup>110</sup> Jones, “Feminist Research”, 73.

<sup>111</sup> L. L. Kriger, “Prejudice Against Woman in Christianity-Root Cause”, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, xxviii, 2002, 184.

pointed out that belief in mystery is deeply entrenched in the Shona worldview. Unnatural events defy a single definition because of multiplicity of meanings. In this study, unnatural events refer to religious truth or belief that is beyond human understanding or a thing in which the cause or origin is hidden or impossible to explain.<sup>112</sup> Some references in the Bible include Exodus 3, Moses and the burning bush, the plagues on the Egyptians (Exodus 8-9), the eating of manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16), water gushing out from the rock at Mara for the Israelites (Exodus 17), incarnation and Eucharist (Synoptic Gospels and John) among others. Guti has also taught and has written about unnatural events and this teaching provokes interest to inquire whether the teaching is more inclined to the Bible or Shona conception.

Guti's belief in unnatural events is very explicit in his book *Kuremekedzana Kunouyisa Humwari* which can be translated to mean, "Respecting each other brings God's Presence". In this book, Guti wrote that many people claim to be Christians but their speech reflects otherwise.<sup>113</sup> Guti believes that when one respects people, regardless of their age, God manifests himself to that person. He told his elders that once, when he was in London, he boarded a bus with his daughter. A man came into the bus and stood, since the bus was full. Although Guti was much older than the man, he offered the man his seat, which made his daughter laugh. Guti drew his teaching from that incident and taught that Christians ought to do the same where ever they are, especially to elders in society and leaders in the church for them to be able to witness miracles in their lives.<sup>114</sup>

Guti quotes from Colossians 4:6 and explains that the salt is the word of God and discourages jokes because they "spoil" the Christian life. He further explains that the Shona people heard and interpreted the language of animals and birds regarding whether or not there was danger because people were dignified.<sup>66</sup> Guti refers to Abraham and Isaac in the Bible (Genesis) who saw God because they respected each other (and other people). This respect caused many people among the Shona dur-

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<sup>112</sup> Nwaka C. Ebulem, *The Power of Afrocentric Celebrations: Inspiration from The Zairean Liturgy*, NY, Crossroads, 1996, 111.

<sup>113</sup> Ezekiel Guti, *Kuremekedzana Kunounza HuMwari*, Harare, EGEA, 1993, 6-7.

<sup>114</sup> Guti, *Kuremekedzana Kunounza HuMwari*, 1993, 6-7.



ing the ancient days to be provided with *sadza* under sacred trees.<sup>115</sup> Guti stressed that one cannot experience these divine manifestations “*nekuzhangandira kwako ikoko*”<sup>116</sup> (being talkative, ill-talking). It is quite interesting to see how Guti draws an analogy between the experiences of Abraham, Isaac and Shona culture. The examples of speech, respect, listening and interpreting voices of birds in the forest in order to understand or experience the unnatural are prevalent in several Shona folktales. In these folktales people hunting or embarking on journeys would sit under trees and pour out incantations or commune with ancestral spirits and food would appear mysteriously. No one seems to have the explanation as to where and how the food came from because there would be wind which prevented the people from seeing. What Guti teaches is not outside the experiences of the Shona people. A Zimbabwean theologian, Canaan Banana says that, traditionally Zimbabweans experienced God’s revelation in natural phenomena such as trees, rocks, caves, rivers and also mountains. Thus, the revelation is not confined to the Israelites alone nor is the biblical revelation the only source of theologizing because tradition is the twin brother of scripture.<sup>117</sup> What Banana says has been affirmed by some claims relating to what transpired during the liberation struggle against the British in Zimbabwe.

## The Liberation Struggle and Unnatural Events

It is also well known that during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe religion played a very significant role as a strategy of mobilization of peasants on the basis of their religio-cultural ideology. The freedom fighters (guerillas) observed taboos which kept them disciplined and also not to offend the ancestral spirits of the land. Guerillas claimed to have relied so much on the guidance from birds, animals and snakes for direction and safety. A lot of mysterious happenings occurred which they interpreted and mostly through the help of traditional religious practitioners. The general populace, alongside the guerilla claims, also had the same testimonies of unnatural events which happened and mostly pro-

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<sup>115</sup> Ezekiel Guti giving a testimony at ZAOGA 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebrations on 21 Aug. 2010 at Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium, 23 Oct. 2010.

<sup>116</sup> Guti giving a testimony, 23 Oct. 2010, Harare.

<sup>117</sup> Canaan Banana, *Come and Share, Introduction to Christian Theology*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1991, 40.

tected them from the Rhodesian soldiers.<sup>118</sup> A. J. Pongweni records songs that were sung during that struggle by the guerillas and the peasants, the popular one being *Nzira Dzemasoja* (Code of conduct for soldiers). The song brings out religious and cultural expectations: Soldiers have a code of conduct by which they live, not robbing, not exploiting, paying fair price, communicate and not engage in promiscuity while waging a revolutionary war.<sup>119</sup> The other song entitled *Titarireyi*, (Look after us) shows an appeal to the guardian spirits of the land, Takawira, Nehanda and Chaminuka, because of their heroic deeds in resisting colonization:

Our guardian Spirit, we pray to you to protect them (fighting forces)  
Oh Nehanda, Our guardian spirit, we appeal to you Chaminuka, you  
are the ancestral spirit, Guard and protect our cadres in the field, We  
appeal to you Mugabe, our revolutionary leader, head us to victory.<sup>120</sup>

In summation, the song appealed to the guardian spirits of the nation for help, to inspire and nurture the thoughts of masses and Mugabe (the leader). R. C. Mitchell adds that the Africans have greater sense of continuity between the living and the dead. It is the ancestors, especially the immediate ones, who really 'live' and manifest themselves in this world in various ways.<sup>121</sup> The important thing is to note the source of the provision, that is, the ancestral spirits. To further demonstrate belief in unnatural events, one pastor moved a congregation on a Sunday service in Chitungwiza when he encouraged them to practice hospitality to visitors because God might bring people to them whom they can despise. He had the following testimony:

A ragged man came to my house from the small anthill close to my yard. I gave him clothes and the man went away. Seven years later I saw the same man in the same ragged clothes appearing miraculously and he also disappeared the same way.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> David Lan, *Guns and Rains: Guerillas and Spirit Mediums*, London, J. Carrey, 1985.

<sup>119</sup> Alec J. Pongweni, "The Chimurenga Songs of Zimbabwean War of Liberation", K Barber, ed, *Readings in African Popular Culture*, 1997, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 67.

<sup>120</sup> Pongweni, "The Chimurenga Songs of Zimbabwean War of Liberation", 68-69.

<sup>121</sup> Mitchell, *African Primal Religions*, Illinois, SCM Pr., 1973, 18.

<sup>122</sup> Pastor Piason Nhakura preaching at ZAOGA C1 Assembly at Jumbo, Seke on 7 Jan. 2005.

This made him believe that the man was an angel sent by God to test his works. He then implored the congregation to help everyone regardless of status and appearance for they do not know God’s mysterious workings. The author had time to interview some members of the church who expressed different views. One leader believed the man was either an angel or a ghost.<sup>123</sup> The other interviewee argued that it might have been that the man died immediately and did not have decent a burial so he just showed himself anytime he wanted.<sup>124</sup> Upon further inquiry, the two completely showed their ignorance and confusion on mysterious issues. The leader admittedly said “*pachivanhu pedu zviripo asi zvinonetsa izvi*”<sup>125</sup> (it is common in our culture but difficult to comprehend).

Almost the same views were conveyed in both rural and urban areas. In the Eastern Highlands (number 1–5 estates) the people fear some places along Pungwe River because of mysterious things that happened. Some members of the church claimed that they saw “something white” on the water, a whirlwind and sometimes an unusual human being.<sup>126</sup> One respondent said “*Aa-h munotiurayisa! Ichi chivanhu chaicho, hapana anochigona*”<sup>127</sup> (Aa-h you want us to die! This is our real culture; no one can comprehend it/is capable of conquering it). Mrs Mashoko in Budiriro 3 (Harare) also narrated how they were lost in Dzete Mountain which is in Mutoko from 7am - 2pm when they went up for prayer with her colleagues. She believed this was because the mountain is a place of ancestral abode. She even accused other Christians of hypocrisy because they refused to acknowledge factual things that they heard and saw.<sup>128</sup> If some members acknowledged the sacrality of forests, mountains and the unnatural events which took place, then that means they had not discarded the traditional view of respecting these areas as abodes of the living dead, where they continue to manifest and interact or influence the living through different means.

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<sup>123</sup> Interview with Thomas Matare, A3 assembly, Seke, Chitungwiza 7 Jan. 2003.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Mandie Nyanga, A1 assembly, Seke, Chitungwiza 7 Jan. 2003.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Elder Cephas Masama, C1 assembly, Seke, Chitungwiza 15 Feb. 2003.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Chengetai Muzanya, Eastern Highlands no 3 assembly 25 Oct. 2005.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Margaret Kaome Zindi assembly 28 Oct. 2005.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Mrs Patience Mashoko, Budiriro 3 in Harare on 2 May 2004.

## Guti's Interpretation of Unnatural Events

When Guti acknowledged and taught about “manifestation” and provision of food, he was aware of the active role of ancestral spirits, the “living dead” among the living. Also, he is aware of the ritual, taboos and avoidances that have to be observed, such as paying due respect to them in order to maintain a cordial relationship. Yet, Guti discouraged his church from participating in *kurova guva* rituals (bringing back home ceremonies). The comforting ceremony for those bereaved (*nyaradzo*) was also discouraged because of the suspicion that members would participate in traditional rites. The ceremony was encouraged only when members of ZAOGA would take the initiative and control the ceremony in order to ensure that there were no traditional rituals that would take place.

However, ZAOGA appeared to “domesticate” the traditional belief in unnatural events and at the same time consequently acknowledged the continued active role of the ancestral spirits. Conditional acceptance of *nyaradzo* and memorial gatherings (unveiling tombstone) appeared to be contextualization of the practices that is also manifest in the belief in unnatural events. Guti's attitude seemed best described by Jules-Rosette when she talked of neo-traditionalism in her explanation on cultural responses to secularization. The myth of an ideal past is retained and is often accompanied by an attempt to reconstruct an authoritative religious tradition.<sup>129</sup> One notes the use of a Shona traditional belief within a contemporary context. One can therefore easily assess Guti's line of thinking. He seems to have a great inclination towards the traditional concept of unnatural events and expresses his indebtedness to Shona cultural beliefs. Thus, confirming Idowu's claim that the permanently valid heritage is the recognition of the holy and sacred.<sup>130</sup> Many ZAOGA Christians strongly believe in unnatural events. The question that might come up is whether or not the use of the traditional belief in the contemporary context is also influenced by miracles in the Bible, such that ZAOGA find harmonization between biblical miracles and traditional belief in unnatural events? Guti's teaching and the responses of the informants, varied as they were, justify Ogburn's observation that material culture changes more rapidly than non material culture. In other

<sup>129</sup> Benetta W. Jules-Rosette, “Tradition and Continuity”, *African Religion: The Case of New Religious Movements*, ed. by J.K. Olupona, NY. Paragon House, 1991, 158.

<sup>130</sup> Bolaji Idowu, *African traditional Religions: A Definition*, London, SCM Pr., 1973, 70.

words, beliefs and ritual practices last longer than objective artifacts (material things).<sup>131</sup>

## Witches and Witchcraft

After examining the resilience of the belief in unnatural events in the foregoing section, this section proceeds to an analysis of the persistence of the belief in witches and witchcraft in ZAOGA. In chapter three I highlighted the idea that the belief in witches and witchcraft activities is deeply seated among the Shona. Furthermore, specific examples to justify that were provided. It was also mentioned that the belief runs across different social classes. This subject is quite diverse, but shall be limited to the examination of ZAOGA's belief system(s) on witches and witchcraft to see whether or not their perception of the subject has changed when they became born again. The Shona believe that witches are possessed by evil spirits which can be passed on to others after death.<sup>132</sup> Many Pentecostal Christians claim that they do not believe in witches and witchcraft. While the act of witchcraft might be evident, it is easily dubbed the work of the devil or evil spirits. In the Constitution of Zimbabwe it is an offense to accuse someone of being a witch. However, many members of ZAOGA strongly believe in the existence of witches, even within their church. Guti encouraged his members to pray fervently because if they do not, they would serve God together with witches. Sometimes he warned his members that he did not want anyone to accuse people of witchcraft because they had the Holy Spirit to cast away such spirits.<sup>133</sup> An elder narrated how a fellow elder "visited" her at night with the intention of bewitching her newly born baby:

My husband was fast asleep and I was surprised to see the walls of our bedroom falling apart because of an unseen force. I then saw the fellow elder coming straight to the baby. I burst into tongues praying and the witch went out via the same place and the walls came together again. I woke up my husband by screaming the name of that woman. To our surprise, the woman came early and was not even

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<sup>131</sup> F Ogburn, "The Study of African Culture", Ogbu Kalu (ed), *Readings in African Humanities*, Enungu, Fourth Dimension Publ., 1978, 37.

<sup>132</sup> Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 173-174.

<sup>133</sup> Ezekiel Guti shows divided opinion over witchcraft in his teaching as shown above.

shy (as expected traditionally). The visit was an assessment to see whether or not I had identified her.<sup>134</sup>

The respondent shows that the belief in witches and witchcraft is deeply entrenched in the Pentecostal worldview. Guti also visits ZAOGA churches in different areas as an “Apostle”. A pastor reported that Guti was refused a visit to Chipinge (his home area, where witchcraft is said to be rampant) several times by an elder in the area, under the pretext that the congregation was not yet ready with preparations to receive him.<sup>135</sup> He however, visited the church without prior notification and respondents charge that it turned out that the elder was deeply involved in witchcraft activities. The elder admitted (in a confession), repented and surrendered *makona* (magic horns/fetishes) that were burnt by Guti.<sup>136</sup> This incident helps to show how people, apart from believing can continue to practice their cultural and religious beliefs, yet paying allegiance to Christianity, thereby raising questions on the implication of a making “complete break from the past.” Prayer and deliverance sessions are also places where one can encounter belief in witches and witchcraft. People who are believed to be witches scream and utter a lot of words and sometimes confess what they would have done or intended to do. A “complete break from the past” becomes unlikely in the light of an incident that took place at AMFCC at a Deeper Life Conference. An elder confessed that they had an assignment to kill Guti on three occasions and they could not succeed. On another occasion they had tried to kill another ZAOGA pastor in Bindura but could not.<sup>137</sup> As the elder praised Guti as the true man of God who could not be harmed, it strengthened Guti’s message and gave it greater appeal. This solidifies his teaching that a “born again” person should not be bewitched if they are strong.

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with Patience Mukura, C3 assembly, Seke 2 District, Chitungwiza, 2 Sep. 2005.

<sup>135</sup> A Report read at Jumbo Seke 2 district from Pastors’ Friday meeting with Ezekiel Guti, 9 July 2005.

<sup>136</sup> A Report read at Jumbo, 9 July 2005.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Maud Marume who attended Deeper Life Conference Apr. 2002, Highfield, 2-03-2007.

## Exorcism in ATR and ZAOGA

Bewitched members are not encouraged to go to traditional healers as in ATR but to be prayed for to “drive out” (exorcise) the evil spirits or spells cast on them. They also burnt objects they used, in the case of those who repented from the witchcraft acts. However, many visited traditional healers or prophet type healers during the night to avoid being identified by some members of the church. Some of the members would backslide in times of such challenges and others travelled to rural areas in search of solutions from *n’angas* (traditional healers) and would then go back to the urban areas and pretended as if nothing had happened. Wrestling with evil spirits showed that Pentecostals were not always successful, although at times they wanted to emphasize that “nothing is impossible with God.” Even ZAOGA’s canonical book does not record failure to heal some diseases and sicknesses. Yet, ZAOGA’s failure to deal with some issues leads to some members visiting *n’angas*. A member of ZAOGA explained:

I am not sure if I am going against God because my son got mentally ill and the pastor (name supplied) prayed for him. I went to Deliverance Explos but he could not be healed. What we want is life, I then went to a traditional healer and he healed my son but pastors failed!<sup>138</sup>

It gives the impression that *n’angas* can tackle what the churches would have failed to heal. Yet, there are also situations that *n’angas* cannot address. This is expressed in the Shona proverbial saying “*zvakona n’anga murapwa achida*” (the *n’anga* has failed against the patient’s wish). Guti wrote that when the miracle of healing would have failed, there was another miracle of grace (2 Corinthians 12:8-9).<sup>139</sup> This is an acknowledgement that sometimes there are cases beyond human capability. Also, Guti might have derived the lesson from the experience of his disabled son Ezekiel (junior) who is claimed to have been born “dead.” Although they claim the miracle of life after prayers, the son remained physically challenged until his death in 2018 and has been cited by critics of spiritual healing who question the significance of Deliverance Explos in ZAOGA.

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<sup>138</sup> Interviewee, ZAOGA anonymous interviewee, ZAOGA Hatcliffe assembly, Harare, 9-11-2010.

<sup>139</sup> Guti, *Maturity*, 61.

## Wrestling with Persistent Evil Powers

It is important to note that the belief in witchcraft and the power of evil forces have been a phenomenon in ZAOGA as shown by the different names at different times, for example, Sunday service deliverance session(s), Evening Deliverance Sessions, District Healing Schools (especially AMFCC and Baines City Assembly) and Deliverance Explos.<sup>140</sup> Although witchcraft acts are demonized, it is important to note that ZAOGA acknowledges that witchcraft acts are common and that some witches know that they are witches. This is unlike other churches that do not believe that a dead witch can work through a living person, whether or not s/he would be willing to participate. To assess the resilience of Shona religion and culture, it's important to analyze the behavior and attitude of witchcraft victims. Below is a testimony from a pastor who claims to have dealt with many witchcraft cases in her pastoral ministry:

I have dealt with issues of witchcraft; in fact, different serious types. In ZAOGA people are no longer praying fervently. That is why even some leaders are involved in witchcraft activities. The church is slumbering, very cold. I was phoned two days ago around 2am because someone was dying. A mother-in-law wants to kill her daughter-in-law. We struggled in prayer until 9am when the spirit of witchcraft left her.<sup>141</sup>

The informant acknowledges the prevalence of the belief in witchcraft and witchcraft activities within the church. Thus, exorcism and cleansing through several rituals such as burning objects and verbal declarations of biblical verses become the means to “free” those possessed. But ZAOGA does not embark on witch-hunting and witchcraft eradication such as has been witnessed in the Tsikamutanda phenomenon.<sup>142</sup> The

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<sup>140</sup> ZAOGA uses all the above terms to refer to the sessions that they run to pray for the sick and cast out evil spirits. However, Deliverance Explos have grater appeal because they were officially launched after 2000. Guti taught that the devil thought Jesus was coming in year 2000; hence he commissioned many demons on earth especially those of witchcraft (interview with Pastor Patience Mukura, 2-06-2010). That is the justification for emphasising Deliverance Explos and also deliverance sessions at all ZAOGA assemblies and districts.

<sup>141</sup> Evangelist Virginia Gadzika at her house in Avonlea, Harare, on 2 Nov. 2010.

<sup>142</sup> Tsikamutanda refers to witch-hunting and witchcraft eradication by individual(s) in different parts of the country, especially rural areas.



Shona believe a person can bewitch someone through declaring negative words. An informant said:

I come from Mutare and we have a grandmother who is always bewitching others. She got angry with my young brother and said; *haufi wakapasa chikoro chako kana ndiri mupenyu* (you will never succeed at school, as long as I am alive). Now my brother has sat for his O Level exams four times, coming out with a chain of “Us” but he used to be very sharp.<sup>143</sup>

The incident shows the wide spread nature of the belief in witches. In the light of this, I then examine an incident which sparked controversy. A female evangelist at a University of Zimbabwe crusade narrated how she used God’s authority to punish a security guard at a filling station in Mutare. There were petrol queues (because of fuel shortage in Zimbabwe) and she and her crusade team wanted fuel to travel to Harare. One of the team members stood in the queue and when it was his turn to get fuel, the evangelist drove closer to the queue but was refused entry by the guard.<sup>144</sup> Out of anger, she cried and spoke words of cursing and told the guard that he would never work and prosper in his life. She claims she felt the whole future of the guard in her hands.<sup>145</sup> The guard cried and the evangelist felt pity. When she was allowed access to the fuel she “took back her words” from the guard.<sup>146</sup> A parallel can be drawn when the power of words, negative words or cursing in Shona religion and culture. The question is: how different are words of cursing using God’s authority and cursing of people in Shona religion and culture that invoke spiritual forces? The other critical question is whether or not personal challenges or deprivations act as easy bridges back to “nativism” among the born again?

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<sup>143</sup> Interviewee, at deliverance session, Harare, Glamis Stadium, 22-08-2009.

<sup>144</sup> Evangelist Hilda Bvunzawabaya preaching at ZOC at the Univ. of Zimbabwe, NLT 400, 12 October 2001.

<sup>145</sup> Hilda Bvunzawabaya preaching at ZOC in NLT 400 at the Univ. of Zimbabwe on 12-10-2001.

<sup>146</sup> Hilda Bvunzawabaya preaching, 12-10-2001.

## Contextualization of the Belief in Evil Powers

It seems there are some features in both Shona culture and Christianity which rest on similar ideology. In the Bible there are allusions to witchcraft activities when the Israelites were commanded not to pollute themselves with the cultures of the Canaanites.<sup>147</sup> There are no pronounced cases of witchcraft in the Bible apart from the allusions that forbid Israelites to participate in witchcraft activities. However, both religions embrace the belief in witchcraft activities. This gave rise to the important place granted to deliverance rituals. Several versions of deliverance services into Deliverance Explos in ZAOGA helped to give them greater appeal, leading to the attraction of a large clientele. Investigations show that many people panic because of witches and witchcraft, mainly because of mysterious acts which take place. Activities in ZAOGA such as Deliverance Explos and services bear testimony that the belief in evil or spells cast on people through witchcraft activities is very powerful.

However, what is taught reflects otherwise. The question that confronts us is: if there are no pronounced cases of witchcraft in the Bible and yet people display their strong belief in it, what will be the source of those beliefs? I have examined belief in witches and witchcraft, role, status and significance of women, belief in avenging spirits, belief in unnatural events and significance of words prior to death/on deathbed. The section below proceeds to examine ZAOGA's liturgy and salvation.

## Liturgy and Salvation

In this section, I examine ZAOGA liturgy and salvation to establish whether aspects of Shona traditional religion and culture have found avenues of expression in ZAOGA. If so, this accounts for the resilience that the title of the book refers to. In chapter three, the liturgical expressions of the Shona with particular reference to their music and dance were highlighted. Shona music and dance are referred to as part of liturgy because they worship through music and dance. Some forms of music and dance were singled out; such as *mbira*, *kongonya* and *sungura* and pointed out that there are no trained personnel. Instead, everyone partic-

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<sup>147</sup> The Deuteronomist theme that runs through the Old Testament that warns the Israelites not to imitate the cultures of other people (Deuteronomy and Leviticus)

ipates creatively. Earlier on in the first chapter, it was pointed out that considerable space would be devoted to the analysis of themes. Hence, this section examines liturgy and the concept of salvation among the Pentecostals in pursuit of the aim to establish whether or not the Pentecostals still adhere to the traditional beliefs, practices and conceptualizations. Hillary Achunike’s words shed light by summarizing the content of this section on liturgy and salvation:

Liturgy deals with the way people worship God. Pentecostals take worship seriously and allow it to penetrate and influence their lives. Pentecostals seem to be obsessed with liturgy. Indeed for the Pentecostals, worship is a 24 hour-a-day, seven days a week experience of God.<sup>148</sup>

He adds that:

The prosperity gospel of the Third Wavers (Pentecostals) has succeeded in eroding the initial impetus of Pentecostalism as an escape from this world in view of the other world. It has catapulted attention of the contemporary Christians from the kingdom of justice and righteousness that comes from faith in the crucified and risen Lord to the ‘blissfulness’ of materialism and sentimentalism in the categories of the world.<sup>149</sup>

The above quotations are related in that it is in their worship that brings out the issue of salvation. The above two quotations also give a summary of liturgy and salvation. One will be in a position to draw conclusions or to assess the vitality and resilience of Shona religion and culture among the ZAOGA Pentecostal Christians. An analysis here begins by examining music and dance.

## Music and Dance

Opinion is sharply divided on the question of Africanizing Christian worship as some feel that it will be a return to African paganism, while others think that if Christian worship is to mean anything to the majority of African Christians, it must not be presented and practiced in a

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<sup>148</sup> Hillary Achunike, *The Influence of Pentecostalism On Catholic Priests and Seminarians in Nigeria*, Onitsha, Africana First Publ., 2004, 66.

<sup>149</sup> Achunike, *The Influence of Pentecostalism*, 143-144.

foreign garb. This study does not intend to pursue this debate in detail. However, there is need to investigate whether or not in music and dance ZAOGA Christians have re-invented the tradition in Christian praxis. Music and dance are central to African cultures and religions and are expressed in various ways. Sebastian Bakare observes that when Africans dance “they express the joy of life in community, social solidarity, renewal and building of relationships, thus proclaiming their oneness.”<sup>150</sup>

These (music and dance) have been used to rehabilitate Zimbabwe’s cultural heritage in the post-colonial era. This has been done at political rallies, national *biras* (ancestral ceremonies) and music galas. Culturally-inspired music and dance is also played on national radio and television. In the area of music, colonialism availed new musical instruments. Traditionally, Shona music is a national treasure and its emblematic genre is the *mbira* tradition which is also internationally recognized.<sup>151</sup> *Mbira* is an iron pronged hand held lame-laphone and has been a sacred instrument among the Shona people for centuries.<sup>152</sup> However, the biggest selling music in Zimbabwe is not *mbira* but *sungura*. *Sungura* is essentially Zimbabwean adaptation of guitar driven ‘*rhumba*’ sounded that blasted out of Kinshasa starting in the late 50’s and 80’s via Tanzania and Zambia.<sup>153</sup> This type of music is popular but is regarded as secular by Pentecostal Christians. It is mostly popular in beer halls and also weddings.

It is important to highlight that music in mission churches had a Western style of worshipping. However, as from the 1950s onwards the mission churches among the Shona brought a new development in the direction of especially African style of hymn.<sup>154</sup> B. Sundkler and C. Steed share the same view as Eyre by asserting that only after the 1950’s was there a large scale turn to genuinely African music for the churches, an awareness of the need for music growing from a natural African context.<sup>155</sup> Amanze points out that this turn to African music can be regarded as a popular protest against what missionaries imposed:

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<sup>150</sup> Bakare, *The Drumbeat of Life*, 3.

<sup>151</sup> Eyre, *Playing with Fire*, 3.

<sup>152</sup> Eyre, *Playing with Fire*, 33.

<sup>153</sup> Eyre, *Playing with Fire*, 11.

<sup>154</sup> Eyre, *Playing with Fire*, 33.

<sup>155</sup> Bengt Sundkler & C. Steed, *A History of the church in Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2000, 916.

The people strive to fight forced acculturation or destruction of tribal life imposed by missionaries and colonial administrators ... Africans thought it to be the white men's intrusion in the cultural domain which provided the base form of cultural identity.<sup>156</sup>

Amanze's assertion seems to be a valid one considering Gutu's breakaway from the AFM church and the type of music and cultural dance that have been introduced in the church and the use of instruments such as drums and *hosho* (rattle). One can note specifically on youth gatherings the love of *sungura* and *rhumba* music and dance. ZAOGA justifies the informal relaxed music and dance by pointing out that King David in the Old Testament danced for the Lord (Psalms 150 and 2 Samuel 6:12–16). Sometimes it leads to spirit possession, integrating humanity with cosmic forces, speaking in tongues, prophetic utterance, shaking, laughing and falling.<sup>157</sup> According to J. S. Mbiti, dancing gives the distinctive African characteristics and has social and religious significance.<sup>158</sup> At a Youth Conference at AMFCC, one of the ZAOGA speakers condemned the youth for dancing *kongonya* (traditional dance popular at traditional gatherings in rural areas) in the church and said that it showed that they were not filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>159</sup> Not only were the youths wild with *kongonya* dance, but also *sungura* or *museve*. However, the youths continued the “wild” traditional dances.

The premise for the justification of this dance by University of Zimbabwe ZAOGA On Campus is that “the devil stole the music from the church and introduced it to the world, so we have to take it back into the church.”<sup>160</sup> Accordingly, they could jump like people dancing *Muchongoyo*, (Ndau traditional dance), whistle, ululate, clap their hands, run up and down and make bodily gestures which they like. According to Pentecostal youth, the Holy Spirit has no formula. That attitude to music and dance justifies the controversial free dancing style of Pastor Chakanetsa Bandima in “*Ndiperekedzewo Kudombo*”.<sup>161</sup> “*Ndiperekedzewo kudombo*” is a translation of Psalms 61:2. Pastor Bandima creatively

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<sup>156</sup> Amanze, *African Christianity in Botswana*, 66.

<sup>157</sup> Sundlker & Steed, *A History of the Church*, 16.

<sup>158</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1969, 67.

<sup>159</sup> Getrude Rupapa at ZAOGA International Youth Conference, AMFCC, 5 Aug. 2005.

<sup>160</sup> ZAOGA On Campus Praise and Worship Motto, Univ. of Zimbabwe, since 2001.

<sup>161</sup> See Pastor Badimba's CD, *Ndiperekezo Kudombo*, 2001.

borrowed indigenous dancing styles and spontaneity in both song and dance. As noted earlier, *sungura* and *kongonya* are mainly associated with worldly joy in beer halls and growth points where people who are not “born again” fraternize.

## Composition of Music in ZAOGA

The source of inspiration is not only the written words but they believe God reveals himself in art, music, poetry and ritual. One popular ZAOGA musician has been a “son” of Guti, an orphan and has composed songs. One of his songs is examined, a song which became popular, not only in ZAOGA but throughout Zimbabwe. Pastor Lawrence Haisa plays *mbira* and reggae music on his albums. In his album entitled “*Burukai Mwari Baba*” which is also a song, he says:

<i>Burukai burukai Mwari Baba x2</i>	Come down father God
<i>Mutare mutoro</i>	remove the heavy burden
<i>Muturo unorema</i>	the heavy burden
<i>Inyasha kuva nemubereki</i>	it is grace to have parent
<i>Ivo vasina, vanotura kuna ani?</i>	Where can orphans go
<i>Vasina mbereko vanotura kuna ani?</i>	Where can the barren go to surrender
<i>Iwo mutoro mutoro unorema</i>	their heavy burden?
<i>Iwo marwadzo muchaatura kunaani</i>	Where can you surrender the pains
<i>Iwo marwadzo marwadzo anorema.</i>	The pains that are heavy
<i>Shirikadzi dzinotura kuna ani</i>	Where can the widows go surrender
<i>iwo mutoro mutoro unorema?</i>	the heavy burden?
<i>Huyai, huyai kuna Jesu</i>	Come, come to Jesus and surrender
<i>Mutare mitoro, mitoro inorema x2.</i>	burdens x2. <sup>162</sup>

Haisa makes an allusion to widows and orphans, the childless and painful ordeals that they go through. Traditionally, these are of great concern among the Shona. The communalistic ideology enabled society to look after the widows and orphans. As pointed out by P. Mashiri and E. Chabata, although we have orphans among the Shona, no one is an

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<sup>162</sup> Lawrence Haisa’s popular song on “*Burukai Mwari Baba*” on CD *Burukai Mwari Baba*, 1999.

orphan.<sup>163</sup> However, considering the effects of modernization and the economic hardships which Zimbabweans have been undergoing, there have been many challenges. Modernization has partly eroded the traditional communalistic orientation and the economic challenges have left families in poverty. They could hardly support their extended families. Society, therefore, cannot be a guaranteed source of hope for these groups of marginalized people such as orphans. According to Pentecostal teachings, the ancestral spirits are no longer called upon to be with and bless orphans, since God is the only hope.

Haisa's unique understanding of the human predicament makes the music meaningful to an African because he sees God in his own culture amidst poverty, pain and suffering. When Haisa says "*huyai kuna Jesu*" (come to Jesus), it is a proclamation and an invitation to come to Jesus and to surrender all the challenges and hardships. Thus, the song is evangelistic. Barrenness is one of the challenging problems among the Shona people and mostly women are blamed and looked down upon because of the value that is placed upon the children (as discussed earlier in this chapter).

Among the Shona, if one is barren, one becomes a laughing stock. The biblical affirmation in Psalms 127:3 that children are a gift is overlooked. The problem of barrenness is also in the church and sometimes no solution is offered. Guti founded and established children's homes and introduced the Orphans and Destitute ministry. Members contribute to orphans, especially the barren, so that they might be blessed with children. He claims that this ministry was birthed through an instruction from God. He says that he prayed for a woman who was barren for twelve years but she did not conceive. When he prayed to God asking why she did not conceive, he was told that the couple had to look after orphans first.<sup>164</sup> (This is a controversial claim in view of the significance of the coming and death and resurrection of Jesus). These women (rarely men) are encouraged to put their faith in God, who becomes the only hope. Thus, Haisa shows a concern for them and has no distant understanding of the people he is singing to. Through music, Haisa solidifies

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<sup>163</sup> Pedzisai Mashiri & E. Chabata, 'Women and the Stability of the Shona Family', A paper presented at on Africana Womanism Conference at the Univ. of Zimbabwe held on 19-23 Oct. 2010.

<sup>164</sup> Ezekiel Guti claims that God spoke to him that those who are barren should take care of orphans then they will be blessed with children later.

the unity and the love of living in an extended family set up, but in this case, the church, comprising people of different confessional backgrounds.

Chitando affirms Haisa's music when he comments that, it is solemn and follows the traditional pattern of songs associated with misfortune. The sick the suffering and distraught are called on to surrender to Jesus and this captures the imagination of many Africans.<sup>165</sup> There is no use of hymn books. Songs have been composed by the church in relation to their needs and aspirations. This is significant as we find an affirmation of the indigenous religion and culture, in terms of needs and aspirations that inform the composition of songs. The study construes this affirmation and promotion of indigenous rhythms and composition as resilience of the indigenous religion and culture among the Pentecostals. This confirms the observation by Omenyo who says that Pentecostals have built on the liturgical innovations that have been introduced by AICs over the years.<sup>166</sup> The following is another one popular song that has been sung in ZAOGA in appreciation of financial breakthrough from different projects (Talents) undertaken by members of the church:

<i>Mwari baba tinotenda</i>	Father God we thank you.
<i>Makatipa mwana wenyu</i>	You gave us your child
<i>Tinokupai moyo yedu</i>	We give you our hearts in
<i>Kutondera zvatiinazvo</i>	remembrance of all that we have.
<i>Mwari baba tinotenda</i>	Father God we thank you.
<i>Makatipa baba Guti</i>	You gave us father Guti.
<i>Tinokupamoyo yedu,</i>	We give you our hearts
<i>Kutondera zvatiinazvo</i>	in remembrance of all that we. <sup>167</sup>

The economic hardships in Zimbabwe have led them to see “miracles” in what might not necessarily be miracles in the eyes of non-believers. Selling things like roasted peanuts and getting a few dollars is deemed a “miracle from God”<sup>168</sup>. The music and dance is relaxed and full of symbols. The tunes are African. They clap hands, jump, play marimba and drums, even whistling. They affirm Shona traditional models of wor-

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<sup>165</sup> Chitando, “Songs of Praise”, 303.

<sup>166</sup> Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*, 272.

<sup>167</sup> ZAOGA Devotional Song.

<sup>168</sup> This claim is based on field work: every achievement is attributed to a miracle.



ship. In a way they bridge the tension between old and new and attempt to reconcile this through ritual and symbol.<sup>169</sup> The use of Western instruments for an increased tempo as well as the traditional call and response formula is adopted. This explains why churches are seen as an important medium to the wider context of social change.<sup>170</sup> ZAOGA is the Pentecostal church that is also predominantly found in rural areas where there are many people who are culturally grounded. Choruses are popular and the gospel is communicated easily, even to those who cannot read the Bible or write. Music in the rural areas does not only communicate the gospel but constitutes a basic way of living and knowing. H. Kritzinger makes a valid assessment when he says that the gospel is communicated more effectively in Africa by means of song than by means of sermon, Bible study, tract or book.<sup>171</sup> ZAOGA has managed to produce electronically recorded music through the fusion of traditional and modern instruments which shows that the composers have taken the vernacular seriously and are contextually sensitive.

## Dance

Dance provides some form of cultural identity to convey the fundamental truth of the Christian religion to their fellow Africans in a way that they best understand and internalize the Gospel. Togarasei notes that music recorded by Pentecostal musicians falls into all kinds of genres. These include Hip hop, R and B, reggae, *museve/ sungura* (traditional fast Zimbabwean beat). The trend in Zimbabwe has been to consider any music that praises God as gospel music, regardless of the beat accompanying it.<sup>172</sup> Songs are not sung in a vacuum. As pointed out by Ukpong, the fluidity of Pentecostal rhyme and rhythm has made it easy for people to sing and play the same tune in various languages and in diverse cultural ambience.<sup>173</sup> The flourishing of indigenous rhythm in

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<sup>169</sup> Chitando, "Songs of Praise", 303.

<sup>170</sup> Sundkler & Steed, *A History of the Church*, 916.

<sup>171</sup> H. Kritzinger quoted by Imasojie Isadolor, *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa: Theological Perspectives in Africa*, Achimota, Africa Christian Pr., 1993, 14.

<sup>172</sup> Lovemore Togarasei, "Churches for the Rich? Pentecostalism and Elitism", Lovemore Togarasei & Ezra Chitando, eds, *Faith in the City: The Place and Role of Religion in Harare*, Uppsala, The Swedish Science Pr., 2010, 35.

<sup>173</sup> Ukpong, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 49-50.

Christian worship means a re-invention of the Shona cultural spectrum through music and dance. Composing music in ZAOGA is theologically important and it tallies with the composition of music traditionally. It presents us with an insight into the contextualizing process going on in Pentecostal churches, incorporating what is beautiful in their way of life,<sup>174</sup> producing a unique African Pentecostal style of music and dance. I conclude this section with Nketia's words:

The purpose of Africanization is not abandonment of Christocentric worship but the use of familiar means of expression and to enable the African worshipper to understand better and feel more deeply.<sup>175</sup>

A familiar means of expression in music demonstrate sensitivity and accommodation of African modes of worship. As put forward by Nwaka Egbulem about Pentecostal liturgy in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) but also applicable to the Shona; liturgy manifests some sensitivity to the oral character of traditional African literature, songs, dance and some openness to creative spontaneity.<sup>176</sup> This means that aspects of indigenous religion and culture are incorporated in to the new faith, hence becoming resilient. In the following section, the concept of salvation is analyzed.

## Salvation

The general assumption and perception is that Africa is a massively Christian continent<sup>177</sup> because many people have received salvation through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this study, there is need to try and understand ZAOGA's perception of salvation in order to establish whether or not the Shona concept of salvation has found new forms of expression and new angles of survival in the church, leading to some form of its survival and continuity.

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<sup>174</sup> Togarasei, "Churches for the rich? Pentecostalism and Elitism", 35.

<sup>175</sup> J. H. Nketia, "The Church and Culture: The Contribution of African culture to Christian Worship", presented by C. Baeta at All-Africa Church Conference, *The Church in Changing Africa*, NY International Missiology Council, 1958, 62.

<sup>176</sup> Egbulem, *The Power of Afrocentric Celebrations*, 96.

<sup>177</sup> See e.g., Byang Kato, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa, Kenya*, Kisumu, Evangelical Publ. House, 1975, 183. T. Tienou, *The Theological task of the Church in Africa*, Lobaya, Africa Christian Pr., 1982, 25.

It has to be mentioned that the word *salvation* is a Christian theological formulation and has a Eurocentric orientation and also there is need to be aware of the fact that for some people it is not easy to conceptualize salvation in ATR, especially when coming from a Christian background where salvation is understood in terms of Christ's death to redeem humanity from sin. Although the term is a Christian formulation, the Shona have a concept of salvation that deserves serious attention and analysis. Attention and analysis are given to words which designate salvation in Shona religio-cultural setting. Considered linguistically, the term indicates that the concept is intimately related to the physical welfare of life. Mbiti's insights on salvation in African religions that are also applicable to the Shona are utilized.<sup>178</sup> Mbiti points out to the following: prayers that concentrate on various aspects of salvation, for health/healing from diseases and bareness, success in undertakings, protection from harm or death, petitions for peace and blessings and prayers of thanksgiving, sacrifices of animals as well as offerings are made to acknowledge the saving activities of God and in desperate situations human beings were sacrificed in order to save others, shrines, sacred mountains, woods or forests set apart as places of safe keeping, refuge of salvation. People or animals found in these places may not be killed, God is regarded as the savior since he is the creator and many names or titles allude to his salvatory activities. This includes, Giver of Life, Giver of Rain/Water, Protector of the Poor and Deliverer.

Salvation has to do with physical and immediate dangers that threaten survival, good health and general prosperity or safety. It is not an abstraction or something that has to be realized at the end of time, it is experienced in the past and it is being experienced in the present.<sup>179</sup> It is in this sense that I apply the label salvation on Shona indigenous religion. It is deemed imperative to look at the pre-Christian religious orientation of the Shona people in terms of their concept of salvation. Salvation implies deliverance from a particular adverse or unhappy situation and restoration or bringing in to a particular auspicious or happy one.<sup>180</sup> Paul Gifford sheds light on the traditional concept of salvation before the

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<sup>178</sup> John Mbiti, "God and Salvation in African Religion", *Journal of Inter-denominational Theological Centre*, 16, 1 & 2, (Fall 1998/Spring 1989), 66-67.

<sup>179</sup> Mbiti, "God, Sin and Salvation in African Religion," 66-67.

<sup>180</sup> E. Bolaji Idowu, "Religion, Magic and Medicine-with special Reference to Africa", *Orita*, 1, 2, 1967, 62.

Christianization of Ghana which also applies to the Shona people. He points out that:

The physical and the spiritual realm are not separate but are bound up in one totality: nothing is purely matter since the spirit infuses and changes occur, as a result of one spirit acting upon another. Causality is to be discerned primarily in the spiritual realm although the physical is not entirely disregarded. In religious rituals the aim is to preserve the cordial relationship with the Supreme Being, the deities and the ancestors so that there be continuous flow of positive influence which ensures prosperity. This prosperity includes, long life, healthy offspring and a good death and evil deeds leave one open to the anger and withdrawal of benign influence of spiritual to actions of evil spiritual forces. It is within this context that we can understand why Pentecostals dwell much on the Deliverance phenomenon.<sup>181</sup>

Salvation among the Africans means the spiritual world continues to exert influence in form of either blessing or punishing. It also shows the quest for abundant life, health and material success.

## **An Analysis of the Shona Concept of Salvation**

C. Banana notes that the Shona and Ndebele believe in life in the here and now and talking of an eschatology and kingdom of God is actually meaningless to them. It is garbage.<sup>182</sup> He reiterates what Gifford says about the pre-Ghanaian conception of salvation:

Mediation between Mwari and people is the role of ancestors through the spirit mediums. The belief underlying these rituals is that the destructive evil condition, event or action of a person or community is caused ultimately by supernatural forces and can be restrained, corrected or totally eliminated by appropriate contact with ...these forces which ensure positive influence in prospering and protecting from evil.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 83-84.

<sup>182</sup> Banana, *Come and Share: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1991, 61.

<sup>183</sup> Banana, *Come and Share*, 61.

Prosperity among the Shona includes long life, having healthy offspring, individual and community and a good death. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu notes that in primal religiosity, finite human beings stand in need of the powers and draw on such sources for protection from evil forces through appropriate covenant relationships with such transcendent benevolent helpers.<sup>184</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu's observation finds affirmation in the writings of Catholic missionaries working in Zimbabwe, recorded in the Zambesi Mission Record. They charged that the Ndebele and the Kalanga were so grossly sensual and selfish and pre-occupied with the materialistic aspects of life that they could never develop any meaningful spiritual consciousness.<sup>185</sup> The other comment from a Jesuit missionary is:

The carnal things and those only are what they appreciate and seek after. They did not believe in the immortality of the soul. All they were concerned about was to make the most of their earthly life. It was useless and futile to speak to them about heaven and hell as their general reaction would be, who has seen heaven, who has seen hell?<sup>186</sup>

The above comments help to see how some of the missionaries described the prime occupation of the Shona in terms of material success. Although the statements emerged within the context of racism during the colonial era, they help to locate the indigenous people's preoccupation with the here-and-now. The emphasis is not on the world to come, but on the life in this world. For all African peoples, salvation is not experienced once and it has to do with affirmation and enhancement of life.<sup>187</sup>

The Christian teaching of salvation does not easily fit into the indigenous African concept of salvation. While the Christian concept of salvation includes ideas stressed by the Shona, it tends to play them down by

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<sup>184</sup> Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Hearing in our Tongues the Wonderful Works of God': Pentecost, Ecumenism and Renewal in African Christianity", *Missionalia, Southern Journal of Missiology*, 35, Nov. 2007, 131.

<sup>185</sup> *Zambezi Mission Record Report* 73, July 1916 quoted by Ngwabi Bhebe, "Missionary Activities among the Ndebele and Karanga", Anthony Dachs, ed, *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1973, 44.

<sup>186</sup> *Zambezi Mission Record Report* quoted by Bhebe, 1973, 44.

<sup>187</sup> Cyril Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa*, Gower, Gower House, 1987, 77.

placing greater emphasis on the spiritual as well as the eschatological aspects. Hence, one notes an element of contrast in terms of ideas and emphasis. However, this contrast is not in opposition to the Western pre-occupation with atonement from sin and forgiveness of guilt.<sup>188</sup> The question of grace and works, that is, the justification of unjust men by a just and righteous God, the unjust suffering for the just<sup>189</sup> is very foreign to the Shona. The traditional Shona mind revolts against such a theology.

Several writers concur that salvation in ATR is largely material and not mystical and spiritual. It is the summation of whatever guarantees security, peace, protection, happiness, safety and well-being.<sup>190</sup> The salvific goods that are sought pertain to this life and are tangible: success in worldly ventures such as marriage, fishing, hunting, having children and large herds of livestock.<sup>191</sup> In order to help some people from anxieties that are experienced due to life's contingencies from the vagaries of nature, from potential impotency, from bad luck and from malevolent spirits, witches and sorcerers, ATR has designed protective rites and rituals whose function is to immunize potential victims against witchcraft.<sup>192</sup> This is mostly done through acknowledging the key role of the sacred practitioners, spirit mediums and traditional healers who access the spirit world and facilitate full life characterized by protection. Mbiti adds that some people resort to magical practices such as swallowing pebbles from the river bed and eating fat from the python in order to prolong life.<sup>193</sup> Thus, many scholars have remarked that Africans always want to come back when they die. This is better summed up by F. J. Verstraelen when he writes that ATR is focused upon two main concerns: making life possible and sustaining it (provision of food, fertility of people and animals) and offering solutions for suffering (setbacks illness, death).<sup>194</sup> African religiosity is oriented strongly to this world, the

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<sup>188</sup> Okorocho, 77.

<sup>189</sup> Okorocho, 77.

<sup>190</sup> See e.g., Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 84.

<sup>191</sup> See e.g., S. Maimela, "Salvation in African Traditional Religions", *Missionalia*, 13, 2, 1985, 63-77.

<sup>192</sup> Maimela, "Salvation in ATR", 77.

<sup>193</sup> Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 88.

<sup>194</sup> F. J. Verstraelen, *Christianity in a New Key*, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 1996, 74.

earthly reality and the life power is central.<sup>195</sup> The indigenous cosmology is both this and other worldly.

## **ZAOGA and the Shona Concept of Salvation**

The question is: how do these traditional religions relate to missionary gospel and Pentecostal theology that preaches another message of salvation? Hence the task is to examine whether ZAOGA Pentecostals still live within the realm of conceptualizing salvation from the Shona traditional perspective or simply adhere to the biblical concept of salvation. Matthew 6:19-25 says: "...but lay up your treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where neither thieves do not break through and steal ... take not thought of your life."

These verses constituted the message that was preached by early Christian missionaries. Wealth, joy, health and many others were relegated to the next world (heaven) and African Christians were called to endure hardships and sorrows and not to strive to accumulate riches on earth because it is a temporary home. In fact, poverty was conceived as being synonymous with holiness, based on Mark 10:25, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." However, the ZAOGA Gospel has suffered from this early missionary perspective. The word of God forms the basis of Christian salvation and salvation requires believers to refrain from sin. Guti encourages his congregation and said:

Definition of genuine prosperity will only come when you are prospering spiritually by putting God First in your life...When you are saved spiritually; true blessings always start from inside reflecting outside. That is the kingdom of God and His righteousness...True blessing is not money all the time. True blessing is to have enough to eat. The key is peace of mind, peace in heart, peace in the family and good health. To be rich in material (sic) only is not good.<sup>196</sup>

He has also said: "Do not claim heaven every day. Heaven is yours but what matters is what you do here on earth before you go."<sup>197</sup> We should train doctors, lawyers, judges not just to go to heaven but to run the

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<sup>195</sup> Verstraelen, 74.

<sup>196</sup> Guti, Prosperity that Comes through Tithing, 13-15.

<sup>197</sup> Ezekiel Guti teaching at Elders/Deacons Deeper Life Conference, AMFCC, Apr. 2010.

earth (“this world!”). The focus of the church and its theology has been pre-occupied with heaven, it needs to be changed because once you receive Jesus as your personal savior and be born again, walk in the fear of the Lord, heaven is yours.<sup>198</sup> Thus, ZAOGA built an orphanage centre in Matabeleland South in May 2011, in Insiza district, sent relief to Ngaone community on 9 June 2011, among many other social programmes that the church is involved in. Guti says that in Africa, prosperity was delayed by people who were preaching ruptures all the time and saying we are going to be rich in heaven.<sup>199</sup>

This brings to mind the Letter of King Leopold II of Belgium to Colonial missionaries in 1883 that aptly reads, “Evangelize the niggers so that they stay forever in submission to the white colonialists ... encourage your followers to love poverty ...”<sup>200</sup> ZAOGA sermons negate the mentality towards riches that was advocated during the period. One ZAOGA pastor criticized members of the church who simply hope to enjoy in heaven. He emphasized that such people will be a problem in heaven. They would be destroying roads of gold and silver in heaven because they did not have money on earth.<sup>201</sup> The heart of his message was that Christians should make as much money as they can while still on earth because all the wealth belongs to them as children of God (by virtue of being children of God, God’s wealth belongs to them). Salvation is experienced as something concrete, in the here and now: successful cropping in the fields, large herd of livestock and success in the other entire worldly ventures one undertakes. Guti and his pastors perceive that through preaching people would be saved at two levels; from current situations and also in future. At a ZAOGA International Youth Conference in Zvimba, one of the speakers boldly declared that to be poor is sinful because “our father Abraham was rich in everything.”<sup>202</sup> This preacher was a popular businessman and gave the church millions of Zimbabwe dollars because he was one of the owners of Inter-market Building Society, although he later faced corruption charges and fled to

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<sup>198</sup> Guti, Prosperity that Comes through Tithing, 15-16.

<sup>199</sup> Guti, *The Church and Political Responsibility*, 55.

<sup>200</sup> Letter from King Leopold II of Belgium to Colonial Missionaries, 1883, <http://africa.com/stories/200510060035.html>. Accessed 5/06/2012.

<sup>201</sup> Pastor Raphael Gondo preaching at Seke 2 District Big Sunday at Jumbo 14 Dec. 2003.

<sup>202</sup> Nicholas Vingirayi preaching at ZAOGA International Youth Conference at ZIPAM in Zvimba, 4-08-2001.



the United Kingdom. His words find justification in what Gifford says about Pentecostal Christianity: the means to success are only based on giving to God.<sup>203</sup> However, one can only give to God when living in abundance. This prosperity message tends to see material, tangible prosperity (including health) as evidence of spirituality.

Members of ZAOGA are encouraged to make money through carrying out different projects called Talents. Talents is generating income through embarking on a project(s) that he or she is gifted in and then gives the money to the church to support several ministries and also tithing and giving first fruits. This is best described through the analogy of “sowing” and “reaping”. They believe that you will have abundance when you “sow” your “seed” (money) and if you do not have the “seed” you have to pray to God who gives the “seed”. The agricultural rites in ATR can be equated to the continued encouragement to praying for the “seed” before “sowing”, “sowing” into the life of the man of God, tithing, giving first fruits even if the economic conditions are harsh. The premise and justification for this gospel is that God is not limited by any socio-economic and political situation. Therefore, in crisis moments, Christians have to buy household goods, cars and open up businesses rather than watching the “heathens” in the world becoming wealthy<sup>204</sup>. Not only are the members encouraged to generate finance but to own houses. At a prayer meeting for women, at AMFCC, commonly called *Chipiri* (because of the day they meet, namely Chipiri or Tuesday) ZAOGA’s Secretary General’s wife denounced women who rent houses and testify that they have good relations with their landlords. She challenged them: “Why can’t you buy your own house?”<sup>205</sup> According to her, there is no need to be poor materially because this is contrary to God’s divine will. That is why in order to counter poverty, which is demonized ZAOGA has embarked on “Working Talents”.

In general, traditional culture has vested much in keeping communities united by preventing individual accumulation. According to Gifford, it kept individuals from prospering much more conspicuously than their relatives and neighbors. Witchcraft accusations have often functioned in

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<sup>203</sup> Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity*, 69.

<sup>204</sup> Guti teaches that every crisis is an opportunity to prosper. ZAOGA preachers also teach that crisis moments are moments when God demonstrates his power because God is not limited by economic hardships.

<sup>205</sup> Getrude Rupapa teaching on Tuesday Ladies Prayer meeting 5-03-2002 at AMFCC.

this way. Christianity, by constantly glorifying success, is well calculated to change such attitudes and legitimize wealth creation by individuals because it presents success as a blessing, a person's right and also godly.<sup>206</sup>

### **The Quest for Long Life: Salvation from Ill-Health and Premature Death**

Health issues are not ignored in ZAOGA. Fasting is encouraged and Mondays are specifically set for fasting and prayer by every member of the church. Fridays are specifically for pastors. A Chitungwiza overseer encouraged the congregation to fast because, according to him, it kills germs in the body. He also encouraged believers to eat healthy food the right way, even after fasting. Members were told that as old as he is, Gutu exercises everyday to keep his body healthy.<sup>207</sup> It is reported that Gutu does not eat fatty chickens but instead opts for the traditionally raised chickens, especially those from the rural areas.<sup>208</sup> It was announced at a ZAOGA Marlborough Big Sunday that the church was looking forward to a donation of these chickens for Gutu's Birthday Gift. Many people pledged to bring them. The Asian people who are claimed to have the longest life span are envied in ZAOGA. Gutu teaches that it is because of the type of food and herbs that they eat.<sup>209</sup> Gutu's wife always reiterates on Ezekiel T.V that she discourages her children from frying food all the time because it is not healthy. She also discourages sweets and biscuits because they cause health problems all the time, as well as leading to premature deaths.<sup>210</sup>

The love for longer life and health is seen in the teachings pertaining to food, eating habits and fasting, coupled with the "deliverance" messages in order for people to receive healing in their bodies. Every time ZAOGA members meet, they are urged to pray for Gutu to have a long life, protection from enemies and good health. Evil spirits disrupt peace of mind

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<sup>206</sup> Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 49.

<sup>207</sup> Stanley Masaka preaching at Jumbo in Chitungwiza on 18-03-2010.

<sup>208</sup> ZAOGA Marlborough District Big Sunday, during collection of Gutu's Birthday Gift on 2 Sep. 2010.

<sup>209</sup> Gutu teaches that the Asians have a long life span and that it is attributed to their diet.

<sup>210</sup> Eunor Gutu's message repeatedly screened on Ezekiel TV.

and Guti told his leaders to teach the people that if there be avenging spirits bewildering a family, they must give the family of the victim a token of saying sorry. This is not to admit that *ngozi* exists because they are simply demonic powers<sup>211</sup> which hinder the well-being of the family, affecting them physically and spiritual. One might question the act of giving a token to the family of the victim, if the church does not believe in *ngozi*. As Chapter five queried this: is it not simply denying what they continue to practice, as it appears that ZAOGA acknowledges that people need to be saved from the avenging spirits or innovative way of practicing the traditional rite in a more profound and meaningful way to the African situation? Alywad Shorter has noted that the doctrine of salvation is well received in most of the Second or Third World countries which have been politically oppressed because it means more than futuristic spiritual salvation.<sup>212</sup> Vincent Mulago adds that Africans are pre-occupied with this life; empirical life since in their view the two are inseparable.<sup>213</sup> Similar observations are made by Karla Poewe: believers try to integrate mind, body and spirit and this provides a holistic religious experience.<sup>214</sup> This is also embraced by ZAOGA. It is therefore worth exploring the common ground between ZAOGA and Shona religion and culture. The salvific goods that are sought pertain to this life. No wonder why the Gospel of Prosperity and “sowing” in to the ministry is emphasized and is more appealing. The church acts as ‘job breakers’ so that members get employed and break the spirit of poverty. ZAOGA seems to view life power as central. There is no need to be sick and the church is the “hospital” and “home” both for physical and spiritual diagnosis.

There is a popular saying: ZAOGA *musha, uchengete unokuchengetawo*.<sup>215</sup> (ZAOGA is a home, look after it well and it will look after you). How then does ZAOGA’s notion of salvation relate to Shona culture and religion? Guti claims that one cannot serve God when one is sick and that no sickness comes from God.<sup>216</sup> For him salvation and healing are inex-

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<sup>211</sup> Ezekiel Guti at Pastors’ Fellowship 5-10-2006 at AMFCC.

<sup>212</sup> Alywad Shorter, *African Christian Theology: Adaptation or Incarnation?*, London et al., Chapman, 1975, 151.

<sup>213</sup> Vincent Mulago, “African Traditional Religion and Christianity”, 120.

<sup>214</sup> Karla Poewe, “Introduction”, *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, Columbia, Univ. of South Carolina Pr., 1994, 9.

<sup>215</sup> This is a ZAOGA popular saying.

<sup>216</sup> Ezekiel Guti’s Message/Teaching to ZAOGA churches for ten days prayer in Jan. every year.

trically linked to God's salvation in the here and now and in healing activities. That is why prominent place is given to "Deliverance Explosions" where pastors, evangelists and other gifted members of the church pray for the sick so that they attain a place of desired health and also prosperity. The basic idea of deliverance is that a Christian's progress and advance can be blocked by demons who maintain some power over him despite him/her having come to Christ.<sup>217</sup> The principle of elimination by substitution seems to have taken place. The functionaries that administer deliverance among the Shona (*n'anga*) are demonized and church leaders have taken on that role. In ATR rites and sacrifice take various forms to bring relief and in order to avoid lack. That is why a special place is given to diviners, priests and medicine men and women. Banana asks a relevant question: "How far does the role of *n'anga* help us understand the role of pastors?"<sup>218</sup>

He asks another question: "To restore health and wholeness, should not Christianity baptize some aspects of traditional healing?"<sup>219</sup> The answer to this question might be: how? However, part of the answer to this question is that ZAOGA has dethroned the traditional role of Shona religious practitioners through the role of church pastors in order to achieve desired ends. However, the means to bring about deliverance is what is different. While the church invokes the name of Jesus, traditionally, religious practitioners appeal to the ancestral spirits.

Gerrie ter Haar has provided useful insights concerning prosperity among Pentecostals. She argues that the concept of prosperity has to be seen in the light of African worldviews, not just a recent import from North American evangelical ideas. According to her, it proceeds from African ideas.<sup>220</sup> The idea of spiritual rebirth is also deeply rooted in African Religions and often bears a relation to traditional ideas of good and evil. Evil forces have to be integrated into the community and there kept under control.<sup>221</sup> The disappearance of such mechanisms to keep evil under control or to accommodate the presence of evil, explains the need of Pentecostals' ministry of deliverance. These are very popular in ZAOGA. According Daneel, the missionaries proclaimed a gospel of

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<sup>217</sup> Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 84.

<sup>218</sup> Banana, *Come and Share*, 63.

<sup>219</sup> Banana, *Come and Share*, 63.

<sup>220</sup> ter Haar, *Halfway to Paradise*, 58.

<sup>221</sup> ter Haar, 58.

the soul's salvation but appeared to be silent on issues of politics, man's physical needs and his daily struggle for salvation therefore they did not spell out convincingly the salvation of the entire man.<sup>222</sup> However, what is significant is that Guti teaches his church that they cannot claim heaven everyday because once one makes a prayer of receiving Jesus he/she becomes a candidate for heaven. What is important is what one does here on earth<sup>223</sup>, the extent to which one exercises the kingdom of God as a birthright in taking charge over all that God designed for one (acquiring possessions and status). In other words, how many material benefits does one accrue as God's child while one is still on earth before going to heaven? At the Golden Jubilee, Guti's prayer was that God would prosper his church, Zimbabwe, cure Zimbabwe, give them food, accommodation, bless them abundantly and that they would fear God.<sup>224</sup> One can note the pre-occupation with the day today needs like food, accommodation and the desire for daily blessings in Guti's prayer.

According to Jude Mbukanma the neo-Pentecostal quest for earthly riches and temporary well-being via religion is an illicit diversion, a turning from God to self and he predicts the own abolition of Pentecostalism through contradiction which is inherent.<sup>225</sup> This is a verdict which that can be contested because it might be too hasty, general and judgmental. He quotes further two biblical verses to illustrate this diversion, 1 Timothy 6:9-10 which says that; "Those who want to get rich fall into the temptation and are caught in the trap of many foolish and harmful desires, which pull them down to ruin and destruction" and Matthew 16:16-20, "For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?"<sup>226</sup> Why does Pentecostalism (in general) hanker after worldly values like money and wealth?<sup>227</sup> This makes most Christians believe that such an attitude contradicts the original vision

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<sup>222</sup> Marthinus Daneel, "The Missionary Outreach of African Independent Churches", *Missionalia*, 8, 3, 1980, 58.

<sup>223</sup> Guti, *The Church and Political Responsibility*, 16.

<sup>224</sup> Ezekiel Guti's Prayer at ZAOGA 50th Jubilee Celebrations on 22-08-2010 at Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium.

<sup>225</sup> Jude Mbukanma, "The Contradictory Posture of Neo-Pentecostalism: A Philosophical and theological Critique", (eds), Anthony Akinwale & Joseph Kenny, *Tradition and Compromises: Essays on the Challenges of Pentecostalism*, Ibadan, The Michael J Dempsey Centre, 2004, 68.

<sup>226</sup> Mbukanma, "The Contradictory Posture of Neo-Pentecostalism", 68.

<sup>227</sup> Mbukanma, 68.

and thrust of the first post-apostolic and non-Catholic Pentecostals. Poverty is demonized and is said to reflect a deficient Christian. The question is whether or not ZAOGA has couched the traditional salvific view into the church. This is mainly because Christians have sought a religion that is material as well as spiritual, and as stressed by Maxwell:

African Christian leaders and practitioners borrowed from traditional culture and religion but re-coded when located within the Christian systems of ideas and thus took on a new form and significance which had greater appeal. The success of new forms of popular Christianity lay in both their continuity and discontinuity with what had gone before.<sup>228</sup>

This search finds place in ZAOGA where personal relationship with Jesus is emphasized, communal weekly home Bible studies are undertaken on Wednesdays and meeting on Sundays as a church. Healing is interpreted in the widest sense, encompassing the whole life's problems, making salvation easily identified with healing.<sup>229</sup> While Guti always emphasizes spiritual purity and dedication to God, the doctrine of physical salvation appears to be built upon the Shona cultural-religious heritage. This forces one to question why people who claim to have converted to Christianity continue to be influenced by their past traditions which they at times denounce. Only Satan, as pointed by Paul Gifford, is the Western missionary import<sup>230</sup> but the deliverance phenomenon is well understood by Christians coming from a Shona religio-cultural background.

## Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the traditional belief in unnatural events is very strong among the Pentecostals and that the Bible also has allusions to witchcraft activities, although there are no pronounced cases in the Bible so the Pentecostals adhere to the traditional Shona belief. It

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<sup>228</sup> David Maxwell, "Christianity and the African Imagination", 2002, 7.

<sup>229</sup> See e.g., Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2004.

<sup>230</sup> See e.g., Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Pr., 2004.

<sup>230</sup> Maxwell, "Christianity and the African Imagination", 2002, 7.

has been established that there is both acknowledgement and confusion among the Pentecostals pertaining to the subject of avenging spirit. Also, it was demonstrated that the teaching on the role and status of women is informed by the traditional existential realities. Most analysts of the history of music performance in Zimbabwe overlook the important role played by AICs in retaining traditional music as well as creatively blending it with Christian themes. This is a proven fact in ZAOGA's music; the whistling, ululation, clapping of hands, incantations and petitions accords well with traditional forms of worship rather than with Western Christian form of worship.

Forms of 'wild' traditional dances commonly regarded as secular have become popular in the church and the justification is that, the 'God of Ezekiel Guti' (not God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) delivered them from darkness to light. Prosperity in every facet of life is desired. Consequently, salvation which is largely world affirming is a felt need among the Shona. It raises the question of adherence to Shona liturgy and salvation by ZAOGA. The Christian notion of salvation is also futuristic and it is not world affirming largely because the world is evil and Christians are not of this world (1 John 3). Whatever ills faced on earth, there shall be restoration and joy in heaven (Revelations 4). The Christians' view of salvation embraces the hope for life after death and the need for realized salvation does not forfeit its future and spiritual dimensions. If Christianity is world denying by focusing and emphasizing the future and the spiritual dimension while ATR is world affirming, then the task is to evaluate whether or not the concept of salvation among the Pentecostals is largely influenced and shaped by Shona culture or biblical perspective. "A complete break from the past" is difficult because members continue to be influenced by the past. In this chapter, it was noted that the background Shona religion plays a major role in shaping ZAOGA's notion of salvation. The following chapter will conclude the book by restating the key themes from each chapter and summarizing the interface between Pentecostalism and indigenous spirituality in Zimbabwe.

## 6 | Analysis and Conclusion

### Introduction

The previous chapters have considered the themes which we realized will give us the platform to assess the resilience of Shona religion and culture among the Christians in ZAOGA. We made use of the methods that we employed in chapter one in gathering the material that lead us to analyze and conclusion. In this chapter, we revisit these themes and offer an overall analysis in order to present the position of the study on the resilience of Shona religion and culture among Pentecostals in ZAOGA. The central questions underlying the analysis are: which beliefs and rituals are in harmony in both religions? Which are the areas of continuity, discontinuity, extension, harmonization and contradiction?<sup>1</sup> How has ZAOGA contextualized the Gospel – how has ZAOGA managed to re-interpret, recast, and reject the concepts from Shona religion and culture?

### Revisiting the Issues and Themes

As we move towards the conclusion of this study, it is important to re-trace the steps that we have taken so far. In chapter one, we mainly dealt with the area of study, justification, methodology and the challenges faced by the research using the specified methodologies. We also considered the typologies of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. Chapter two reviewed the literature by Daneel and Anderson and also analyzed the works of scholars who have contributed to areas that are relevant to our study. It gives prominence to the works of Maxwell. Chapter three examined the Shona peoples and their culture providing us with a background for our study as we examine tenets of the Shona culture against the backdrop of Christian teachings. We noted that in Shona culture, sacrality pervades every area of life and Guti has upheld this worldview in his pastoral ministry. In *Kuremekedzana Kunounza HuMwari* he has

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<sup>1</sup> The researcher was inspired by Nisbert Taringa's arguments in his book, *A Comparative Analysis of Shona and Christian Attitudes to Nature: Shona Religion and Christianity*, Saarbrücken, Lambert Academic Publ., 2010, 4.



explicitly demonstrated this African worldview in his Africanization of worship. For Guti respect is a form of worship which can move God to act as demonstrated in the old days among the Shona. Thus, although there is biblical exposition, the worship of God is incarnated in Shona religion and culture.

In chapter four, we examined some traits of American Pentecostalism and the location of ZAOGA within the Pentecostal movement by focusing on the rise of Guti and ZAOGA in order to assess the magnitude of its influence on Guti and ZAOGA. I considered Guti's background in Ngaone, his relations with UCCZ and AFM, in Vumba, Marondera and Bindura and how it has influenced and shaped ZAOGA theology and church structures. Chapter five provided an in depth analysis of the selected aspects of Shona religion and culture. We highlighted the complex interaction between ZAOGA and these selected aspects which appear to have created avenues for survival in different forms and means. We therefore need to conclude our thesis in the light of the findings.

## **The Themes: A Critical Overview**

In this section, we seek to provide our final assessment regarding ZAOGA's interaction with Shona religio-cultural beliefs and practices. We retain the same order of themes as in the earlier chapters.

### **Value of Words Spoken Prior to Death/on the Deathbed**

In chapter five, we noted affinities between Shona culture and the Bible concerning the value of words spoken prior to death. Guti's teaching does not make reference to the Bible but draws all the teaching from Shona culture as shown in *Kuremekedzana Kunounza HuMwari*. Moreover, in the teaching, he shows a great deal of envying the Shona culture by criticizing the Christians' failure to learn from it (Shona culture). Believers creatively formulate their teachings from the old, combining with new concepts which help to create avenues for survival and expression.

This gives us the premise to argue that this aspect of Shona culture has persisted among ZAOGA Pentecostals because there is an extension of this belief in both religions. We asked earlier on whether ZAOGA Chris-

tians are more indebted to the indigenous religions or biblical culture. Since it is also an aspect in the Bible, it appears ZAOGA draws from Shona religion and culture because there is no contradiction in both faiths. Hence, the aspect continues in the church. Here there is continuity and resilience of ATR in an African Pentecostal church.

## Belief in Avenging Spirits

We have acknowledged that in the Bible we have cases of murder. This is also found among the Shona people. The Bible does not supply us with a lot of information on how to redress the situation when someone is murdered. In contrast, Shona religion and culture has very clear teachings and rituals that have to be carried out in order to appease the avenging spirit yet they pose direct confrontation with the Christian values. These have been examined in this study. It is clear that the belief is recast as evil spirits (though in theory) but the practice of appeasing *ngozi* continues in ZAOGA. However, it has been placed under the umbrella of practicing the Christian ethos of admitting wrong and asking for forgiveness. In Shona culture no one can appease *ngozi* without accepting the wrong and asking for forgiveness also. In addition, as pointed by M.L Daneel, the traditional payment of cattle has been associated with the traditional cult of ancestral spirits.<sup>2</sup> ZAOGA transforms the appeasing rituals of *ngozi* besides theoretical denial (in many circles) that it does not exist. The concept of *ngozi* is denied and suppressed but continues to live in that rejection through ZAOGA's allegiance to the concept of 'restorative justice'.<sup>3</sup> This denial or rejection does not mean that the belief has been discarded but it is only suppressed and is not destroyed. This is complicated by the fact that the Bible does not offer a clear position on what has to be done, except that if a person kills someone by mistake one has to find safety in the land of refuge,<sup>4</sup> which is different from the Shona belief because, '*mhosva hairovi*' (a crime has to be paid for). Therefore appeasement of *ngozi* continues to exist but in a refashioned way.

The belief resurfaces in the church, but there is a different interpretation (namely, that they are demonic powers). We have concluded that the

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<sup>2</sup> Martinus Daneel, "The Growth and Significance of Shona Independent Churches", *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, 2, (ed), Anthony Dachs, Gweru, Mambo Pr., 202.

<sup>3</sup> See Mangena, *On Ubuntu*, 2012, 84.

<sup>4</sup> See the book of Leviticus 24:20.

traditional method of *kuripa ngozi* (appeasing the spirit of the deceased) have also found justification but under the guise of Christian ethos of love, admitting wrong and asking for forgiveness in order to promote peace and harmony. This theology is formed in response to the felt needs and questionings of adherents. However, the element of discontinuity from the Bible is with regards to the settlement by giving a virgin girl as in Shona culture. This has been condemned, not only in ZAOGA, but also as an infringement of individual's rights by human rights organizations.

On a theoretical plain, discontinuity from Shona religion culture is manifest when the life of the Christians is imaged as a power encounter, a spiritual battle, requiring steadfastness against *ngozi*, and this perception recasts the belief through demonization of the spirits, but at the same time, adapts traditional belief and rituals to have a Christian meaning. This adaptation is a result of familiarization. Hence, we note that there is combination of the old and new concepts in the teaching and practice of rituals on appeasement rituals. The familiarization and adaptation has enabled ZAOGA to re-fashion the belief enabling it to re-surface and continue. The new interpretations have also given birth to direct confrontation and contrast which has created some discontinuities.

## **Role and Status of Women: African Traditional Legacy**

With reference to the status of women, we have outlined (in chapter five, section 5.1.2) how ZAOGA has endeavored to upgrade and restore the status and dignity of women through acknowledging and accepting their participation in the church that includes ordination, preaching and teaching on the pulpit, a domain reserved for men in some Pentecostals churches. However, we can affirm the rhetorical question that Mercy Amba Oduyoye has raised, "What actual difference has Christianity made for women other than its attempt to foist the image of a European middle class house wife?"

ZAOGA has a patriarchal hierarchy, although it accepts the services of women, it does not listen to their voices and welcome their initiatives. Moreover, the Gospel of unconditional submission in marital relations purveyed by ZAOGA should be viewed critically. It defies and negates the idea of a free woman and keep women in subordinate position, such that the concept of equality and equity remain a far-fetched dream.

Eunor Guti claims that it is “voluntary submission” which is godly but the unresolved and unanswered question is: how far a woman can submit to a cruel, irresponsible, promiscuous, violent husband especially in this HIV/AIDS era? What about abusive in-laws? A blind eye seems to be cast on the needs and aspirations of a woman, especially by not allowing women to challenge male headship. Thus, we concur with Oduyoye when she says, “Biblical interpretation and Christian theology in Africa have had the effect of sacralizing the marginalization of women’s experience.”<sup>5</sup> Although ZAOGA leaders advocate democratic principles of fairness and justice in the running of families and the need to consider the views of women, the underlying theology and ideology governing marriage is one of subordination of women to men.<sup>6</sup> Thus, as pointed out by Browning and Hollingsworth, ZAOGA has the “dubious and paradoxical character of being at once liberating and disempowering.”<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the literalist interpretation of the Bible is an emulation of Shona traditional roles assigned to women.

Divorce is not encouraged and, as in Shona culture, a woman has no dignity outside marriage. This is clearly attested in “Go Quickly and Tell” Thursday meetings (*kuChina*). However, Guti loves and respects single women to the extent that he has pioneered Single Women’s Ministry which is very powerful and prominent in ZAOGA in matters of contributing finances to the church and praying for him during all-night prayers sessions. The *tete* (aunt) has been dethroned in her traditional role and the pastor’s wives, elders and deaconesses assume that role of *tete* to give sex education to the young woman. One also notes the traditional expectation of a woman in marital relations is being reinforced by Pentecostals. These are that she should guard the marriage at all costs, endure hardships and not divorce. Thus, we see continuity of teachings from Shona culture and discontinuity through elimination by substitution of the religious practitioners (pastors replacing aunts). Nonetheless, at the same time there is continuation of the Shona concept of preparing the girl for marriage. Guti positively encourages single women to pray (especially for him) and to work hard and fend for their families and not

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<sup>5</sup> Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa*, 1997, 172.

<sup>6</sup> Mwaura & Parsitau, “Perceptions of Women’s Health and Rights”, 178.

<sup>7</sup> Melissa Browning & A. Hollingsworth, “Your daughters Shall Prophecy (As Long as they submit): Pentecostalism and Gender in Global perspective”, Michael Wilkinson & Steven M. Studebaker, eds, *The Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America*, Eugene, OR, Pickwick, 2010, 171.

to prostitute themselves. They minister to the pastors and Guti continually praises them and claims they are his “pillar.” This is because they constantly have night vigil prayers for Guti without hindrance from husbands. Guti honours them a lot but their role and status is the same as that of every woman who loses her husband. Generally, she has lost her respect and finds herself despised if she does not quickly remarry. If she chooses not to remarry, she is robbed of her dignity because it is beyond societal expectation for a woman to stay alone. They end up longing to escape the social opprobrium of not having a husband.

Women who choose to divorce because of hardships or the promiscuity of their husbands are branded as ‘fools’ who build and destroy their homes with their hands. Proverbs 14:1 is quoted. In this connection, we note that Shona religion and culture is upheld in the church because it was unheard of that a woman divorced her husband regardless of hardships. She was expected to endure. Worse still, barrenness is an obvious disaster for the woman, but not for the man. Exodus 23:26 which says that no one shall be barren in the land is often quoted to the blame and disgrace of the woman. This is similar to how a barren woman becomes a disgrace in Shona culture (*chiseko chenyika*). So one questions whether or not ZAOGA aligns with the principles of the Bible which state that children are a gift from God or Shona culture with regard to the significant role and status of children. In view of this, we concur with Edet’s claim that the teaching of human liberation and the equality of men and women is indeed good news for women but this teaching is rather more theoretical than practical.<sup>8</sup> As a result the role and status of women in ZAOGA closely follows women’s traditional roles. Hence, ZAOGA appears to be a bastion of patriarchy, perpetuated by men and taken over by the female leadership. Female leaders have become the agents of patriarchy themselves. This is evidenced in Eunor Guti’s teachings. The element of partnership through “not above him, not under him but side by side with him” is theoretical because the teachings on submission override partnership in marital relations.

Thus the words of Chitando find justification:

Although the ideals posited by Zimbabwean Pentecostalism are impressive, they have built in limitations as they continue to be influ-

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<sup>8</sup> Rosemary. N Edet, “Christianity and African Women Rituals”, (eds) Mercy Oduyoye & Musimbi Kanyoro, *The Will to Arise: Women Tradition and the Church in Africa*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1992, 35.

enced by the old paradigm of male supremacy because the assault on masculinities is not radical and still carries oppressive aspects as they continue to be informed by indigenous and biblical patriarchies.<sup>9</sup>

Madipaone Masenya also has a positive point to note:

While it is good for a woman to have the interests of her husband at heart, it will do both of them good if marriage is not a one sided affair as in patriarchal cultures like those underlying Proverbs 31:10-31.<sup>10</sup>

Through a different lens ZAOGA promotes women to offices of overseers, bishops and even apostles. Their ideology builds on what the AICS have espoused by enlarging the priestly role of women.<sup>11</sup> Assuming powerful titles like “Apostle” seems not to be biblical and at the same time might give the impression of negation of tradition. Maxwell says:

The negation of tradition by Pentecostals is significant in a number of ways ... it has been used by some women and young men to undermine the sacred legitimation of social hierarchies of male gerontocratic elites which have excluded them from political power and social status.<sup>12</sup>

This raises hope or gives the impression of a woman who has been ‘released’ and given space to exercise her gifting in full. However, the uncritical reading of the Scriptures subverts everything. This is the very thing that has frustrated feminist theologians and other gender activists. This is manifested in ZAOGA Day to Day Council, which is responsible for judging critical issues mostly of corruption and adultery by pastors. It has virtually excluded women. This closely follows the traditional pattern of the Shona *dare* (council) which excluded women. It militates against them by rendering them passive by not being allowed to represent or to speak for themselves but through a male spokesperson. This is perhaps

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<sup>9</sup> Ezra Chitando, “A new man for the new era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, masculinities, and the HIV epidemic”, *Missionalia, Southern African Journal of Missiology*, 35, 3, Nov. 2007, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Madiopane Masenya, “A Bosadi (Womanhood) Reading of Proverbs 31:10-31”, Musa Dube, (ed), *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible*, Geneva, WCC, 2001, 155.

<sup>11</sup> Kalu, “The Third Response”, 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> David Maxwell, “Delivered From the Spirit of Poverty?: Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28 (3), 1998, 354.

where we need to interrogate ZAOGA: to what extent are women empowered when they operate within the checks and balances set by men? Moreover, the teaching of equating Christ and the husband is pure evidence of how women occupy a subservient position in Pentecostal churches since they are called to follow orders without expressing themselves or questioning their husbands. This reinforces a one sided marital relationship detrimental to the woman. Most women in leadership positions seem to accept this subservient position. They have even taken the lead from their male counterparts in perpetuating this gospel to their fellow women, especially when leaders condemn equal rights in the church as a worldly doctrine by the devil to counter God's perfect design for a place of a woman in marriage. ZAOGA accept male monopoly on leadership in the church as both 'natural' and divinely 'ordained'.<sup>13</sup> That is why ZAOGA has spiritualized discourses against and "fights" feminism. The evidence shows that the role and status of women in Christianity and ATR assign inferior roles to women apart from the burdens that they carry, for example, the biblical notion of submission and Proverbs 31 woman and the traditional expectations of a woman. These largely corroborates because they are informed by patriarchal structures. However, the traditional sociological setting of the Shona Christians have led to an over emphasis on submission. The traditional subservient position of a woman seems to have been found plausible in this Pentecostal movement. Hence, in response to the question that we asked in chapter five in relation to designations (powerful titles like apostle), titles have done little to empower women in ZAOGA.

However, ZAOGA ordains women as leaders and gives them space to practice their gifts. While ZAOGA positively fights the threat to family breakdown and marriage failures in the church, it appears women have become sacrificial victims in the whole project. Culture can be used by the dominant group to oppress and exploit women in the church. Aspects of culture are often invoked to resolve issues concerning the role of women and their position in society and in relation to men.<sup>14</sup> Despite this, ZAOGA still holds greater possibilities for women because it has the avenues and potential beyond other Pentecostal denominations.

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<sup>13</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Methodologies in Women's Studies and Feminist Theology", ed Arvind Sharma, *Methodologies in Religious Studies: Interface with Women's Studies*, NY, State Univ. of NY, 2002, 179.

<sup>14</sup> Ayanga, "Religion and Women's Health", 38.

However, it appears ZAOGA “sanctifies patriarchal relations in the church”.<sup>15</sup> We can therefore, safely argue that ZAOGA has inherited the Shona traditional values and expectations of women in to the church with some discontinuity. Therefore, this means that while ZAOGA, in the manner of AICs, has opened space for women to participate in the affairs of the church, there is not much difference that the church has made in terms of ‘empowering women’ within the institution of marriage. Women are overtly and covertly marginalized by the Pentecostal theological discourse.

We may therefore conclude that Shona culture demonstrates its resilience in ZAOGA’s approach to gender issues. While Guti preaches the message of equality and promotes the participation of women, patriarchy continues to have an upper hand. There is some degree of casting the Shona patriarchal values by placing emphasis on love, but ultimately ZAOGA regards the man as the head and dominant figure in church and society.

### **Belief in Unnatural Events**

We can draw analogies between the beliefs in unnatural events in both religions. While this belief is a common phenomenon in the two religions, most interviewees show their affiliation to the notion of unnatural events in ATR. Moreover, Guti’s literature and teachings are also affiliated to Shona culture, especially the cherishing of the rich and glorious African past. Hence, ZAOGA re-sacralizes dominant traditional symbols through preserving customary notions and beliefs of the community.

We can therefore conclude that the concept among the Shona corroborates with the biblical concept. Believers appear to have harmonized the beliefs although differences lie in the nature and occurrence of these events/incidents. The dominant inclination to the past means that the belief is resilient among Pentecostals in ZAOGA through re-sacralization. This makes it easier for the Pentecostal Christian believers to continue with their traditional worldview without being challenged.

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<sup>15</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church: Theology and Practice*, San Francisco, Harper & Row Publ., 2.



## Belief in Witches and Witchcraft

African people on the whole are influenced on the by their religio-cultural beliefs which include belief in and fear of witches and witchcraft practices.<sup>16</sup> ZAOGA articulates a firm response to fears and insecurities that come with the belief in witchcraft therefore create ritual spaces to deal with the presence of evil. There is an extension of the belief in witches and witchcraft activities because the belief is found in both ZAOGA and ATR. However, this research submits that in spite of this extension, the belief and practices, coupled with the cleansing mechanisms, are largely inherited from Shona beliefs and perceptions. This is mainly because the Bible does not provide us with explicit examples of witches and witchcraft activities; yet this is a subject of concern in the church in Africa.

As already been pointed previously, Maxwell (1995) in his study of witches, prophets and avenging spirits has shown that there is resonance on witchcraft cleansing mechanisms between ZAOGA and the traditional religion. This gives us the premise to argue for elements of discontinuity embedded in that extension. There is a promotion of African diagnosis but remedy is achieved through the work of pastors, evangelists and other members of the church who have the charismatic gift of healing. We highlighted contradicting statements by Guti and other members of the church in their teachings on witchcraft. That contradiction bears testimony to confusion which seems to emanate from denying something which is coherent in the sub-conscious. However, since we do not have clear biblical affinities, it is logical and prudent to acknowledge that the Shona religion and culture has persisted in spite of aggressive denunciation among members. The belief is rejected but continues to live in the rejection, thus demonstrating its resilience.

## Liturgy: An Overview

Most analysts of the history of music performance in Zimbabwe overlook the important role played by African Independent churches in retaining traditional music as well as creatively blending it with Christian themes. Bakare notes that it is especially in worship, healing ceremonies

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<sup>16</sup> Themba J. Mafico, "The African Context for Theology", *Journal of Inter-denominational Theological Centre*, 16, 1 & 2, (Fall 1988/Spring 1989), 69.

and pastoral counseling that African churches express their embrace of African culture. Discontinuity is apparent because the language used in the worship appeals to the experiences and concerns, the joys and hopes of Africans.<sup>17</sup> The whistling, ululation, clapping of hands, incantations and petitions accords well with traditional forms of worship rather than Western Christian form of worship. Forms of 'wild' traditional dances commonly regarded as secular have become popular in the church. There is no doubt that ZAOGA has revolutionized the Christian worship to have their services have a more African feel. The Africanization of worship has seen the relaxed and exciting dancing, clapping of hands, trumpeting, drums, whistling and ululating while singing the African tunes. While the believers continue to make references to the Bible with regards to gestures like clapping of hands and dancing, ZAOGA's form of music and dance gives distinctive African characteristics which demonstrate the persistence/continuity of some type Shona cultural dances. Thus, confirming the observation on gospel music by Maxwell that singing in the vernacular backed by traditional instruments, Zimbabwean musicians reflect on a wide range of issues that concern ordinary citizens.<sup>18</sup> ZAOGA confirms traditional modes of worship. Taking the vernacular seriously, they re-invent Shona traditional religion and culture and foster indigenous rhythms.

The question that comes to mind is: has ZAOGA managed to resist the seemingly "worldly dances" or have tried but failed because of their popularity, especially among youth? If the church has tried to resist but failed and later on passively accepted the continuity of the type of music and dance, it bears testimony to the claim that ZAOGA has served as a vehicle of rehabilitating African music and dance which is deeply rooted within the hearts of the Christians. This confirms their resilience and survival.

Maimela has noted that prominent place is given to priests, diviners and medicine men or women because salvation in ATR is world affirming.<sup>19</sup> Okorochoa adds that:

Salvation is the goal of all people's religiousness; that wherever there is religion there is indeed a notion of salvation (bearing in mind different definitions), whatever is not life affirming is not considered

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<sup>17</sup> Sebastian Bakare, *The Drumbeat of Life: Jubilee in an African Context*, 1997, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 216.

<sup>19</sup> Maimela, "Salvation in African Traditional Religion", *Missionalia*, 70.

salvific...the worldly concept is no less spiritual because of stress of present needs and this reminds us that the secular is also spiritual, uniting the spiritual and the material.<sup>20</sup>

The idea of salvation appears to form a universal water table which may be touched from which ever local context we stand in religious landscape. If this is so, this might explain ZAOGA's continued interaction with Shona religion and culture because people always see reconcilable areas between the old faith and the new faith. Furthermore, because of attachment to the old faith which they 'attack', they find new avenues of expression in the lives of believers, consciously or unconsciously. For the Shona, 'now' is the symbol of the future and 'tomorrow' is received today. The worldly concept is no less spiritual because of stress on present needs. This reminds us that the secular is also spiritual: uniting the secular and the spiritual. Traditionally health (long life) and wealth determine social status in life. It needs no contention that the teaching on physical salvation and prosperity appeals to the deep seated emotions of the African people, satisfying their spirituality. The understanding of salvation has an indigenous flavor. The principal concepts in Pentecostalism are victory, favor, blessing and breakthrough but mainly in an exclusively material way to the extent that sometimes the impression is given that Christianity has been reduced to that.<sup>21</sup>

The reluctance of ZAOGA to break ties with Shona religion and culture lies in the fact that they (leaders and members) are wedded to an African world view in which salvation is understood in terms of relief or help in times of trouble in this life.<sup>22</sup> However, ZAOGA plays down ideas stressed by the Shona by emphasizing the spiritual as well as the eschatological aspect. Salvation is fundamentally a holistic concept that embraces not only theoretical salvation of the soul but also the practical here and now. The success of the message of prosperity is mainly because of the resonance or continuity between that gospel and Shona indigenous spirituality built on traditional preoccupations which focus on material realities-needs and avoidance of sickness, poverty, hunger, oppression, unemployment and evil spirits among many. Thus, the traditional occupation on material realities has been domesticated and re-coded within the Christian system. This domestication has made

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<sup>20</sup> Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa*, 52-71.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 46.

<sup>22</sup> Maimela, "Salvation in African Traditional Religions", 72.

ZAOGA relevant to the contemporary situation in terms of liturgical and socio-cultural concerns.

In the light of the praxis model (see chapter one), ZAOGA reaches out to the resources of Shona religion and culture, hence, creating an avenue for survival of the traditional religion and cultural aspects. We can conclude this section on salvation with the words of Harry Sawyer, quoted by Okorocho; “The Christian teaching on salvation does not easily fit into the tribal African concept of salvation.”<sup>23</sup> This is in spite of the similarities we have observed in the area of deliverance from evil. Ancestral spirits are reconfigured as demonic spirits. They do not bless but bring curses, hence, the need to engage in warfare<sup>24</sup> with them as opposed to establishing cordial relations with them. The driving force behind engaging with them is different but the acknowledgement of their role in the lives of the living is what has made adherents of both religions continue to interact with the spiritual world.

Joel Robbins says:

There is a tendency to preserve people’s beliefs concerning the reality and power of the spiritual worlds from which they have broken. Preserve these beliefs in the sense of accepting their cognitive claims concerning the existence of spiritual forces, but it does not retain the normative presuppositions about the moral value of the spiritual world that often accompany them.<sup>25</sup>

Adogame<sup>26</sup> and Ukah have drawn attention to Pentecostal engagement in warfare with spiritual forces. Ukah points out that African Pentecostalism would not have had the measure of vitality which it is experiencing now if it were not for the idioms of warfare, demon possession, spiritual attack, ancestral curses and oppression which it appropriates from the traditional worldview.<sup>27</sup> Hence, as pointed by D. Tutu, to all African peoples, salvation has to do with the affirmation and enhancement of

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<sup>23</sup> Harry Sawyer quoted by Cyril Okorocho, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa*, Gower, Gower House, 1987, 80.

<sup>24</sup> See Afe Adogame, “Engaging the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare; The Public Face of Aladura in Diaspora”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 34, Nov. 2004, 494-522.

<sup>25</sup> Joel Robbins, “Globalization of Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity”, *Annual Review*, Department of Anthropology, Univ. of California, 2004, 33; 117-143.

<sup>26</sup> See Afe Adogame, “Engaging the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare: The Public Face of Aladura in Diaspora”, *Journal Religion in Africa*, 34, 4:4, 2004, 493-522.

<sup>27</sup> Ukah, “Religious Vitality and the Expansion of Pentecostalism in Nigeria”, 20.

life, in great contrast though not in opposition to the Western pre occupation with atonement from sin and forgiveness of guilt.<sup>28</sup> We have to acknowledge the differences that are found within the religions. ZAOGA places significance on the religious practitioners who are pastors while in Shona culture the traditional practitioners, *n'anga* (male) and *nyahana* (female) are of significance in order for one to get blessings from the ancestral spirits. The object of faith is also different. While ZAOGA Christians deny the active role of ancestral spirits, in Shona culture one cannot access any blessing without acknowledging and invoking them. ZAOGA has served as a vehicle for the continuity and regeneration of Shona culture “which becomes attractive for some people who are searching for their cultural roots in a faceless urban society.”<sup>29</sup> It has succeeded in establishing a kind of Christianity that has the trademark of African religion and culture in music, dance and the concept of salvation. Healers have inherited part of their knowledge from family heritage and traditions on healing rituals, and shouting commands. This is not an attempt to disqualify the fact that there are some areas which cannot easily be reconciled between Shona culture and Christianity. The areas of continuity show that ZAOGA still holds tightly to beliefs and idioms derived from traditional worldview, even after conversion. The strength of the traditional worldview dictates how much of daily life is organized and life's crises moments are negotiated. At critical moments of life and decision making period, the traditional worldview becomes a resort in trying to solve existential problems.

There are inherent contradictions, diversities and tensions within the Pentecostal movement. However, individual or critical rites normally associated with healing, divination and magic tend to persist largely because they continue to meet important needs in a changing world. This is particularly the case in ZAOGA where everything is spiritualized, poverty is demonized and emphasis is laid on deliverance in order to be saved. Thus, there are areas of harmonization between Shona culture and Christianity. Through the influence of Guti's teachings, ZAOGA constantly affirm blackness, language and certain aspects of culture (such as communalism). The message accords well with the life where

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<sup>28</sup> Desmond Tutu, quoted by Cyril Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa*, Gower, Gower House, 1987, 7.

<sup>29</sup> See Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008, xi.

generosity, mutuality, reciprocity, caring, nurturing relationships and righting wrongs are foundations of African ethics. Thus, aspects of Shona religion and culture find both harmonization and continuity in the Christian faith.

## ATR and ZAOGA: Persistence amidst Change

We can speak of adaptation and contextualization in as far as the traditional customs are incorporated into the church life, the Gospel is presented in a typically African guise and by means of the new message coming to grips with the old religion at a truly existential level, a rejection of at least deliberate transformation of some of its facets take place<sup>30</sup>. Thus, the combinations of praxis, translational and transcendental models of contextualization are employed by ZAOGA in their expression of faith.

In practice and privately many Pentecostals feel the tremendous burden of having to bear at least two cultural loads, the modern (Western) and the traditional. As a result, much of Pentecostal Christianity continues to source from the traditional religion and culture while theoretically preaching the pure biblical message.<sup>31</sup> ZAOGA has the components of both continuity and discontinuity between Christianity and African religion. According to Kalu:

Pentecostalism has produced a culture of continuity by mining the primal worldview, reproducing an identifiable character and regaining a pneumatic and charismatic religiosity that existed in traditional society.<sup>32</sup>

It is true that the missiological policy has left a sad legacy in Africa whereby most of the African's religion, music, culture and drama was uprooted and Africans have been made to be ashamed of being African.<sup>33</sup> However, a great deal of what has been happening in recent times

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<sup>30</sup> Daneel, *Old and New*, 3, 457.

<sup>31</sup> Tite Tienou, *The Theological Task of the Church in Africa: Theological Perspectives in Africa*, (ed), T Tsjmshatsui, Nairobi, Africa Christian Pr., 1990, 22.

<sup>32</sup> Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr., 2008, 186.

<sup>33</sup> Desmond Tutu, "Wither African Theology", Edward Fashole-Luke et al., eds, *Christianity in Independent Africa*, London, Richard Gray, 1978, 366.

is a process of rehabilitation and reconstruction, recapturing what is authentic and African and consistent with the Gospel.<sup>34</sup> This resurgence is captured by Bediako when he says that Africa is playing a dominant role in the resurgence of the Christian faith that has remained an important force, even after Western dominance.<sup>35</sup>

Conversion to the gospel takes place within a cultural framework and that culture becomes the medium of receiving, diffusing tuning in and relaying the gospel.<sup>36</sup>

This has served as a vehicle for the survival and continuation of Shona religion and culture among the Pentecostals. The movement (ZAOGA) provides ideologies of change and transition. Christianity is presented in terms that people understand-traditional thought. Old beliefs are blended with the Christian teachings. One aspect that has served to make it ‘a home for many’ is the survival of traditional attitudes and behavior patterns in this modern time. We affirm Oduyoye’s claim that neither a Muslim nor Christian in Africa can be totally free of the values that emanate from the African traditional religion.<sup>37</sup> That observation finds affirmation in ZAOGA Christians. It seems ZAOGA found a new synthesis between a saving gospel and penetrated Shona culture with a regenerative power of the Gospel message, making use of their cultural religious heritage to explain a whole range of doctrines of the church in order to make good the news of salvation. The vacillating attitude that characterizes many ZAOGA Christians is a result of a culture that is being born out of their struggle to rediscover its memory and regain its dignity.

Guti’s realization that human culture could not be totally replaced but only recreated by the power of the Holy Spirit seems to contradict the notion of making a ‘complete break from the past’ by regenerating the old beliefs through re-fashioning concepts. This has served the purpose of revitalization of the Shona traditional religion and culture that is adaptive to new institutions. It is thus resilient enough to adapt to and be at home with modernity. Gutu and members of his church (as shown by

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<sup>34</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 186.

<sup>35</sup> See Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a non-Western Religion*, NY, Orbis, 1996.

<sup>36</sup> J.S Mbiti, “Christianity and African Culture”, *Journal for Theology for Southern Africa*, Sep. 1977, 20.

<sup>37</sup> Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa*, 1997, 12.

the interviews) employs African culture to convey the fundamental truths of the Gospel to his fellow Africans in a way that they could best understand and internalize the gospel truth in the African ways.

The adaptation is mainly because Christianity is not very strange to Shona realities as one can note areas of extension, collaboration and harmonization. In view of how the traits of Shona culture resurface in ZAOGA, we concur with Mbiti who claims that:

...a person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots his foundation his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence.<sup>38</sup>

Under normal circumstances, the mass entry, the conversion, the joining of Pentecostalism appears to discredit Shona religion and culture. However, things are not always what they seem to be,<sup>39</sup> as converts continue to draw from the indigenous beliefs and practices. ZAOGA's need for self awareness and independence in the church in the hands of indigenous people) has given Shona culture the platform to continue and to find avenues of survival. Various new forms of expression have remained a formidable recognizable resilient force in ZAOGA. The Bible gives ZAOGA a place to project their cultural life, history and experience. Thus, it creates avenues for survival. That is why ZAOGA has repackaged them as Christian faith. Harvey Cox sees largely unconscious interaction of Pentecostalism with indigenous religions, as helping people recover vital elements in their culture that are threatened by modernization.<sup>40</sup> However, this interaction sometimes produces a dilemma of floating between the requirements of culture and requirements of change within the new faith. It is against that background that the research acknowledges the complex persistence of Shona culture among Pentecostals through extension, refashioning, revitalization, neo-traditionalism and syncretism (combining old and new concepts). It is through all these variations that avenues for the persistence of Shona religion and culture have been forged, thereby showing versatility and resilience in ZAOGA, whether in overt or camouflaged form.

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<sup>38</sup> See John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969.

<sup>39</sup> S. A Thorpe, *African Traditional Religion*, Pretoria, Sigma Pr., 1991, 118.

<sup>40</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century Reading*, Mass, Addison Wesley Publ., 1995, 245.



## Conclusion

I have argued that ZAOGA continues to interact with Shona traditional religion at various degrees. This interaction is significant because it has helped Pentecostals to recover vital elements in their traditional religion and culture. It is against this background that we conclude by pointing out that Shona culture is persistent among Pentecostals through several ways and means. Hence in both overt and camouflaged forms, Shona traditional religion and culture have demonstrated remarkable resilience among the Pentecostals.

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### Interviews

Bhobho George (male) is a pastor in the church. He is 48 years old and has been a member of the church for 28 years.

Gadzika Virginia (female) is a pastor and evangelist interviewed at her home on 2 November 2010 in Avonlea. She is 40 years old and has been in the church for 26 years.

Gadzika Jeff (male) is a pastor and evangelist interviewed at his home in Avonlea. He is 45 and has been in the church for 22 years, interviewed on 5 June 2010, Harare.

Gonhi Paul (male) is a village head and member of the Church was interviewed in Chinhoyi, Kenzamba village, on 2 December 2003. He is 54 years old and has been a member of the church for 20 years.

Kagoya Lucy (female) is a member of the church. She is 48 years and was interviewed at after ladies meeting at Marlborough church on 2 April 2010.

Kaome Margaret (female) is a lay member of the church at Zindi assembly. She was interviewed on 28 October at Zindi. She is 28 years old and has been a member of the church for 9 years.

Kanyenze Beulah (female) interviewed in Harare on 25 July 2010 is a deaconess in the church for the past 3 years. She is 29 years old and has been a member of the church for 7 years.

Kaseza Memory (female) interviewed on 25 July 2010 in Harare is a member of the church. She is 24 years and born to ZAOGA parents.

Kufakunesu Tafadzwa (male) was interviewed on 5 October 2009 in Harare. He is 62 years old and has been in the church for 13 years.

Makoni Cuthbert (male) was interviewed on 7 May 2009 at Christ College in Belvedere, Harare. (Refused to disclose age). He is founder of Christ Ministries International.

Mandimu Alice (female) was interviewed on 25 July 2010 at Tsonzo. She is 29 years and has been in the church for nine years.

Masara Kenny (male) is a member of the church. He is 22 years old was interviewed 7 February 2010 in Harare.

Mashoko Patience (female) was interviewed on 2 May in Harare 2004 is a member of the church for 13 years and is 52 years.

Matare Thomas (male) was interviewed on 7 January in Chitungwiza Seke C3 assembly. He is 25 years old and is born to parents who are members of ZAOGA.

- Matikiti Gillian (female) and an elder in Faith in God Church of Asa Gurupira. She also participated in the 31 days of fasting for Guti.
- Marume Maud (female) was interviewed on 2 March 2002 in Highfield. She is 70 years and has been a member of the church for 23 years.
- Masama Cephas (male) was interviewed on 15 February 2003 at his house in Unit C Seke Chitungwiza. He is 61 years old and is has been a pastor for 16 years.
- Masama Eve (female) was interviewed on 4 April 2005, Seke. She is 58 years old and has been a pastor for 16 years.
- Anonymous Anglican Church member (female) and lecturer, interviewed on 25 October 2012, University of Zimbabwe.
- Mukura Patience (female) was interviewed on 2 September 2005, 15 February 2003 at her house in Unit A in Chitungwiza. She is 41 years old and is an assembly elder for 15 years.
- Murera Tawanda (male) Interviewed on 2 September 2009 in Harare. He is 29 years old and born to ZAOGA parents.
- Muzanya Chengetai (female) is an elder and was interviewed at no 3 Assembly in E/ Highlands on 25 October 2005. She is 35 years and has been a member of ZAOGA for 15 years.
- Mushoriwa Alfred (male) is a regional pastor in Marlborough District and was interviewed on 22 February 2010. He is 42 years old and became a member of ZAOGA for the past 17 years.
- Mutambwa John (male) was interviewed on 27 January 2012 is a member of the church for 27 years. He is 52 years old.
- Mutepfa Jameson (male) was interviewed in Harare at UZ on 8 October 2005. He is 20 years and a deacon in the church.
- Mwatsiya Stanley (male) is an assembly elder in the church in E/Highlands and was interviewed on 14 December 2007. He has been in the church for 8years in the church. He is 39 years old.
- Nyanga Mandie (female) was interviewed on 7 January 2003 at Jumbo, Seke. She is 48 years old and a member of ZAOGA for 18 years.
- Ruzivo Munetsi (male) was interviewed on 24 March 2012 at the University of Zimbabwe, shared his views and comments on Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe.
- Sampakaruma Tsitsi (female) was interviewed in Kariba on 3 July 2001. She is a member of the church for 16 years and is 58 years old.
- Tavengwa Violet (female) is 69 years and has been a member of the church for 11 years. She was interviewed on 16 April 2007 at her home in Mugumba vilage, Shurugwi.

Tsikwa John (male) interviewed at his home in Tsanzaguru, Rusape. He is 52 years old and has been a member of the church for 19 years.

Anonymous male pastor interviewed on 22 September 2010 in Harare. He is 70 years old and has been in the church for 43 years.

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Makandiwa Emmanuel, Glamis Stadium, 21 July 2012.

Guti Ezekiel in Harare Gardens, 5 April 2005.

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Guti Ezekiel on 5 October 2006 at AMFCC.

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Guti Ezekiel on 22 August 2010 at Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium.

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Gondo Tafadzwa, at Jumbo, Seke, Chitungwiza, 14 December 2003.

Masaka Stanley, (Overseer) at Jumbo, Seke Chitungwiza on 18 March 2010.

Musoni Phillip, (Marlborough District Pastor) on 13 March 2010 at Green-croft Shopping Centre.

Nhakura Piason, (Elder) C1 assembly Seke, Chitungwiza on 7 January 2003.

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Gonzo, F (female), 22 June at Monomotapa Hotel, ZUPGF.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Sample of information required

Interviewee	Information Required
Pastor/elder/member	Age
	Role in the church
	Number of years in the church
	Knowledge of the selected themes
	Belief/ participation in the rituals

## Example of Interview Questions

1. How long have you been a member of ZAOGA and tell us briefly about your knowledge of ZAOGA?
2. How important is Ezekiel Guti in ZAOGA or in your personal life?
3. Do you believe in ngozi/witches, significance of words prior to death/on death bed/unnatural unnatural events/equality of men and women?
4. Do you think ZAOGA sermons on gender relations empower women and why?
6. What do you understand by being “born again” and a ‘break from the past’?
7. Do you still have responsibilities in the family that extend to the extended family?
8. Can you name rituals in Shona religion and culture that you no longer participate in and are there some that you still practice and why?
9. Have you ever questioned sermons in ZAOGA or you embrace them wholly?
10. How do you evaluate ordained women’s status, vocational satisfaction?
11. What do you think is the effect of the increasing number of women from the pastorate?



## Appendix 2: “Professor Archbishop” Ezekiel Guti



## Appendix 3: AMFCC Bible College in Glen Norah, Harare in Zimbabwe: Elders and Deacons at Deeper Life Conference April 2010.



**Appendix 4: ZAOGA pastors praying for written prayer requests at ZAOGA Jubilee at Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium, 22 August 2010.**



**Appendix 5: ZAOGA women welcoming Ezekiel Guti at ZAOGA Jubilee, Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium, 21 August 2010.**



## Appendix 6: Ezekiel Guti's letter to ZUPC

### ZAOGA FIF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES FELLOWSHIP

#### DR. E.H. GUTI 'S MESSAGE

10 JULY 2004

- The main vision of this ministry is to witness, preach and win other university graduates and undergraduates, well-educated and influential people in the society such as lawyers, doctors, lecturers, politicians, etc.
- These people if not saved; they have lots of problems, although some of them may be financial powerful. Solutions to their problems are with you (graduates). Street kids do not have problems **but unsaved** highly educated and influential people.
- **HOW DO WE WIN THEM TO CHRIST?**
- In your fellowships, meetings & gatherings invite speakers who are gifted and unlimited, those who can articulately explain the scriptures in a very unique and outstanding way, people who read widely.
- Identifying talented and gifted people in some areas and use them in those particular areas.
- Identifying people who are good at counseling and know how to approach such educated people.
- By being organized in fellowships, seminars and any other functions.
- Every member of this ministry is gifted or talented in a certain area **but** very few of you know that as a result you try to be like other people; **Be yourself! Be original!**
- Most of the university graduates in our church behave as if they have never set a foot into the classroom and yet you are educated.
- Do not forsake your area of specialization, i.e. the staff that you have acquired at school.
- Your social life should preach the true gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Non graduates should aspire to become graduates when they see you.
- Raise the standards so that you will be heard in the society.
- Do not stop learning, excel in education.
- Pray for financial breakthrough, we do not want **poor** graduates.
- When you start to do the work of God the devil will not be happy but remember, Paul says in Rom 8:37 "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us"

AMEN

## Abbreviations

ADDA	ASSEMBLIE DE DEUS (ZAOGA in Mozambique)
ATR(S)	African Traditional Religion(s)
AMFCC	Africa Multi Nation for Christ College
CFNI	Christ for the Nations Institute
F.I.F.MI	Forward in Faith Ministries International
ZACOHSM	ZAOGA Colleges and High School Ministry
ZAOGA	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa
ZEGU	Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University
ZOC	ZAOGA on Campus
ZVOP	ZAOGA Voice of Power
ZUPG	ZAOGA University Post Graduate Fellowship





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This volume, based on a PhD thesis submitted to the University of Zimbabwe, investigates the resilience of Shona religion and culture among ZAOGA Pentecostal Christians. Whereas the Pentecostal ideology suggests that 'old things' have passed away, it appears that 'old things' continue to have high significance for the 'new'. The book demonstrates how belief in avenging spirits, witches and witchcraft, value of words spoken prior to death, the role, status and significance of women, belief in unnatural events, liturgy and salvation have remained relevant to the lives of ZAOGA Shona converts. The patterns of continuity, discontinuity, extension, collaboration, contradiction, re-interpretation and rejection between Shona traditional religion and culture and ZAOGA are explored, challenging the framing of African Pentecostalism as a mere imitation and parroting of US theology. The conclusion is that while ZAOGA self-consciously presents itself as a sophisticated, trans-national and progressive Pentecostal movement, members continue to wrestle with Shona indigenous beliefs and practices. An African womanist framework is adapted to challenge ZAOGA to promote the well-being of women.



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