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**The Theology of Experience as a Distinctive Mark of
Pentecostalism: A Case Study of the Apostolic Faith
Mission in Zimbabwe**

A Thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Rev Ranganai Charles Chipere

Department of Theology and Religion

University of Birmingham

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Abstract

This research analyses the theology of experience as a distinctive mark of Pentecostalism with the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFMZ) as a case study. The thesis devolves upon religious experience in general and then formulates African Pentecostal Christian experience as a particular experience of African/Shona Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand. Historical antecedences of such experience are traced to establish how the theology of experience has operated in the Pentecostal movement and how these shapes religious experience in the context of an indigenised African Pentecostal church. The thesis notes that the theology of experience of the AFMZ is informed by the Bible as they understand it as well as African Traditional religious views of the Shona people of Zimbabwe. Religious experience is expressed in the context of the African enchanted worldview where mystical causality is key to interpreting African realities. The research shows how the experiential form of Christianity has been embraced, adapted, and propagated within a Zimbabwean classical Pentecostal church which has experienced phenomenal growth besides birthing other African Pentecostal groups. The contribution of specific Pentecostal doctrines and practices of the AFMZ which are directly linked to religious experience are analysed with special attention to their resonance with ATR. The research notes that African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand practise responsible syncretism by selectively adopting and adapting Shona religio-cultural traits consistent with Pentecostal Christianity. This is done on the backdrop of their quest for a Spirit-connected community being a special kind of ecclesiology and African holistic pneumatology which is a special kind of liberative pneumatology as it addresses missional and existential issues. This thesis establishes and characterises the theology of experience of the AFMZ as that of encountering God and countering the spirit-filled world.

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Abbreviations

AC	Apostolic Council
AFC	Apostolic Faith Church
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AFM	Apostolic Faith Movement
AFMI	Apostolic Faith Mission International
AFMIM (UK)	Apostolic Faith Mission International Ministries United Kingdom
AAFM	African Apostolic Faith Mission
AFMR	Apostolic Faith Mission in Rhodesia
AFMSA	Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa
AFMZ	Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIC	African Initiated Churches
AMEC	American Methodist Episcopal Church
APD	African Pentecostal Discourse
ANE	Ancient Near East
ATR	African Traditional Religion/s
CCACZ	Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DS	District Superintendent
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
KBC	Kasupe Bible College
LMS	London Missionary Society
LWTS	Living Waters Theological Seminary
MP	Member of Parliament
NAC	National Apostolic Committee
NWC	National Workers' Council
PC	Pentecostal Charismatic
PWC	Provincial Workers' Council
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God
SP	Spiritual Presence
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
ZAOGA	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

Introduction

This research attempts to analyse the theology of experience and its centrality in Pentecostalism by focusing on the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFMZ) as a case study. Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon which is gravitating towards the global south as the centre of Christianity. Pentecostalism is also the dominant and fastest growing brand of Christianity in the global south in which the AFMZ is one of the leading classical Pentecostal denominations. It is the oldest and one of the biggest Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe despite witnessing or birthing splits and breakaway churches some of which are looming large like the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) also known internationally as Forward in Faith (FIF). The AFMZ has followed a growth path like most Pentecostal churches in Africa: from initial missionary activity (from South Africa and United States of America) to a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating indigenous group. This study specifically focuses on African Pentecostal Christian experience in the AFMZ by focusing on the Shona speaking assemblies which constitute the majority as compared to other ethnic groups.

An overview of the research problem

Pentecostalism is a movement which is still attempting to define and position itself theologically, socially, culturally, and historically. Proponents and critics of Pentecostal Christianity agree that it is a Christian movement in which religious experience plays a central and crucial role. Scholars of Pentecostalism such as Peter Neumann, Clark and Lederle, Allan Anderson, Frank D. Macchia, Marius Nel and many others are attempting to formulate Pentecostal theological positions which maintain the centrality of religious

experience in Pentecostal Christianity. Clark and Liderle posit that “Pentecostals are attempting to find categories in which they can theologically comprehend, or at least state, their experience,”¹ The lack of an absolute position of religious experience as a mark of Pentecostal Christianity has created problems for researchers and scholars in understanding it. Similarly, Ivan Satyavrata quoted by Westerlund says, “the genius of Pentecostalism is clearly the remarkable capacity of Pentecostal movements to incarnate themselves in various indigenous cultures, producing rich cultural and theological diversity.”² Incarnation of Pentecostal Christianity in the various cultures especially in Africa can only be clearly understood and related by looking at the role of religious experience in Pentecostal Christianity. Allan Anderson further debates how Pentecostalism draws from the host cultures like the Shona culture in continuity, whilst also simultaneously confronting the same culture in discontinuity.³ It is from these dynamics of continuity and discontinuity that one observes the experience and engagement of African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand when confronting African realities of poverty, illness, and misfortunes with the lenses of mystical causality emanating from the spirit-filled world.⁴ The experience of Pentecostal Christianity also relates to wealth creation, prosperity and technological advancement. Much of the literature on Pentecostal Christian experience has been done by Western Pentecostal scholars whose views do not fully represent the African Pentecostal Christian experience in the global south. Specifically, there are no publications or there is no literature on the Pentecostal theology of experience from the Shona peoples’ perspective in the AFMZ, hence this scholarly venture. These creative adaptations of the Christian faith help to establish whether

¹ Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Lederle, *What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* (Unisa, Pretoria, 1989), 36.

² David Westerlund, ed. *Global Pentecostalism: Encounter with other traditions* (London: IB Tauris, 2009), 3.

³ Allan H. Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World: Religious Dis/Continuity in African Pentecostalism* (New York: Macmillan, 2018), 3.

⁴ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 8.

what Walter Hollenweger and Allan Anderson call “responsible syncretism”⁵ exists in the way the AFMZ adopts and adapts African cultural traits in its theology of experience. This research aims at studying how the theology of experience that lies at the heart of Pentecostalism has been accepted and thereby being effective, adapted and propagated in the Zimbabwean context.

Central Problem Statement

The central problem of this research is to attempt to articulate how the theology of experience has appealed to African Pentecostals with the AFMZ as a case study. It is envisaged that such a scholarly exercise will provide sufficient understanding of the appeal of Pentecostal Christian experience in the context of Shona Pentecostal Christians of the AFMZ brand. Shona culture as the host of Pentecostal Christianity serves as the context in which interaction of the two leads to adopting and adapting those Shona traits which are continuous with Christianity. The following key questions are critical in addressing the central problem in this research:

- To what extent is religious experience an important part in Pentecostal theological analysis and reflection?
- How has a theology of experience operated and witnessed in the Pentecostal movement?
- How has the theology of experience contributed to the growth of the Pentecostal movement in Africa and the AFMZ?
- How has the theology of experience contributed to the doctrines, rituals, teachings, hymnology, and practices of the AFMZ?

⁵ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 195, 197. Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 131.

- Can Pentecostal Christianity in the AFMZ maintain its identity without the theology of experience?
- To what extent does the African Shona worldview contribute to the religious experience and identity of AFMZ?

It is the experiential aspects of Pentecostalism that have been most significant in its acceptance and growth in Africa. This is widely maintained by scholars like Allan Anderson, M.L. Daneel, B.G. Sundkler, Hollenweger, Ogbu Kalu, Marius Nel, and David Maxwell whose contributions to our understanding of African Pentecostalism shall be discussed in chapter three. The AFMZ is not an exception to this. The growth of the Pentecostal movement has to some extent had the religio-social effect of popularising a theology of experience, with the result that Pentecostal scholarship is challenged to provide a thoughtful analysis and expression to those Pentecostal experiential aspects of theology that form the large segments of popular Pentecostal Christianity. The AFMZ is a particular example of a classical Pentecostal church that has become indigenised in Africa. While the growth of Pentecostal Christianity may be attributed to a large extent to the acceptability among Africans of such an experiential form of Christianity, a study of AFMZ's history, beliefs, rituals, doctrine, and practices also contributes towards a theological analysis of its religious experience. The current study on AFMZ provides insights, categories, and analysis of the centrality of the theology of experience of Pentecostal Christianity in an African/Shona Pentecostal context. The study explores the central place of Christian religious experience, particularly within the context of AFMZ and unpacks the African theological categories of the religious experience in AFMZ.

Procedure of thesis

Qualitative research methods used to collect data were surveys, interviews, and participant observation. The qualitative methods were supported by interpretive analytical tools (better known as types of qualitative design) which are phenomenology and narrative analysis.⁶ As a member and leader in the AFM in Zimbabwe (now leading the same denomination in the United Kingdom); the phenomenological approach will go a long way as a tool of analysis pertaining the place of religious experience and identity in this Church. It is the theology of experience that defines Pentecostal Christian socialisation in the AFMZ. The study seeks to retrieve the theology of “lived experience” embedded in the rituals, doctrines, and practices of the AFMZ.⁷ The same lived experience is also analysed by examining the grassroots narratives or stories of AFMZ adherents.

The Qualitative Research as a Methodological orientation

The concept of “methodology” encompasses the way in which I grapple with research questions pertaining the theology of experience of the AFMZ and seek to answer or resolve them.⁸ The qualitative research, which is an umbrella term with diverse techniques of decoding, analysing, and describing non-numerical data collected, is conducted in order to understand how the theology of experience has operated and impacted Zimbabwean Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand.⁹ Records of AFMZ adherents’ testimony and behaviour concerning their religious experiences and the meaning which they attach to it, will undergo

⁶ Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to design and implementation* (San Francisco: Wiley and Sons Incorporated, 2015), 15.

⁷ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation* (London: Sage Publications, 2015), 181.

⁸ Steven J. Taylor, Robert Bogdan, and Marjorie DeVault, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource* (New Jersey: Wiley, 2016), 14.

⁹ Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons Incorporated, 2015), 15.

some comprehensive analysis and reflection, so as to retrieve doctrines, beliefs and practices which derive from such experiences.¹⁰ As a qualitative researcher, I will holistically investigate the significance of religious experience from different “vantage points” of ordinary parishioners and their leaders at various levels in the AFMZ, so as to capture a balanced perspective of the same.¹¹ This qualitative study helps to thoughtfully evaluate the distinctive nature of the theology of experience in the AFMZ as a case study and examine the extent to which the African/Shona primal spirituality shaped the identity and Pentecostal Christian experience of the AFMZ.

Phenomenological and Narrative analysis

In terms of fieldwork, I used the two forms of qualitative research methods, or qualitative designs as mentioned earlier and now expanded, which are phenomenology and narrative analysis. Sharan Merriam and Elizabeth Tisdell posit that qualitative research is an “umbrella term” which encompasses various “interpretive techniques” whose aim is to translate, decode, and describe in order to understand various phenomena in the social world.¹² As a qualitative researcher I shall major on analysing how Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand construct their worldview which is informed by Shona religion and culture as well as the Bible as they understand it, and how they interpret and give meaning to what they experience as adherents of African Pentecostal Christianity.¹³ In this qualitative research, I as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, focused on how AFMZ adherents understand their religious experiences and propagate them.

¹⁰ Taylor et al, *Introduction to Qualitative Research methods*, 14, 17–19.

¹¹ Taylor et al, *Introduction to Qualitative Research methods*, 19–20.

¹² Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 15.

¹³ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 15.

For purposes of this study, the phenomenological method will serve as an analytical tool for unearthing the “lived experience” of AFMZ Pentecostal Christians and establish how they “make sense of experience” thus developing a “shared meaning” to life.¹⁴ This exercise will involve recording and describing religious experience among Shona Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand, how they view it, express it, feel about it, evaluate it, “make sense of it,” memorialise it and testify about it.¹⁵ It is from those lived moments in the life of AFMZ adherents that an attempt will be made to retrieve their doctrines, rituals and practices as witnessed in the AFMZ religious programmes and events which promote various religious experiences like glossolalia.

Alongside the phenomenological method, and in order to allow for a broader spectrum,¹⁶ I use the narrative inquiry approach, which carefully examines human life through narratives or stories of “lived experience,” on the backdrop that stories shape and organise human experiences.¹⁷ Steven Taylor et al also say that “the central insight of narrative analysis is the recognition that people are constantly telling stories, to themselves and to others.”¹⁸ In this process, my narrative inquiry handles stories of AFMZ adherents which are gathered as data for contextual analysis and its interaction in life.¹⁹ Merriam and Tisdell contend that “the power of narrative is not so much that it is about life but that it interacts in life”²⁰ that is how we share our daily lives. The stories which are narrated in interviews are “first-person” accounts of the experiences of AFMZ adherents in their search for experiential spirituality.²¹ This study concurs with what Kenneth Archer calls “Pentecostal

¹⁴ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation* (London: Sage Publications, 2015), 181.

¹⁵ Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation*, 181.

¹⁶ Steven Taylor et al, view phenomenology as the methodological orientation which engages various ‘theoretical frameworks’ like narrative analysis, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, institutional ethnography, and many others, 21–29.

¹⁷ Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation*, 202.

¹⁸ Taylor et al, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*, 29.

¹⁹ Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation*, 203.

²⁰ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 34.

²¹ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 34.

traditioning,” whereby special attention is given to “narratives from the (AFMZ) grassroots” which are expressed through testimonies and songs.²² The story of AFMZ is traced in Chapter two, from the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles to South Africa and then to Zimbabwe. However, from this field investigation, it is hoped that these emotive experiential stories will shed light to Pentecostal theology of experience as understood by African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand.²³

I am an African (Zimbabwean) Pentecostal pastor and academic who formally shepherded a large AFMZ congregation in Waterfalls, Harare for twelve years after which I was posted to the United Kingdom. Concurrently, I served in the training of AFMZ pastors at Living Waters Theological Seminary (LWTS) where I also trained as a pastor but later pursued religious and theological studies at the University of Zimbabwe. Besides lecturing, I served as Academic Dean of the college for five years, after which I accepted a lectureship position at the University of Zimbabwe. I have held other positions of responsibility within the AFMZ. Currently I am serving as a resident pastor of AFMIM (UK) Manchester Glory Zone Assembly in the United Kingdom since 2010, as Vice President of AFMIM (UK) from 2010-2017, and President since 2022. My academic reflection on the theology of experience is therefore that of an insider (emic) rather than an outsider (etic). These terms are defined by Allan Anderson, who contends that reflection on Pentecostalism is dependent upon the paradigm one uses (emic or etic) because it fundamentally affects how one pursues and presents his views.²⁴ It is intended that as a trained observer and an insider for over thirty years, I will maintain objectivity in questioning religious experiences from my religious tradition, given the possibility of being theologically tendentious.

²² Kenneth J. Archer, “A Pentecostal way of doing Theology: Method and Manner,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 3 (2007): 304.

²³ African Pentecostalism, although it’s a generalised term, but for the purposes of this research, it represents the AFM in Zimbabwe Pentecostal brand as one of many brands of African Pentecostalism.

²⁴ Allan Anderson, et al, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 14.

Data collection strategies

Three variations of observational methods, namely surveys, interviews and participant observation were used to collect data in this research. This was an endeavour to rigorously embark on studying religious experience in its natural setting, cognisant of how it is encountered and what it means to the AFMZ adherents.²⁵ To put it in context, it is the AFMZ Pentecostal brand of Christianity and its religious experience, which form the subject matter of this research. The AFMZ adherents were identified, considering their experiential exposure to Pentecostalism and how they interpret it.

Surveys were done as investigative tools to quantitatively collect data using the internet-based survey monkey. This was an amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative methods better known as “mixed methods” whereby I casted a qualitative eye on quantitative results.²⁶ In other words, quantitative results derived from surveys were interpreted qualitatively through the use of statistical tools.²⁷ The survey questions were crafted in such a way as to allow AFMZ participants to express their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and religious experiences as they responded to the survey questions.²⁸ The surveys were conducted on the correct but randomly selected “target universe,” comprising of the general membership as well as the “elites” or leaders of the AFMZ church members based in the United Kingdom (registered as Apostolic Faith Mission International Ministries UK or AFMIM UK) in rank and file.²⁹ Whilst I had access to more AFMZ members in the United Kingdom, I also had

²⁵ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research, Hymns Ancient and Modern* (London: SCM Press, 2016), 28–30.

²⁶ Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation*, 56.

²⁷ Juhem Navarro-Rivera and Barry A. Kosmin, “Survey Questionnaires,” in Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London: Taylor and Francis Group Online, 2011), 395.

²⁸ Navarro-Rivera and Kosmin, “Survey Questionnaires,” 395–96.

²⁹ Navarro-Rivera and Kosmin, “Survey Questionnaires,” 399–400.

some other AFMZ participants in South Africa, United States of America, Republic of Ireland and a few who were reachable in Zimbabwe. The surveys were intentionally made short and simple to read and comprehend (including relevant Shona terms) for clarity's sake and considerable options to the answers were given.³⁰

Qualitative interviews were used not as casual conversations, but as scholarly endeavours involving procedures like setting interview questions, sampling participants, recording, transcribing, as well as classifying and analysing data collected.³¹ Non-judgmental interaction with respondents was demonstrated, whilst assuming a neutral position with regards to the responses of the participants.³² Good and relevant questions were asked, followed up by requests and probes for further details during the interviews as part of the data collection strategy.³³ As a precaution, "pilot interviews" were done in order to ascertain the validity of each question and where the questions turned out to be confusing, such questions were re-worded in order to make the best out of the interviews.³⁴ Merriam and Tisdell rate interviewing as an observation method of investigative inquiry of something in a systematic manner.³⁵ Participants from the AFMZ (based in UK and other countries as already mentioned) were randomly but purposively selected³⁶ from the pool of leadership ranging from pastors, elders, deacons and deaconesses, Bible college students and ordinary church members of various ages and gender.

"Purposive sampling," which is a process of selecting participants for the interviews was done against the backdrop of what the interviewees could contribute.³⁷ Originally, the

³⁰ Navarro-Rivera and Kosmin, "Survey Questionnaires," 408–09.

³¹ Anna Davidsson Bremborg, "Interviewing," in Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London, Taylor and Francis Group Online, 2011), 310.

³² Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 128.

³³ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 18.

³⁴ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 117.

³⁵ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 2–3.

³⁶ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 38.

³⁷ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 127.

targeted group was to consist of interviewees from Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, and those from the nearby rural community of Domboshawa. Harare was selected because this is where the AFMZ headquarters and theological seminary are located. Furthermore, there is a wider spectrum of AFMZ adherents converging from the rural areas, and the urban community comprising the urban elite and the urban poor. Although I intended to travel to Zimbabwe two or three times for the interviews, the travel restrictions and personal safeguarding concerns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic made it impossible to pursue that route. The alternative option was to engage a research assistant, who would conduct the interviews in Zimbabwe on my behalf. This option did not materialise owing to the Covid 19 pandemic which later put Zimbabwe under similar lockdown restrictions. The options of skype, Zoom or WhatsApp calling systems are difficult in Zimbabwe due to factors such as the limited access to internet services, the unaffordability of internet data, and the inconsistency of electricity supplies. In the end, the obstacles were surmounted by engaging the AFMZ diaspora community in the United Kingdom, South Africa, USA, Republic of Ireland whose views serve as an authentic alternative.

Graham Harvey argues that participant observation as a core method of fieldwork is perceived to be the best mode to research about “lived reality” of religion leading to an informed account of religious experience.³⁸ The subject matter of this qualitative study is to observe the direct involvement of AFMZ adherents in the spiritual programmes of the church and how these shape their religious experiences and their perception of the same. The AFMZ adherents understood lived experience as the way they encounter God in organised religious gatherings and in their private devotions, and how they utilise the power of the Holy Spirit in propagating the gospel and addressing African problems emanating from mystical causality.

³⁸ Graham Harvey, “Field Research: Participant Observation,” in Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London: Taylor and Francis Group Online, 2011), 217.

Such lived experience contributes to a clear understanding of how African/Shona people interact with Pentecostal Christianity considering Shona primal spirituality. Participant observation is about participating while observing the performance of religion to extract the “vernacular” of actual experientials and lived expressions of religion.³⁹ The nature of my participation as already mentioned earlier was that of an insider (emic) rather than an outsider (etic) which fundamentally enmeshes and influences my analysis.

The original arrangement was to concurrently engage in participant observation of a few Harare and rural Domboshawa AFMZ church services and events, while interviewing selected informants. Again, the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the barriers it created, prevented such participant observation. The Covid 19 Pandemic therefore created a gap or situation whereby “in-person social science research” was no longer possible.⁴⁰ In order to bridge this gap, I resorted to virtual participant observation, by way of collecting and analysing artifacts, such as videos from the Facebook and YouTube, of the AFMZ church services as my major locus of social interaction.⁴¹ Whilst this alternative of ethnographic study from a distance may yield some results, I acknowledge its short-comings, in that rural communities of the AFMZ were technically excluded because of lack of videos showcasing rural church services.

Chapter 1: Defining religious experience from different perspectives.

Chapter one deals with religious experience from different perspectives taking into consideration the influence of the Enlightenment thought on Western interpretation of reality. To arrive at a definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience which shall be a

³⁹ Harvey, “Field Research,” 218–22.

⁴⁰ Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California, “What research can be done during Covid-19 Pandemic?” 18 August 2020, 1.

⁴¹ Matthew J. Brown, et al, “The challenge of continuing participant observation during Covid-19 pandemic,” SPA2021 Interrogating inequalities, namadit.co.uk, 1.

determining factor in our exploration of the theology of experience, views of social scientists and Pentecostal scholarship on religious experience shall be examined. Social scientists analyse religious experience from various vantage points like psychological, sociological, anthropological, and phenomenological perspectives. These observations will assist this thesis by shedding light to our understanding of religious experience as a social phenomenon which affects individuals and communities. Pentecostal scholarship will bring an insider perspective on how Pentecostals articulate their own experiential spirituality. The origins of the theology of experience shall be in Schleiermacher, a towering liberal theologian with pietist roots. In this study, African Pentecostal Christian experience can be defined as, “the direct experiential encounters with the triune God through the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit, personally or corporately, with evidential tangibles like glossolalia and other supernatural experiences, reflecting Afro-biblical ambience out of which flows their mission, kerygma and lifestyle.”⁴² These direct experiential encounters are culturally mediated and underpinned in the historical antecedents of Pentecostalism.

Chapter 2: The theology of experience in the historical antecedents of the Pentecostal movement

Chapter two links the theology of experience to historical antecedents which have impacted the AFMZ as a classical Pentecostal church. This exercise serves to account for any commonalities and peculiarities between AFMZ vis a vis the antecedent movements. The first antecedent is Moravian and Wesleyan pietism, best known as an ecclesial and renewal movement in which a great premium is placed on evidence-based and heartfelt Christianity.⁴³ It is not surprising that, the AFMZ hymnology borrows from Wesleyan Methodist hymns.

⁴² 1.5 Definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience.

⁴³ Christian T. Collins Winn et al, eds. *The Pietist Impulse in Christianity* (Cambridge: James Clark Company Limited, 2012), 6. and Anthony G. Roeber, “The waters of rebirth: the Eighteenth century and transoceanic Protestant Christianity,” *Church History* 79, no. 1 (2010): 44–76.

Pietists embraced a holy, counter-cultural, and rigorous lifestyle characterised by fasting, spiritual formation through Bible study groups, vigorous proclamation of the Word focused on individual salvation, enthusiastic worship, ecstatic spiritual experiences, and re-inventing the New Testament apostolic church.⁴⁴ In the Healing movement, special attention is given to John Alexander Dowie because of how some of his teachings and practices influenced the AFMZ. The Healing movement had the conviction that physical, emotional, and mental ailments could be cured supernaturally by laying hands on the sick, and/or anointing them with holy oil as in biblical times.⁴⁵

The Holiness movement with its Wesleyan and Baptist versions exhibit common strands of puritanical mores, emotional fervour, literal-minded Biblicism, negativity toward ecclesiasticism, and belief in the second blessing of sanctification.⁴⁶ The common strands of puritanical mores and other features have found home in most of the Pentecostal Churches as shall be shown in the AFMZ. The three major strands and teachings of the Holiness movement include players like Phoebe Palmer, representing Methodist holiness, Charles G. Finney as an amalgamation of Wesleyan Methodism and Arminianised Calvinism, and the Keswick movement representing the reformed holiness strand with some appreciation of Wesleyanism and Calvinism.⁴⁷ The later strand (critical when it comes to understanding the place of experience and holiness in the AFMZ) to emerge before Pentecostalism was the Radical holiness movement which escalated moral challenges with sin into a moral battle needing spiritual warfare, hence the creation of the demonological worldview popularised in Pentecostalism particularly in Africa. Considering the above, African Pentecostalism of the AFMZ brand focuses on encountering God and countering evil. The Radical holiness movement created much of the Pentecostal phraseology, especially the five-fold gospel that

⁴⁴ 2.1 Moravian and Wesleyan Pietism.

⁴⁵ 2.2 Healing movement and Alexander Dowie.

⁴⁶ 2.3 Holiness movement.

⁴⁷ 2.3 Holiness movement.

Jesus saves, Jesus sanctifies, Jesus heals, Jesus baptises with the Spirit and Jesus is the soon coming King.⁴⁸ The five-fold gospel has characterised the AFMZ's missiological thrust, theology of experience and growth. This study will show how the AFMZ has packaged the theology of experience to fulfil the five-fold gospel as part of its Pentecostal identity.

The Azusa Street revival of 1906 in Los Angeles is attributed to the leadership of William Joseph Seymour (an African American Holiness preacher), hence the black roots of Pentecostalism are an unavoidable historical reality.⁴⁹ The Azusa Street Revival dominates the AFMZ theological discourses pertaining the historical identity of the AFMZ. Some of the AFMZ theological training colleges and church assemblies have been named after the Azusa Street revival. Prior to this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, there were earlier incidences like in Topeka, Kansas, in a short-term Bible school run by Charles Fox Parham who later became Seymour's teacher when he moved his Bible school to Houston, Texas.⁵⁰ As a result, the Azusa revival is one of the major contributors to the birthing of the Pentecostal movement which became a permanent addition to Christianity to which African Pentecostalism is a major player in the global south.

It is my position in this study, that the theology of experience that characterised the Moravian and Wesleyan pietism, Holiness movement and the Azusa Street revival had an extensive contribution to the acceptance of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. The success of the planting of the AFM on African soil, can be accounted for by the Pentecostal gospel brought by the missionaries from Azusa as well as preceding revivals in the Dutch Reformed church (DRC) and the Zionist movement of Alexander Dowie which was later incorporated into the AFMSA. The first AFM revival is well known as the South African Doornfontein revival which is celebrated as the African

⁴⁸ 2.3 Holiness movement.

⁴⁹ 2.4 Azusa Street Revival.

⁵⁰ 2.4 Azusa Street Revival.

replica of the Azusa revival.⁵¹ The subsequent sporadic planting of the AFM to nearby countries like Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) was mainly done by African migrant workers who had come to South Africa to work in gold mines and elsewhere but carried their newly found Pentecostal gospel to their villages. These were later to be properly organised by missionaries from South Africa and the United States of America (USA).⁵² These sporadic congregations began to sprout from around 1913, although the official date of the official existence of the AFMZ is 1915 with earliest documented communities in Gwanda and surroundings in Matabeleland South Province, Kadoma in Mashonaland West Province and Mutare in the Manicaland Province.⁵³ These sporadic revivals account for how the AFMZ sprouted in its early planting stages and spreading.

During its planting and flowering stages, the AFMZ (formerly Apostolic Faith Mission in Rhodesia during the colonial era) suffered setbacks because of lack of recognition by the settler government authorities because their practices of experiential spirituality like night meetings, exorcisms, witch-finding, divine healing, ecstatic predisposition by the Spirit were deemed unorthodox by British native commissioners and mainline churches.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the settler government had inherent fears of political uprising as what happened in Malawi under the leadership of a Baptist preacher, Rev John Chilembwe in early 1915. This caused the settler government to demand that the AFM of South Africa send European or White missionaries to supervise roving African preachers for the AFM to become a properly registered church.⁵⁵ This led to the influx of Afrikaner and American missionaries who include the celebrated Louis Lodewyke Kruger and the Wilson brothers, Willard and Bill who attempted to bring respectability to the AFMZ by giving the African preachers some

⁵¹ 2.5 Planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

⁵² 2.5 Planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

⁵³ 2.5 Planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

⁵⁴ 2.5 Planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

⁵⁵ 2.5 Planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

form of on-the-job ministerial training which culminated in the establishment of a proper Bible college in 1974.⁵⁶ The trained preachers were technically an extension of missionary authority but at the same time indigenising agents of the AFMZ on the backdrop of anti-intellectualism and anti-medical treatment among its followers. The relationship between the coming of Pentecostalism and its encounter with African culture and people becomes critical to engage in this study. The AFMZ gives that critical analysis and understanding to how the theology of experience contributes to Pentecostal Christianity.

Chapter 3: The relationship between African Pentecostalism, Scripture and African Traditional Religion and Culture

Chapter three focuses on the relationship between African Pentecostalism, Scripture, and African traditional religion (ATR) and culture, which clarifies Pentecostal Christianity and its growth. To understand the pre-existing religious and cultural practices prior to the advent of Christianity, an overview of ATR and culture is engaged from the Shona cosmological perspective. The Shona peoples also believe in the existence and influence of benevolent and malevolent spirits in line with the African enchanted worldview and its emphasis on mystical causality. The traditional healer (*n'anga*) (just like the Pastor as a therapeutic and diagnostic healer in Pentecostal Christianity) is perceived to be the kingpin of the Shona communal society as a therapeutic herbalist and diagnostic diviner within the traditional health system.⁵⁷ It is the concept of communality of life, which was harnessed by African Pentecostalism, making it one of the key reasons for the acceptability of this brand of Christianity.⁵⁸

Selected scriptures on the supernatural as understood by AFMZ are also analysed to demonstrate the similarities which exist vis-à-vis Shona cosmology. It is these similarities

⁵⁶ 2.5 Planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

⁵⁷ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

⁵⁸ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

which further influenced African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand to embrace Christianity. The selected scriptures are critical when it comes to AFMZ as they cite the same texts to support their claims on their Pentecostal theology of experience as they counter the African enchanted world. This worldview is informed by selected biblical texts, second temple Judaism in the post-exilic era and Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) traditions.⁵⁹ The supernatural or the spirit world in the scriptures based on the more polished Christian dogma consists of YHWH/God and angels on the benevolent side and Satan and his fallen angels now known as evil spirits or demons representing the malevolent section.⁶⁰ It is multiple deities and their manifestation in the lives of people that find homage or similarities with the Shona people and their interaction with the world of spirits. However, the AFMZ position is that all spirits in Shona religion (benevolent and malevolent) are all classified as evil spirits with Satan as the major force behind according to their understanding of scriptures. It is these spirits which account for the misfortunes and suffering of the Shona people and they engage the power of the Holy Spirit to counter these spirits daily hence spiritual warfare prayer. Although the Shona traditional community and the selected scriptures on the supernatural are differentiated by geographical and temporal distances, there are undeniable similarities which contribute to the acceptance of Pentecostal Christianity.

Considering the cosmological view of the Shona people which is spirit-filled, the theology of experience of the Shona Pentecostal Christians in the AFMZ is appealing as shall be shown in this study. There is need in this study to discuss the continuity and discontinuity debate which underpins the African Pentecostal discourse (APD). The reason behind the scholarly exercise is to unearth the continuing general interplay between ATR and

⁵⁹ 3.2 Comparison of ATR and the supernatural in scripture.

⁶⁰ Matthias Kockert, "Divine Messengers and Mysterious Men in the Patriarchal Narratives of the Book of Genesis," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings-Origins, Development and Reception* eds. Friedrich V. Reiterer et al, (Berlin: De Gruyter. Inc, 2006), 51. Hans Moscicke, "Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews of the Bible, African Traditional Religion and African Christianity," *Journal of Missiology* 45, no. 2 (2017): 136–37.

Pentecostal Christianity in shaping the theology of experience in African Pentecostalism. What is key to these creative adaptations in the continuity of certain African values and practices in African Pentecostalism is what Walter Hollenweger and Allan Anderson call responsible syncretism as reiterated earlier. It is through this process where African Pentecostalism (as shown in this study) is becoming an indigenised Christianity as opposed to Missionary Christianity. Continuity and discontinuity are a disposition of simultaneously being inside and outside ATR, by tapping into African cosmology while confronting it at the same time, and by so doing, it shapes African Pentecostalism into a homegrown Christianity.

Chapter 4: Data findings on the theology of experience of the AFMZ

Chapter four dealt with findings on the theology of experience of the AFMZ. Surveys gravitated around the role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences. The role of slogans, terminologies, worldviews, and adaptations in the theology of experience were also scrutinised. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its global restrictions to travel, the fieldwork which was meant to be done in Zimbabwe (in person) ended up being done virtually among United Kingdom, USA, South Africa, and Republic of Ireland based AFMZ members and leaders with the AFMZ background. A few reachable members of AFMZ based in Zimbabwe participated in the virtual fieldwork. This research exercise was conducted telephonically due to travel restrictions within the United Kingdom and world-wide. Questions were posed which respondents needed to address their personal spiritual experiences such as Spirit-baptism, difference between spirit-possession in ATR and Spirit-baptism in Pentecostalism, AFMZ calendared events that promote experiential spirituality, and distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ. There are also issues of adaptation and modernising in AFMZ, place of church discipline and how such a practice shapes spirituality, and the role of the Holy

Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues. Participant observation was meant to be an accompanying exercise during interviews in Zimbabwe, but this was also thwarted by the Covid-19 pandemic. To bridge the gap, a “distant participant observation” was done via observation of selected videos of the AFMZ services and conferences to observe how religious experience is expressed in different settings.

Chapter 5: Analysis of the theology of experience in the AFMZ

Chapter five makes a full analysis of the theology of experience in the AFMZ based on data findings. The theology of experience as a distinctive mark of Pentecostalism focuses on two major themes derived from data findings which are Spirit-connected community and African holistic pneumatology. Under Spirit-connected community, AFMZ practices and rituals also derive from events such as all-night prayers, early morning prayers, January ten days of prayer and fasting, praise and worship together with order of service, spiritual retreats, camps and conferences, and life cycles. Pentecostal proclamation and expansion, constitutional governance, and church discipline, and holistic healthcare system are discussed as accompanying sub-themes for African holistic pneumatology which addresses missional and existential issues. This thesis envisages to analyse how the AFMZ grapples with the theology of experience by adopting and adapting Shona cultural traits like communal connectedness (*ukochekeche*) as demonstrated by its rituals, hence Spirit-connected community. It is also noted that prayer is the central ritual and weapon of spiritual warfare AFMZ adherents use to address missional and existential issues through the manifest power of the Holy Spirit. This analysis of the AFMZ hopes to unveil that Spirit-connected community, being a special kind of ecclesiology is a product of inculturation and that African holistic pneumatology is a

special kind of liberative pneumatology which deals with missional and existential issues within the African enchanted milieu.

Chapter 1: Defining religious experience from different perspectives.

The focus of this thesis is to make a critical analysis of the theology of experience as a distinctive feature of Pentecostalism with the AFMZ as a case study. This chapter aims to lay the foundation for the discussion on the theology of experience by shedding light on religious experience as a general area of study and then narrowing it to African Pentecostal Christian experience. The Enlightenment era's impact on modern scholarship of the social sciences and theology will be acknowledged as this shaped the perspectives of missionary Christianity in Africa and modern Western views of religious experience. Social scientific views on religious experience, especially those of Psychologists of religion are analysed considering how they evaluate the impact of religion on individuals and communities which includes African Pentecostals. This analysis of social scientific views on religious experience is hoped to expand our knowledge of the subject matter as there seems to be a connection between their findings with Christian experience of the AFMZ Pentecostal brand. Schleiermacher's views on religious experience shall be analysed to establish how the theology of experience found its origins in Schleiermacher, who was influenced by Moravian pietism (one of the key antecedents to Pentecostalism) and is considered the father of modern theology. A further examination of Pentecostal scholarship on religious experience is also done to demonstrate the uniqueness of Pentecostal Christian experience compared to other views of experience. The end purpose will be the coining of a working definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience which shall be used to understand the theology of experience in the AFMZ.

In this chapter, I begin with the impact of the Enlightenment on religion and modern scholarship, followed by the contribution of social sciences on religious experience, after which I analyse the influence of Schleiermacher on religious experience, Pentecostal views

on religious experience, culminating with a definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience.

1.1 The Impact of the Enlightenment on religion and modern scholarship

The Enlightenment era is a critical antecedent to modern scholarship. Foucault in Couze Venn argues that Enlightenment is an inheritance which directly or indirectly affects what people think or do today.¹ This implies that our thinking styles operate within the framework of Enlightenment reasoning. Whilst this view may be representative of Western scholarship, but universalising it is not defensible. It shall be argued later in chapter three that African thought processes although they were impacted by the Western Enlightenment thought, the influence of the African enchanted context cannot be ignored if we are to understand the subject matter of their religious experience. Sebastian Conrad views the Enlightenment discourse as a Eurocentric construct which aims to place Europe at the centre of the global intercourse of ideas,² through the work of social scientists and other scholars who perpetuate the Enlightenment project as if it is the only lens to perceive the world. In that regard, social scientists have been criticised for being complicit in propounding the negative perception of Africa as a dark continent, in need of civilisation. Andrew Linklater argues that the Enlightenment project naively regarded science as a pathway to understanding the universal truth about society and nature.³ To this view Ikechuku Oluikpe adds that Enlightenment was viewed as the only legitimate “measure of reality,” thereby dismissing God and the Bible as

¹ Couze Venn, “The Enlightenment,” *Sage Journals* 23, no. 2-3 (2006): 477.

² Sebastian Conrad, “Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique,” *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 4 (1 October 2012): 999.

³ Andrew Linklater, *Enlightenment Thought and Global Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Books Online 2016), 272.

outdated “superstitious” ideas.⁴ This meant that all other disciplines of knowledge such as religion, were subverted to the narrow path of science to attain academic dignity. It may also be argued that missionary Christianity embraced the Enlightenment notion which dismissed the African worldview as superstitious, hence the demonisation of African religion and culture which would later shape African Pentecostal Christian experience.

Alister McGrath finds the umbilical connection between modern scholars and the Enlightenment project in how the scholars thought as opposed to what they thought.⁵ According to McGrath, the term “Enlightenment” or “age of reason” is a cluster of 18th century ideas which took place in Great Britain and its counterparts, in Germany known as “Die Aufklärung” meaning “the clearing up” and in France known as “Les Lumieres” or “the lights.”⁶ Dale Van Kley describes the Enlightenment as a movement which had “contextual diversity,” hence the varieties of “enlightenments” which were characterised by different themes, cultural and religious tastes, while some radical wings were anti-religion.⁷ Van Kley further notes that although both Protestants and Catholics embraced the Enlightenment era, the Catholics went further and sided with the “moderns” against the “ancients,” in their acceptance of reason and the sciences.⁸ This appears to suggest that both Protestantism and Catholicism had varying contexts in countries like Germany, France and England.

John Robertson concurs that Enlightenment was a broader and complex movement whose intellectual roots originated from European philosophers, but expanded to the wider public, leading to the practical advancement of human conditions in European communities.⁹ Emmanuel Kant, one of the most prominent Enlightenment philosophers defined

⁴ Ikechuku, M. Oluikpe, “Beyond Science: A look at the Biblical View of the Supernatural,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 28, no. 2 (2019): 193.

⁵ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 89.

⁶ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 89.

⁷ Dale K. Van Kley, “The Varieties of Enlightenment Experience,” in *God in the Enlightenment*, ed. William J. Bulman and Robert G. Ingram (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 282.

⁸ Van Kley, “The Varieties of Enlightenment Experience,” 290.

⁹ John Robertson, *The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1.

Enlightenment “as the freedom to make public use of one’s reason with the goal of liberating mankind from its self-imposed immaturity.”¹⁰

McGrath proposes that Enlightenment thinkers aimed at demystifying religion, including any claims to religious experiences, thus making Christianity a natural religion¹¹ which dismisses the supernatural. It is this dismissal of the supernatural by missionary Christianity which made Christianity to initially struggle to take root in Africa until the emergence of Pentecostalism. John Robertson remarks how “Enlightenment hostility to religion is widely regarded as a landmark in the history of secularisation, the process whereby religious observance became an optional rather than a necessary dimension of social life.”¹² This attitude led to the questioning of six major areas of the Christian doctrine namely; miracles, the notion of revelation, the doctrine of original sin, the problem of theodicy or evil, the status and interpretation of Scripture, and the identity and significance of Jesus Christ.¹³ To Christians, components such as the belief in miracles, revelation, the sanctity of Scripture as the Word of God and the significance of Jesus Christ as the risen Saviour, are at the core of Pentecostal experience. Modern social scientists evaluate religious experience with the intellectual bias of the Enlightenment ethos, hence their failure to appreciate that religious experience is central to African Pentecostal Christianity.

What then emerged was the separation and subordination of the Church to the State, the rise of religious tolerance and competing views on religion as something natural or revealed.¹⁴ Whilst Christians maintained the belief that Christianity is a revealed religion with Christ as the way to salvation, they agreed on the other hand to the existence of “natural order” coupled with the “law of nature” as applicable to all humanity.¹⁵ This materialistic

¹⁰ Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 7.

¹¹ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 89.

¹² Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 15.

¹³ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 95–96

¹⁴ Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 17.

¹⁵ Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 17.

view of the world led to the birth of “natural religion” and its progeny, “natural theology.”¹⁶ It shall be argued in later chapters that Africans do not fully subscribe to natural order but rather view reality with the eye of mystical causality. Jeffrey Morrow posits that the academic study of religion, biblical studies, and theology via the “purported quest for objectivity” in line with Enlightenment thought, led to secularised views of Christianity.¹⁷ I also argue that the theology of experience of African Pentecostal Christians would be misunderstood if it’s analysed with the secularised perspectives of the Enlightenment. Morrow further asserts that “secular” may be understood as a space devoid of religious particularity or a space within which discourse about God is excluded, hence the privatisation of religion and its alleged trespassing, if it is shared in the marketplace.¹⁸

The Enlightenment philosophers were also “formers of public opinion,” which led to social and political revolutions.¹⁹ What are now known as coffee houses, Masonic lodges of Freemasons, the Illuminati and hair salons developed as socialising spaces outside the Church and the taverns, where philosophers shared their ideas and hence made these places to become centres for political ideas and other discursive topics.²⁰ Women participated in Enlightenment discussions in hair salons. The Enlightenment era therefore did not only bring economic development through political reforms, but also the cherished values of tolerance, democracy, secularisation, human rights, and gender rights which define modernity.²¹ The freedoms brought by the enlightenment period did not spare religions such as Christianity where people’s experience became an expression of worship. This secularisation and

¹⁶ Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 17.

¹⁷ Jeffrey L. Morrow, “Secularisation, Objectivity, and Enlightenment Scholarship: The Theological and Political Origins of Modern Biblical Studies,” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 18, no. 1 (2015): 14.

¹⁸ Morrow, “Secularisation, Objectivity, and the Enlightenment Scholarship,” 15–17.

¹⁹ Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 83.

²⁰ Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 83–90.

²¹ Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, 124–26.

compartmentalisation of life does not exist in the African enchanted world where religion influences life in its totality.

In sum, whilst the Enlightenment is a Eurocentric construct, its influence upon the global intercourse of ideas especially values like democracy, tolerance, and human rights cannot be ignored. However, the African enchanted context differs radically with the Enlightenment views of secularised Europe as its worldview embraces mystical causality and its superstitious implications. The Enlightenment influence accounts for the struggle European mainline church missionaries faced in their attempt to make the heavily intellectualised Christianity of Europe to be relevant to Africans. It was the dawn of Pentecostal Christianity which resonated with African spirituality and its proclivity to religious experience which led to the shift of the centre of Christianity to the global south.

1.2 Social Sciences' views on religious experience

Social sciences such as Psychology, sociology, anthropology, and phenomenology of religion provide credible analysis of religious experience, which sheds light on the Christian experience as a social and cultural phenomenon. Some of the social scientists discussed below like James, Otto, Maslow, and Smart have been chosen considering their significance and extensive study of religious experience, whilst thoughts from Jung, Allport, Frankl, Fromm, and several others are gleaned by inference. Whilst social scientists focus on “natural processes,” and theologians on “transcendent realities,” they converge in their focus and analysis of the “interior life.”²²

One of the early psychologists to address the subject of religious experience was William James (1842-1910). James defines religion as, “the feelings, acts and experiences of

²² Hardy, “Implicit Theologies in Psychologies,” 70.

individual men (including women) in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.”²³ James coined this definition on the backdrop of his deliberate option to exclude religious experience mediated by institutionalised ritual practices in favour of “personal religion pure and simple.”²⁴ Religious experience, as further explained by James, comes with “emotional attributes” or an attitude of solemnity, seriousness and tenderness in the presence of the “primal reality” of the “divine” which leads to a “religious state of mind” that is saintly/godly, submissive and graceful.²⁵ He postulates that religious experience contains something of value in itself and that feeling is a deeper source of religion.²⁶ Like Schleiermacher as a theologian of religious feeling as we shall see later in this chapter, James sees the varieties of mystical experiences as the essence of religion and that religious feeling is foremost a personal and individual matter.²⁷ Watts comments that James considers religious experience as both individualistic in nature because of feelings, as well as a universal phenomenon traceable in all religions.²⁸ In this research, some of the AFMZ adherents shall be interviewed during fieldwork to account for their personal religious experiences, the context in which these experiences occurred and what religious attitudes have been shaped by such experiences.

Rudolf Otto (1869-1937), although well-known as a minister of religion applied insights from psychology, anthropology and religious studies in his analysis of religious experience.²⁹ Contrary to James and all those who subscribe to religion, especially Christianity only as a feeling, Otto posits that feelings are not enough as they do not account

²³ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 27.

²⁴ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 26.

²⁵ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 32–33.

²⁶ Tastard, *Theology and Spirituality in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 602.

²⁷ James M. Nelson, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2009), 119.

²⁸ Fraser Watts, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality: Concepts and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 53.

²⁹ Nelson, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality*, 127.

for the “rational conceptions” about God which he locates in orthodox doctrinal statements.³⁰ He is also quick to observe the weakness of the rational conceptions and proposes that in order to maintain a balanced view there is need to consider non-rational or “supra-rational” aspect which reflects the “emotional content” of religious life.³¹ For Otto, religious lifestyle is composed of rational and non-rational dimensions where the idea of the Holy can be explained using rational tools, whilst other levels become non-rational terrain.³² According to Otto’s analysis, orthodoxy failed to “do justice” to the non-rational element contained in the religion of the heart in their doctrinal construction which was heavily rationalistic.³³ Otto accommodates the limitations of social sciences in analysing the non-rational aspects of religious experience. Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand tend to unwittingly dismiss rationality when it comes to their trans-rational experience of God.

Otto goes further to discuss what he considers to be a “deeply felt” moment of religious experience³⁴ He introduced the term “numinous” in which he highlights three elements, “(Firstly) a feeling of creatureliness or nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures, (secondly) a feeling of mystery.....(thirdly) a feeling of fascination and yearning that can lead to search for something beyond.”³⁵ This approach resonates with Harvey Cox’s concept of “primal piety,” which manifests in religious expressions such as mystical experience, trance, vision, dreams and dance.³⁶ Put in another way, the feeling of creatureliness shows that humans have nothing to offer in the presence of God. The feeling of mystery in “*mysterium tremendum*”³⁷ reflects how the God feeling is

³⁰ Rudolf, Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 1.

³¹ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 2–3.

³² Nelson, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality*, 127.

³³ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 3.

³⁴ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 8.

³⁵ Nelson, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality*, 127.

³⁶ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Addison: Wesley Publishing Company, 1995) 82.

³⁷ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 20.

overpowering and God Himself appears unapproachable. The feeling of fascination triggers a yearning for more of the same experience of the “wonderfulness” of God.³⁸ It is noted that such experiences are a common feature in the religious experiences of AFMZ adherents. As a minister of religion, Otto is careful to maintain the sacred nature of religion, when he argues that encounter with the Holy has non-rational aspects. Further, religious experience, according to Otto may be defined as the encounter with the Holy which creates a feeling of awe, unworthiness, fascination but at the same time a yearning for more of that experience.³⁹ The key word which pops out of Otto’s definition of religious experience is “encounter,” a term commonly used in the AFMZ.

An avowed atheist of Jewish parentage who maintained that religion was an essential aspect of existence,⁴⁰ Eric Fromm (1900-1980) defines religion as “any group-shared system of thought and action that offers the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion.”⁴¹ This study will evaluate how the AFMZ orients its adherents in its shared system of religious experience. His interpretation of Exodus 3:6, where Moses encounters God, sheds light on his views on religious experience. He argues that God introduces himself as the “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob” and not “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” to show that God is “always an individual experience of each man (person).”⁴² Although religious experience in the AFMZ is expressed and experienced communally, but the individual aspect of such encounters cannot be dismissed. He also posits that the “I am who I am” designation for God in Exodus 3:14 demonstrates that God is a living and dynamic being and not an object or idol with a given name.⁴³ In order for one to experience “oneness” with God, Fromm proposes a return to childhood innocence (Luke 18:17) by way

³⁸ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 32.

³⁹ Nelson, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality*, 127.

⁴⁰ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 140–41.

⁴¹ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 142.

⁴² Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 152.

⁴³ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 152–53.

of letting go of reasoning which leads to “satori,” a form of enlightenment.⁴⁴ Religious experience in Fromm’s eyes, is a personal encounter with God as witnessed in the AFMZ which leads to oneness with this dynamic being, culminating into “satori” enlightenment.

According to Walborn, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was a self-proclaimed atheist with an appreciation of religion as a person of Jewish descent, hence his psychological views on religion.⁴⁵ He is celebrated for his analysis of the hierarchy of needs. He explains that physiological needs such as food, shelter and clothes, safety needs like security, and belonging needs which come through affectionate relationships, may all be summed as “deficit needs.”⁴⁶ At the top of this hierarchy of needs is “self-actualisation” which Maslow considers to be a “growth need,” whereby “self-actualisers” get into the “being mode” or “peak experience,” a state where one loses the sense of self.⁴⁷ Peak or mystic experience according to Maslow, is another level of consciousness where the physical world is transcended, leading to “mystic fusion,” an experience which can be triggered by music or being in natural places like forests, river banks or mountains.⁴⁸ The place of music and being in natural places like mountains and forests shall be analysed to establish their contribution to triggering religious experiences within the context of AFMZ. Although Maslow subscribes to humanistic religion, one notes with interest that what he calls peak experience resonates with another level of consciousness, whereby one has a supernatural fusion with God which is often triggered by intense worship in African Pentecostalism.

An Austrian Jew, Viktor Frankl (1905-1997) was well-known for his “logotherapy,” a psychotherapeutic approach to help people search for and detect the “will to meaning.”⁴⁹ He argues that with the power of will, humans are “self-transcending beings” who can cross

⁴⁴ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 161.

⁴⁵ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 256.

⁴⁶ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 262.

⁴⁷ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 262–65.

⁴⁸ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 265–66.

⁴⁹ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 280–87

boundaries of “instincts” and “environmental contingencies” into the “noetic” dimension or the “irrational unconscious” where they intimately encounter God.⁵⁰ Frankl maintains that all humans have this in-born “irrational unconscious” or “spiritual unconscious” whether you are religious or irreligious.⁵¹ This sentiment from Frankl means that one need not be religious in order to have a spiritual experience and alternatively, religious experience on the religious side is in fact spiritual experience. Therefore, in Frankl’s perspective, religious/spiritual experience occurs because of the will to self-transcend into the “spiritual/irrational unconscious” where one encounters God intimately. I am persuaded to analyse how AFMZ believers consider to what extent encounters with God leads to intimacy with God.

Gordon Allport (1897-1967) was an American psychologist who was open about his religiosity and taught that those who have mature religion are able to practise a lived religion which transcends self as it moves into the “meaning of life” or the “quest dimension.”⁵² He describes such a religion as one which incorporates what he calls “sentiment,” being a strong positive feeling based on the “intention” to become, and is heuristically experiential.⁵³ Allport’s view is that, religious experience is attained when one has intrinsic orientation and intentional desire to transcend self and surroundings and enter the heuristic realm where one gets a new experience. It is the idea of desire by Allport which deserves further exploration to ascertain how it leads religious adherents of AFMZ to enter the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*).

Ninian Smart (1927-2001) is one of the most prominent phenomenologists who directly and explicitly deals with religious experience. He notes the following phenomenological dimensions of religion as human activity; the practical and ritual, the narrative and mythic, the doctrinal and philosophical, the ethical and legal, the social and

⁵⁰ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 286–91.

⁵¹ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 292.

⁵² Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 312–18.

⁵³ Walborn, *Religion in Personality*, 303.

institutional, the material which includes buildings, shrines and artefacts, and the experiential and emotional.⁵⁴ Out of these seven dimensions, it is the experiential and emotional, the narrative and mythic, the practical and ritual, and the material which have a stronger bearing on the religious experience of AFMZ Pentecostals. By nature, religious experience is both experiential and emotional. The dimension of the narrative and mythic serves as sacred history of what others of the same faith experienced. In the case of African Pentecostal Christianity of the AFMZ brand, it is the Biblical narratives spiced with oral Pentecostal narratives, from which sermons are prepared to promote experiential spirituality in the African enchanted context. To them, the Bible contains stories of real people who encountered God. The practical and ritual relates to religious activities which promote desired religious experiences like prayer, worship, and dance. Beit-Hallahmi, whilst he acknowledges that certain individuals may have solitary experiences, argues that most people experience religion through the mediation of (communal) rituals.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the material which includes buildings and shrines are crucial as spaces for religious experience to occur. In this research, the significance of the national conference centre of the AFMZ at Rufaro, Chatsworth in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe and other significant spaces like mountains and forests shall be carefully analysed. The aim is to establish why AFMZ adherents frequently go to these sacralised spaces in search of experiential spirituality. Structures such as church buildings are considered as hallowed places where adherents congregate regularly with the expectation to encounter God. MacMurray argues that whether it is a house or a church, what matters is the function or sanctity assigned to that building at that time.⁵⁶ Artefacts such as holy water are strongly discouraged in the AFMZ as they are deemed to remove people from looking to Jesus for healing and deliverance.

⁵⁴ Nelson, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality*, 6.

⁵⁵ Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, et al, *The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief and Experience* (London: Routledge, 1997), 4.

⁵⁶ John MacMurray, *The Structure of Religious Experience* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1936), 2.

John Manoussakis (1972-) accepts the limitations of the scientific approaches of psychology, anthropology and sociology in the study of religious experience.⁵⁷ He however upholds phenomenology for its emphasis that scholars must return to “things themselves” or “phenomena” in which religious experience is embedded.⁵⁸ He views religious experience as a product of “ritual repetitiveness” leading to what he terms “sacred addictions” which cause religious adherents to have an “addictive desire” to “relive or repeat” past experiences.⁵⁹ For Manoussakis, religious addiction is neither “hallucinogenic fantasy” nor “narcotic” but rather simply a case of desire, driven by devotion and consecration to “something or someone.”⁶⁰ Manoussakis concludes his argument by saying, “religion will remain addictive and addiction religious as long as religion continues to serve the natural (sacred) and promote the fantasy of a timeless past (myth and ritual).”⁶¹ Therefore “sacred addictions” are common in African Pentecostalism, insofar as it embraces the experience of being drunk with the Holy Spirit, which was prophesied by Joel and continually being filled by the same Spirit (Acts 2:15-18, 13:52). The research will demonstrate how the AFMZ as an African Pentecostal church succeeds in inculcating the desire for “ritual repetitiveness” (affectionately known in Shona as *dzokororo ine simba*) through its doctrines and practices.

Courtney Bender (1972-) makes a sociological enquiry of religious experience based on William James’ psychological definition of religion. As noted earlier, William James defines religious experience as the “feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men (including women) in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.”⁶² Bender establishes that James’ definition

⁵⁷ John, P. Manoussakis, “Sacred Addictions: On the Phenomenology of Religious Experience,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 33, no. 1 (2019): 41.

⁵⁸ Manoussakis, “Sacred Addictions,” 43.

⁵⁹ Manoussakis, “Sacred Addictions,” 50–51.

⁶⁰ Manoussakis, “Sacred Addictions,” 51.

⁶¹ Manoussakis, “Sacred Addictions,” 51.

⁶² Courtney, J. Bender, “Touching the Transcendent: Rethinking Religious Experience in the Sociological Study of Religion,” in Nancy, T. Ammerman, *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2007), 204.

acknowledges that experiences are a felt reality which happen even to people who may not have anticipated it to happen to them.⁶³ She proceeds to the sociological domain which transcends from the individual to the religious community, and argues that this is where religious experiences are “domesticated,” and become culturally and “communally prescribed” thereby dispensed.⁶⁴ From Bender’s views, it is noted that religious experience is culturally shaped within a given social context. In this research, African Pentecostal Christian experience is evaluated in the African/Shona cultural context with special reference to the AFMZ and informed by scriptures and the African worldview.

Ann Taves (1952-) posits that all along, psychologists have focused on individual religious experiences whilst sociologists zeroed on “social causes and effects of religious experience,” without engaging the “inter-disciplinary” approach in order to have a “sensible account of religion.”⁶⁵ In the light of her argument, Taves engages with other social sciences and makes the important observation that the value tag of “specialness” contributes to certain things and writings being treated as “sacred” and needing to be “protected by taboos.”⁶⁶ What Taves is positing here is that specialness given to sacred things, religious beliefs and religious rites or practices is a result of “sacralisation” and that this “sacralised discourse” constitutes “experience deemed religious.”⁶⁷ The “sacralised discourse” of the theology of experience as a distinctive mark of Pentecostalism with the AFMZ as a case study is the subject matter of this thesis.

Roger Austin Straus (1948-) argues that the central mystery of religion is “transcendental experience.”⁶⁸ He uses the sociological method of analysis known as the

⁶³ Bender, “Touching the Transcendent,” 204.

⁶⁴ Bender, “Touching the Transcendent,” 205–6.

⁶⁵ Ann, Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-block Approach to the Study of Religion and other Special Things* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 5–8.

⁶⁶ Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 26–27.

⁶⁷ Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 9,29,56.

⁶⁸ Roger A. Straus, “The Social-Psychology of Religious Experience: A Naturalistic Approach,” *Social Analysis*, 42, No. 1 (Spring 1981): 57–67.

“contextual dramaturgical analysis” to evaluate religious experience as premised in social interaction which explains that people live their lives much like actors performing on a stage.⁶⁹ He argues that the process or act of experiencing in religious experience is socialised, although cessation of normal conscious functioning known as “metaphoric deformation” may occur.⁷⁰ According to Straus, religious experience may range from the everyday participation of adherents in religious ceremonies to extraordinary episodes of “ultimate reality” summed up by three qualities namely; “peak experience,” ecstasy, and transcendence.⁷¹ Peak experience may be understood as an intense or hyperconscious experience, whilst ecstasy is a breath-taking and hair-raising experience which releases the subject from his/her socialised realities. Transcendence is a direct encounter with Ultimate Reality (God) or a transpersonal experience of the Absolute (God).⁷²

Straus analyses religious experiences using the Four/Five stage imagery as follows:⁷³

- *Framing*: this is the setting in which the subject undergoes contextual framing. Like a human being in society, the subject is socialised under given social frameworks which govern the drama of life.
- *Predisposition*: the subject begins to adopt religious metaphors to deal with existential dilemmas which require religious experience to be resolved.
- *Programming*: the subject begins to depict favourable attitudes, motivations, and atmosphere of expectation. Steps are intentionally taken to program a substantive event to facilitate the experiential encounter.
- *Triggering*: the subject is ready for the experiential moment and what remains is to trigger the “climactic episode.” The triggering process may include rituals,

⁶⁹ Straus, “The Social-Psychology of Religious Experience,” 57.

⁷⁰ Straus, “The Social-Psychology of Religious Experience,” 58.

⁷¹ Straus, “The Social-Psychology of Religious Experience,” 59

⁷² Straus, “The Social-Psychology of Religious Experience,” 59.

⁷³ Straus, “The Social-Psychology of Religious Experience,” 59–64

preparations, and coaching to evoke intense absorption as a means of releasing ecstatic peak experiences.

- *Having the experience*: the subject may enter this phase with perceptual consciousness, leading to conscious or cognitive meditation. This phase gives way to metaphorical deformation which is the transcendent phase. The aftermath of this phase reverts the subject to normal consciousness where the experience undergoes “translation.”

The social-psychological views of Straus serve as another angle of understanding the theology of experience of the AFMZ.

Social scientific views discussed above are hereby summarised. The definitions and explanations of religious experience clearly expose the existence of general religious language and terminologies which are common across all religions in general. Some terms which are often utilised, such as encounter, ecstasy, the Holy or the Divine and many others, are household words in Pentecostalism. Religious experience has been depicted by social scientists as relational, experiential, and emotional encounters with the Transcendent, Holy or Divine, with addictive propensities. These names may safely refer to God in Christianity. Religious experience has also been described as a feeling of mystery, peak or mystic experience, fascination, satori enlightenment, awesome presence, felt reality and sacredness. Religious experience has further been considered by social scientists as an aesthetic sensory phenomenon of divine significance or specialness insofar as it brings apprehension and disclosure of the Holy. It has been acknowledged that religious experience is culturally and communally prescribed and dispensed. Lastly, religious experience has also been defined by social scientists as extraordinary ecstatic or transcendent experiences with Ultimate Reality (God). In all these descriptions, the non-rational nature of religious experience, the individual nature of experience as well as the communal aspect have been acknowledged.

These social scientific views on religious experience shall play a pivotal role in coining the definition of the African Pentecostal Christian experience.

1.3 The influence of Friedrich Schleiermacher on the theology of experience

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who came from the Germanic ring of liberal Protestant theologians, is celebrated for placing experience at the centre stage of theology, and endowing it with the dignity it deserves.⁷⁴ Similarly, Aubrey states that Schleiermacher influenced the shift of the ground of authority from belief to feeling, from the limitation of conceptual knowledge to limitless consciousness of dependence on the Transcendent.⁷⁵ Although Schleiermacher grappled with some challenges, his observations surpass his time and still apply to the modern debate on religious experience. He saw religion as an autonomous experiential moment which does not need to be reduced to scientific analysis and did not accommodate the misplaced criticism of religion based on the lifeless external dogmas and liturgies existent in the church at the time.⁷⁶ In his famous statement, Schleiermacher saw religion as a feeling of “absolute dependence.”⁷⁷ In the same vein, Schleiermacher deals with the relationship between theology and religious experience. For him, the expression of religious affections depicted in hymns, prayers, testimonies and preaching, forms the primary data upon which theology constructs, arranges, interprets and systematises those beliefs and practices.⁷⁸ Nel concurs with Schleiermacher’s views, and argues that Pentecostals share a basic preference for experience as a co-determinant in the

⁷⁴ Terry Tastard, “Theology and Spirituality in the 19th and 20th Centuries” in Peter Byrne, ed. *Companion Encyclopaedia of Theology* (London: Routledge, 1995), 595.

⁷⁵ Edwin E. Aubrey, “The Place of Definition in Religious Experience,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 27, no. 21 (1930): 561.

⁷⁶ Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987), 2.

⁷⁷ Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*, 15.

⁷⁸ Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*, 16.

way they do theology and read the Bible, because of the advent of the Spirit.⁷⁹ It can be clearly noted that religious beliefs and practices of a particular faith group (including AFMZ as a case study) are interpretations of the experiences of that group and the hymns, prayers, testimonies and preaching make up the database upon which theology is constructed.

The above theological concepts are better understood if one analyses Schleiermacher's first order and second order theology. According to Frei, Schleiermacher contends that theology should not be viewed purely as an academic discipline, but rather that, real theology is a product of Christian self-description; an insider job.⁸⁰ This resonates with John Macquarrie who defines theology thus, "as the study which, through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express the content of this faith in the clearest and most coherent language available."⁸¹ From Macquarrie's definition, three things about theology may be understood:

- Theology comes through practical participation in a religious faith.
- Theology is a reflective job of practitioners of a religious faith.
- Theology is the articulation of the religious faith, depicting clarity of thought and coherence.

Whilst Macquarrie views theology as the content of faith, Schleiermacher considers it as second order didactic and conceptually, precise Christian language, which is a by-product of first order experiential encounters.⁸² In Schleiermacher's mindset, religious experience is first order theology, the database upon which self-description occurs, leading to the making of second order theology. What Schleiermacher posits as second order theology resonates with Macquarrie's definition of theology. This study will engage the theology of experience

⁷⁹ Marius Nel, "Pentecostal Talk about God: Attempting to speak from Experience," *HTS Theological Studies* 73 no. 3 (2017): 1.

⁸⁰ Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology* (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 34.

⁸¹ John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1977), 1.

⁸² Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 34.

as an attempt on self-description, utilising the raw data of first order experientials among African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand. Such an exercise postulates the making of second order theology which is didactic and conceptually precise, thereby constitute a significant contribution to the making of African Pentecostal theology.

1.4 Pentecostal views on religious experience

Whilst religious experience is a phenomenon we find in most religions, the understanding and definition of the same by scholars of social sciences cannot fully account for Pentecostal experience as a distinct phenomenon. This section attempts to address the central problem by analysing to what extent Pentecostal scholars engage religious experience in Pentecostal theological reflection and their perspectives on how the theology of experience has operated in the Pentecostal movement. This exercise is done on the backdrop that each religious tradition has its own distinctives. For this reason, it is appropriate to examine religious experience as to which we call Christian experience, from a Pentecostal standpoint. The scholars cited below serve as a random sample upon which a discourse on Pentecostal Christian experience can be reasonably engaged. Such a discursive engagement begins with earlier scholars and modern ones as well as the views of scholars from the global south, a context in which I discuss the theology of experience.

Hollenweger is one of the earliest scholars on classical Pentecostalism who attempted to address the place of religious experience. He argues that Pentecostalism is better understood when one considers the diversity of contextual spiritualities existent worldwide, making the African environment one of many available cultural contexts.⁸³ The African Pentecostal Christian experience of the Shona members of the AFMZ is the context in which

⁸³ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 2.

Pentecostal spirituality is studied in this thesis. He ascribes the theology of the experience of glossolalia to the pre-Azusa teachings of Charles Fox Parham under whom William Seymour found tutelage⁸⁴. Surprisingly, Hollenweger has been ridiculed for locating the black and African roots of Pentecostalism in William Seymour, the chief architect of the Azusa Street revival of 1906 onwards, out of which came some of the major classical Pentecostal denominations which includes the AFMZ.⁸⁵ Of prime importance to this study is the African expression of Pentecostalism, which Hollenweger sums up as, “Orality of liturgy, narrativity of theology and witness, maximum participation at the levels of reflection..... inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship....”⁸⁶ Instead of diabolising the African primal spiritualities and their therapeutic functions, Hollenweger proposes a “theologically responsible syncretism” bearing in mind that all other forms of Christianity have syncretic elements.⁸⁷ The concept of responsible syncretism shall be further explored in chapter three. These views resonate with Kingsley Larbi who posits that the success of African Pentecostals was largely due to their ability to interpret their struggles with African (spirit-filled) cosmology considering Judaeo-Christian views which leads them to aggressive missions and strict ethical values and communal life.⁸⁸

Frederick Bruner is also another earliest scholar who testifies that Pentecostalism wishes to be understood as “experiential Christianity” with the Holy Spirit as the source of Pentecostal power.⁸⁹ He posits that Pentecostals emphasise experience of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by glossolalia as a continuation of what occurred during the early Church.⁹⁰ For

⁸⁴ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 23.

⁸⁵ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 48.

⁸⁶ Walter J. Hollenweger, “After Twenty Years Research on Pentecostalism,” *International Review of Mission* 75 no. 297 (January 1986): 6.

⁸⁷ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 132–36.

⁸⁸ Kingsley Larbi, “African Pentecostalism in the context of Global Pentecostal Ecumenical Fraternity: Challenges and Opportunities,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 143.

⁸⁹ Frederick D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (London: Hodder, and Stoughton, 1970), 25.

⁹⁰ Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 21.

Bruner, the Pentecostal movement exists to incarnate the neglected reality of the New Testament, being the Holy Spirit in the experience of the believers, thus perpetuate the “contemporaneity” of apostolic Christianity.⁹¹ He locates the experiential variables of Pentecostalism as something gleaned from Wesley’s “experiential theology” and the “experiential methodology” from American revivalism.⁹² Bruner’s views point to the heartbeat of Pentecostal theology as experience-based, characterised by baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by glossolalia and endowment of power to preach the gospel to an experience-hungry world. The evidential aspect of glossolalia to authenticate proof of Spirit baptism in the AFMZ as a classical Pentecostal church resonates with Bruner’s observations.

Mathew Clark (once a missionary in the AFMR) together with his evangelical colleague Henry Lederle who are also earlier proponents of Pentecostal experience, characterise Pentecostalism as an adaptive movement with primarily “a nucleus of common (lived) experience” and secondarily with a common theological “confession of doctrine” which is baptism in the Holy Spirit or experience of God, being a doctrinal position that is informed by experiential spirituality.⁹³ According to Clark and Lederle, due to growing theological awareness, Pentecostals are “attempting to find categories in which they can theologially comprehend or at least state their experience”⁹⁴ which ordinarily will culminate into a doctrinal position. However, they maintain an awareness that the anti-intellectual sentiment in Pentecostalism is still embraced within some circles in the “contemporary movement.”⁹⁵ This thesis is an attempt to articulate African Pentecostal Christian experience of the AFMZ brand of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa.

⁹¹ Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 33.

⁹² Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 39.

⁹³ Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Lederle, *What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* (Pretoria: Unisa, 1983), 17.

⁹⁴ Clark and Lederle, *What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* 36.

⁹⁵ Clark and Lederle, *What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* 41.

Daniel Albrecht who also belongs to earlier scholarship on Pentecostal experience argues that the religious experience of Pentecostals is imbedded in Pentecostal rites and rituals even though he acknowledges that Pentecostals are opposed to ritually mediated spirituality which is perceived to restrict or thwart the “move of the Spirit.”⁹⁶ He says that ritual “connotes those acts, actions, dramas, and performances that a community creates, continues, recognises and sanctions as ways of behaving that express appropriate attitudes, sensibilities, values, and beliefs within a given situation.”⁹⁷ In order to arrive at a proper description of Pentecostal spirituality, Albrecht highlights “corporate worship services” as the major Pentecostal ritual with ritual segments like praise, preaching, altar call and many others where one can retrieve the lived religious experience of Pentecostals and that such experience is based on the belief in Spirit baptism out of which all other Pentecostal experiences are expressed.⁹⁸ Considering the arguments above, Albrecht concludes that Pentecostalism has diverse expressions of experiential spirituality hinged upon the “power and presence” of the Holy Spirit which influences them to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁹⁹ In this study, Pentecostal rituals of the AFMZ shall be subjected to analytical evaluation in order to retrieve the African Pentecostal expression of their theology of experience.

Peter Neumann is a key Pentecostal scholar who addresses the subject of religious experience extensively in consultation with the works of other scholars of the Pentecostal fold like Frank D. Macchia, Simon Chan, and Amos Yong. He arguably views religious experience as something which is mediated within a given context since human experience emanates from and is interpreted through a particular context.¹⁰⁰ In this research, the theology

⁹⁶ Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 21.

⁹⁷ Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 22.

⁹⁸ Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 22–24.

⁹⁹ Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 29.

¹⁰⁰ Peter, D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 4.

of experience of the AFMZ is analysed within the African context which is further narrowed down to the context of the Shona members of the AFMZ. Neumann further analyses the mediated Pentecostal experience considering the sources of theology like Scripture, tradition, and reason.¹⁰¹ For Neumann, the religious aspect of experience is culturally and linguistically mediated based on the views gleaned from Schner who says, “Experience is that which is communicable within the context of a cultural-linguistic community-meaningful to others and to the experiencing subject, based on the pre-existent horizon of meaning through which experience is interpreted.”¹⁰² According to Neumann, the two major Pentecostal life-changing experiences are conversion or new birth experience and the post-conversion experience of Spirit-baptism.¹⁰³ He goes further to say that the Pentecostal emphasis on experience and its authoritative nature has enabled Pentecostalism to adapt to a diversity of cultures which has led to multiple cultural expressions of Pentecostal spirituality¹⁰⁴ of which the Shona cultural context of African Pentecostalism is the subject matter of this thesis.

Neumann also sheds light to Pentecostal experience by summarising Albrecht’s views of its four qualities which are, “mystical and supernatural,” contextually communal, empowers for mission, and its creative nature.¹⁰⁵ The mystical and supernatural locates the source of Pentecostal experience in the Holy Spirit. The contextual communal aspect of Pentecostal experience affirms the role of each Pentecostal community and its rites and rituals in facilitating individual and communal spiritual encounters. The fact of empowerment embraces the full nature and purpose of Pentecostal experience. The creative nature of Pentecostal experience accounts for how Pentecostals use creativity in the way they improvise their settings for worship and all aspects of life and livelihood.

¹⁰¹ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 14.

¹⁰² Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 27–37.

¹⁰³ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 101.

¹⁰⁴ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 110.

¹⁰⁵ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 112–21.

Neumann grapples with the sources of theology like Scripture, tradition, and reason from a position of “experiential faith” because to him, “experience is integral to and functions authoritatively within Pentecostalism.”¹⁰⁶ He views Pentecostals as a Bible-based community who associate their experience of the Spirit with biblical narratives.¹⁰⁷ On the same note, Neumann engages Coulter’s phraseology that Pentecostalism is a “Spirit-Word” movement and Archer’s perspective that Pentecostal experience has “dialectical tension” whereby their experiential encounter with God influences their understanding of Scripture whilst at the same time the “presently inspired” Scripture shapes their “lived experiences.”¹⁰⁸ From the aforementioned, one notes how experience and its transformational nature becomes the spectacles which Pentecostals engage with Scripture which culminates with Scripture overall shaping their religious experience.

Concerning the role of tradition to Pentecostal experience, Neumann acknowledges the suspicion surrounding tradition as something that restricts and constricts freedom to experience the Spirit whilst tacitly embracing it due to the influence of charismatic renewal in mainline churches leading to ecumenical engagement with other Christian traditions.¹⁰⁹ His view is that ecclesial and creedal traditions are not enemies of the Spirit but rather that they are conduits through which experience of the Spirit is mediated and articulated and that Pentecostalism emerged and was shaped by antecedent Christian traditions leading it to what can be termed Pentecostal tradition.¹¹⁰

On the role of reason, Neumann further argues that early Pentecostals also maintained a tacit perspective of reason whereby reason was questioned for its attempt to “quench” or “substitute” the power of the Spirit leading them to be labelled “anti-intellectual,” but the fact

¹⁰⁶ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 101–2.

¹⁰⁷ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 133.

¹⁰⁸ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 109, 129–30.

¹⁰⁹ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 133, 144.

¹¹⁰ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 133–44.

that Pentecostalism was birthed in a modernist setting meant that engaging reason was unavoidable.¹¹¹ Neumann posits that whilst early Pentecostals did not fully subscribe to reason and its modernistic academic tools and language, they partially utilised some aspects of modern argumentation to articulate, validate and defend their experiences and beliefs, and used technology to enhance their proclamation.¹¹² Neumann's argument of tenuous reciprocity seems to persist in Pentecostalism in that while reason is viewed with suspicion, it is tacitly used to validate their experience leading to the making of Pentecostal theology. These observations on the sources of theology by Neumann demonstrates growing evidence that the role of Scripture, tradition and reason contributes to the shaping of Pentecostal experiential spirituality.

Neumann expands his discussion on the contribution of Scripture, tradition, and reason to the theology of experience by analysing the views of three Pentecostal scholars. These are Frank Macchia's theology of experience of God as mediated through the Word, Simon Chan's experience of the Spirit through tradition which preserves its continuity, and Amos Yong's experience of the Spirit through reason.¹¹³ Neumann demonstrates that Macchia views the experience of God as "pneumatologically experiential and transformational" and is guided or mediated by the explicit presentation of the Word which is central for Pentecostal understanding of the working of the Spirit.¹¹⁴ It shall be observed in chapter four and five that African Pentecostal proclamation of the Word is the basis upon which experience of God takes place as AFMZ clergy and laity believe that genuine Pentecostal spirituality is Word-based.

Simon Chan's attempt to accentuate Christian tradition and its theological heritage is done on the backdrop that Pentecostal experience of the Spirit is not sustainable futuristically

¹¹¹ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 146–47.

¹¹² Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 147–49.

¹¹³ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 162–330.

¹¹⁴ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 167–86.

if it does not have “undergirding theology.”¹¹⁵ He then proposes the “traditioning” project by Pentecostals whereby they can communally transmit the experience of the Spirit as a “living tradition” by accepting and engaging with the rich historical Christian heritage which by so doing Pentecostals can also enrich other Christian traditions.¹¹⁶ Chan goes further to argue that this experience of the Spirit is ecclesial and has historical evidence to it from the day of Pentecost and that the blending of ecclesiology and pneumatology makes it possible to perpetuate this living tradition.¹¹⁷ It is doubtless that early Pentecostals were suspicious of tradition as something that embraced dead religion but Chan’s observations and recommendations are beneficial to Pentecostalism as it has come of age having existed for over one hundred years to date. It shall be noticed in chapter four and five that the AFMZ is a brand of African Pentecostalism which is continually excelling in its traditioning project whereby it is adopting and adapting traits from both the Christian heritage and African heritage to theologise their experiential spirituality.

Whilst Amos Yong engages experiencing the Spirit through reason, he does so through use of Scripture and tradition. For Yong, reason is a tool for theological reflection which goes beyond Pentecostal theology to “theology of religions” but having pneumatology based on “Pentecostal-charismatic” (PC) experience as the starting point and “lens for viewing reality.”¹¹⁸ In his engagement with reason, he proposes “pneumatological imagination” as a PC experience of the Spirit which in turn determines a PC worldview with varying “cultural expressions” emanating from diverse contextual realities in the global setting.¹¹⁹ Yong views Spirit-baptism as an overwhelming direct encounter with the divine (Spirit) and that such a PC experience is communally mediated through symbols and the

¹¹⁵ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 221.

¹¹⁶ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 221–28.

¹¹⁷ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 230–35.

¹¹⁸ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 18–20. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 273–74.

¹¹⁹ Yong, *Spirit Poured Out*, 18.

outcome being that PC encounters serve as a “suitable resource for theological reflection” and determines how they re-read Scripture to account for their experience of God.¹²⁰ In his discourse on theology of religions or inter-faith dialogue, Yong postulates the possibility of the presence and activity of the Spirit in other religions based on the conviction that no religion is entirely void of the presence of the Spirit (spirits) well-knowing that certain religions are bearers of the demonic.¹²¹ For this reason, Yong recommends the principle of discernment whereby other religions are evaluated to ascertain whether they are devoid of the presence of the Spirit through assessment of “concrete phenomena” such as texts, rituals and “religious experiences” as depicted by dances, visions, glossolalia, and dreams leading to the possibility of the Spirit’s presence universally.¹²² The AFMZ is analysed in this thesis as a contextual cultural expression of African Pentecostal Christian experience by AFMZ adherents as they grapple with African realities using the lens of mystical causality in a world filled with spirits.

Frank Macchia locates the heart of Pentecostal experience in the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues or glossolalia.¹²³ He aims to establish glossolalia as a Pentecostal sacrament, since there is sacramental spirituality depicted through the Eucharist in Catholic tradition. But what can be established from the onset is that the AFMZ which is the centre of this study is a classical Pentecostal movement which views baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of glossolalia as the initiation process in the theology of experience for new converts.

¹²⁰ Amos Yong, *Discerning Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Books, 2000), 168–71. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 294–96.

¹²¹ Yong, *Discerning Spirit(s)*, 209–11; Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 300–3.

¹²² Yong, *Discerning Spirit(s)*, 224, 250–251; Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 303–6.

¹²³ Frank D. Macchia, “Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 61–76.

According to Macchia, embedded in glossolalia is both the experience of God and an audible means of making God immanent¹²⁴ which Kelsey, quoted by Macchia, claims it creates the believer's direct access to God,¹²⁵ as demonstrated by the tearing of the temple curtain which denied ordinary people entrance into the Holy of Holies.¹²⁶ In his sacramentalisation agenda, Macchia is sensitive to Pentecostal attitudes of anti-institutionalisation and anti-tradition. He however puts his argument into perspective, when he acknowledges the shift in views on sacraments by the Catholics lately and that his concept of Pentecostal experience is based on the latter, which views sacraments as an opportune moment for a "personal encounter" with God.¹²⁷ As a sacrament, Macchia sees glossolalia as a significant medium through which God is uniquely incarnate/d and encountered evidentially.¹²⁸ Macchia solidifies his argument by saying, "Tongues as initial evidence of Spirit baptism is perhaps the most enigmatic and controversial of classical Pentecostal beliefs. There can be little doubt that tongues serve as an apostolic sign for most Pentecostals, signalling evidence of the Spirit's anointing for service that connects Pentecostal believers with the initial apostolic anointing for service."¹²⁹ From the views of Macchia, it can be noted that the foundation of Pentecostal experience is in the initiation process of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidential tangibles of glossolalia. All other spiritual experiences are assumed to be based upon the working of the Holy Spirit who is already resident in the Pentecostal believer. This concept of Spirit baptism among African Pentecostals shall be scrutinized considering the concept of spirit possession in African traditional religious practices.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Macchia, "Tongues as a Sign," 61.

¹²⁵ Macchia, "Tongues as a Sign," 61.

¹²⁶ Matthew 27:51

¹²⁷ Macchia, "Tongues as a Sign," 63.

¹²⁸ Macchia, "Tongues as a Sign," 63.

¹²⁹ Macchia, "Tongues as a Sign," 64.

¹³⁰ Francis Machingura, "The Shona concept of spirit possession (*kusvikirwa*) and the Pentecostal phenomenon of getting into the Spirit," *Hope's Reason: A Journal of Apologetics* 1, no. 1 (2012): 85–101.

Frank Macchia further grapples with how the experience of Spirit baptism can be articulated theologically. He perceives Spirit baptism as a “form of clothing” or the “God intoxication” experience which leads one to witness as someone who has been empowered.¹³¹ He maintains that Spirit baptism is the central and “crown jewel” Pentecostal distinctive which Oneness Pentecostalism attaches to the soteriological process through water baptism in Jesus’ name, whilst Trinitarian Pentecostals perceive it as a separate “post-conversion charismatic experience of Spirit empowerment.”¹³² Speaking in tongues is viewed as a sign of the Spirit’s presence and spiritual gifts as accompanying charisms.¹³³ He notes that Pentecostal theology emerges from the lived dramaturgical “experiential forms of expression” embedded in prayers, stories, songs, and ecstatic dances which serve as “doctrinal symbols” or narrative expressions.¹³⁴ Macchia points out the need for Pentecostals to appreciate and account for the soteriological function of the Spirit besides the dramaturgical charismatic experience of empowerment.¹³⁵ However, Macchia argues further to say that Spirit baptism in the book of Acts culminated with “Spirit-enriched praise” as well as the development of an ecclesial community where there was inclusive communal fellowship and the teaching of believers.¹³⁶ In light of charismatic pneumatology and soteriological pneumatology cited above, I view both cases as concrete experientials where the Spirit works internally to enact the salvific experience and externally in the charismatic empowerment experience.

Keith Warrington grapples with experiential Christianity¹³⁷ whereby he views Pentecostalism (traditionally) as a movement that is not focused on theology but is rather

¹³¹ Frank, D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2006), 14.

¹³² Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit* 20–21.

¹³³ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 36.

¹³⁴ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 51,54.

¹³⁵ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 58–59.

¹³⁶ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 79.

¹³⁷ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T and T Clark, 2008), 15.

“praxis-oriented” in that its focus is on practically experiencing God hence functional theology.¹³⁸ For Warrington, the heartbeat of or what is central to Pentecostalism is the kerygma which popularises direct experiential encounters with God.¹³⁹ To strengthen his position, he quotes MacDonald who describes Pentecostal spirituality as an “experience-certified theology.”¹⁴⁰ Warrington is however aware of the dilemmas associated with the theology of experience when he quotes the sentiments of Kelsey that, “It is far easier to deal with ideas about God than God himself. Ideas about God rarely overwhelm the thinker.... when a man does encounter God, it is not God who is put under the microscope and examined with reason, but man who finds himself under scrutiny.”¹⁴¹ This writer concurs with Warrington that Pentecostal Christianity is experience-based and that such experiential encounters with God are the driving force for missions, as evidenced in the Bible. One notes with interest that biblical figures like Paul, Isaiah, Moses, and others are recorded as having encountered God, leading to a missiological call.¹⁴² In order to fit in this prophetic and apostolic lineage, African Pentecostal preachers tend to claim mystical experiential encounters with God as a way of authenticating their divine calling.

Wolfgang Vondey sheds light on Pentecostal theology which regards “Pentecost” as the core theological symbol, and the four/fivefold full gospel as its theological narrative.¹⁴³ He describes the term “Pentecostal” as a trademark which reflects alignment with and continuation of the biblical day of Pentecost, thus identifying with the experiential spirituality rooted in it.¹⁴⁴ Vondey’s definition of Pentecostalism embraces with it what could be understood as Pentecostal experience. He states that, “Pentecostalism can be identified by the

¹³⁸ Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 16.

¹³⁹ Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 20.

¹⁴⁰ Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 21.

¹⁴¹ Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 26.

¹⁴² Acts 9, Isaiah 6, Exodus 3

¹⁴³ Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 1.

¹⁴⁴ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 2.

day of Pentecost as the concern for an immediate encounter with God through the Spirit of Christ, manifested in discernible signs and wonders as evidence of God's transforming and redeeming presence, directing all of life towards the kingdom of God."¹⁴⁵ Vondey in a way, reincarnates Schleiermacher's emphasis on experience when he posits experience as the playground of Pentecostal theology.¹⁴⁶ Vondey however rejects Schleiermacher's focus on experience through feelings and he reworks it through affections. For Vondey, Pentecostal theology is a two-pronged theology in that it is both "pneumatic" i.e., the experiential encounter and "pneumatological" insofar as it reflects upon the experience.¹⁴⁷ In the "pneumatic" dimension are first-hand experiences which can be observed in prayers, songs, glossolalia, prophecy, oral narrative, and testimony which resonates with what Schleiermacher calls "first-order" theology. Schleiermacher's "second-order" theology occurs when Vondey engages with reflective pneumatology which analyses the ethnographical and biographical data that corroborates with "lived experiences."¹⁴⁸ The "pneumatic" and "pneumatological" shall be used as tools to analyse the theology of pneumatic experience in the African Pentecostal environment.

Furthermore, Vondey argues that "the worldview of Pentecostals depends overwhelmingly on a recognition of the Spirit's activity in the world"¹⁴⁹ which is characterised by holistic spirituality which is derived from the "pneumatic" i.e., life imbued with experiential existence from the Holy Spirit, with the ability to interpret the experience pneumatologically, and empowering believers to participate in transforming the world through charismatic gifts.¹⁵⁰ In his analysis of Pentecostal spirituality, Vondey acknowledges

¹⁴⁵ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 4.

¹⁴⁶ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 18.

¹⁴⁷ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 18.

¹⁴⁸ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 20.

¹⁴⁹ Vondey, Wolfgang. *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 31.

¹⁵⁰ Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 32–35.

that the limitless experiential orientation of Pentecostalism operates on a broader terrain of diverse contextual spiritualities which makes charismatic excesses unavoidable.¹⁵¹

Vondey also views the twentieth century Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as “renewal movements” whose focus is on “spiritual presence” (SP) as evidence of the Holy Spirit in the believer and in the world.¹⁵² He argues further that it is this emphasis on SP which led to ecumenical dialogue on the Spirit as central to renewal as testified by the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue of 1985-1989 and other subsequent World Council of Churches interreligious dialogues which now acknowledges the universal presence of the Spirit.¹⁵³ Vondey affirms that SP should be understood in its varieties and taxonomies¹⁵⁴ one of which is the African-Shona context of the AFMZ whose theology of experience is central to this thesis.

Eriksen sees more of a rule than an exception that people relate to a “living kind of religion” often characterised by experiential features of faith.¹⁵⁵ For him, Pentecostalism has a shared “pneumatological and experiential spirituality” which breaks limitations of race, ethnicity, theology, denomination, gender or class.¹⁵⁶ He acknowledges that academic Pentecostals are known as people who take spiritual experience to be significant for doing theology and biblical interpretation.¹⁵⁷ In other words, experience provides the empirical basis upon which a rational interpretation of the world occurs. Eriksen uses the language of social sciences in his description of Pentecostal experiences and beliefs. He says this about religious experience, “In the natural sciences, experience exclusively refers to empirical sense knowledge, but in philosophy, it is the heart of religion, an encounter with the supernatural or

¹⁵¹ Vondey, *Pentecostalism*, 42–47.

¹⁵² Vondey, Wolfgang. *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: Historical, Interdisciplinary, and Renewal Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 5.

¹⁵³ Vondey, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life*, 5–7.

¹⁵⁴ Vondey, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian life*, 10.

¹⁵⁵ Stian S. Eriksen, “The Epistemology of imagination and religious experience: A global and Pentecostal approach to the study of religion,” *Studia Theologica Nordic Journal of Theology* 69, no. 1 (2015): 47.

¹⁵⁶ Eriksen, “The Epistemology of imagination and religious experience,” 48.

¹⁵⁷ Eriksen, “The Epistemology of imagination and religious experience,” 48.

the Holy Other, a transcendent dimension.”¹⁵⁸ For Eriksen, the definition of religious experience solely depends upon the lenses through which one sees the world.¹⁵⁹ He presents five characteristics of Pentecostal epistemology which sheds light on the belief systems of Pentecostals in general.¹⁶⁰ These are:

- An exploratory, open, and flexible epistemology
- An experiential and empirically based epistemology
- A relational, communal, and normatively oriented epistemology
- A contextual, empowering, and non-elitist epistemology
- A practically oriented and transformative epistemology

From the above characteristics propounded by Eriksen, it can be noted that Pentecostal Christian faith is not rigid and habitual but is rather a religion of first-hand experiential adventure. It is a religion which promotes a vertical relationship with God and horizontal communal relationships with others based on biblical norms. It also emphasises the importance of context in its empowerment and transformation agenda. Finally, Pentecostal faith is not theoretical but practical. These ideas point to the theology of experience, the subject matter for this research.

Nel, an AFMSA pastor and academic with European roots contends that Pentecostals share a basic proclivity for experience as a prerequisite for doing theology.¹⁶¹ He argues that Pentecostalism recognises the truth claims of the Bible not only as theological concepts, but also as experiential in nature.¹⁶² These experiences are deemed to be transformative internally and that they also manifest externally through glossolalia, healing, deliverance etc.¹⁶³ He

¹⁵⁸ Eriksen, “The Epistemology of imagination and religious experience,” 49.

¹⁵⁹ Eriksen, “The Epistemology of imagination and religious experience,” 51.

¹⁶⁰ Eriksen, “The Epistemology of imagination and religious experience,” 57.

¹⁶¹ Marius Nel, “Pentecostal Talk about God: Attempting to speak from Experience,” *HTS Theological Studies* 73, no. 3 (2017): 1.

¹⁶² Nel, “Pentecostal Talk about God,” 2.

¹⁶³ Nel, “Pentecostal Talk about God,” 2.

posits that a trinitarian relational model of God is best suited for Pentecostals who put high value to experiential spirituality.¹⁶⁴ For Nel, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is a clear demonstration of God's desire to relate with His creation,¹⁶⁵ which shows that the theology of experience is based on the dynamics of relationality. This trinitarian model shall be further evaluated in the quest for a definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience.

Nel goes further to define Pentecostal spirituality as a "lived religious experience of the Christian faith" which emanates from the direct personal experience of Spirit baptism.¹⁶⁶ He characterises Pentecostalism as a movement which is sceptical about man-made creeds but would rather be consumed with passion for holiness, affective experiential spirituality and missional outreaches.¹⁶⁷ He further points out that the AFMSA was anti-intellectual or anti-reason in its infancy due to its historical circumstances of attracting those with little or no education, which contributed to the rejection of theological training and the resulting, self-inflicted theological inferiority.¹⁶⁸ The dominant view was that in order for one to serve in preaching the gospel, all what was needed was the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by the evidence of speaking in tongues. With time however, the AFMSA embraced theological training although in some quarters it is maintained that intellectualism suppresses the Spirit.

Nel proposes that African Pentecostals stand to benefit from the "language of the time-honoured practice of mysticism (which) is suitable for explaining its spirituality."¹⁶⁹ Nel views Christian mysticism as an experiential consciousness of God's participation in existential issues, hence the existence of "mystical sensibilities" and "experiential impulse"

¹⁶⁴ Nel, "Pentecostal Talk about God," 5.

¹⁶⁵ Nel, "Pentecostal Talk about God," 6.

¹⁶⁶ Marius Nel, *Aspects of Pentecostal Theology: Recent Developments in Africa* (Zurich: LIT Verlag, 2015), 7.

¹⁶⁷ Nel, *Aspects of Pentecostal Theology*, 14–17.

¹⁶⁸ Nel, *Aspects of Pentecostal Theology*, 78–80.

¹⁶⁹ Marius, Nel, "African Pentecostal Spirituality as a Mystical Tradition: How regaining its roots could benefit Pentecostals," *HTS Theological Studies* 76, no. 4 (2020): 1–10.

in African Pentecostalism.¹⁷⁰ To consolidate this sentiment, Nel states that, “the global South speaks of God in intimate terms, expecting God’s direct intervention in the believers’ and churches’ affairs on a daily basis.”¹⁷¹ This African view of mystical causalities and its accompanying ecstatic experientials and language of mystery, has led to the development of a “vernacularised” or “alternative version” of Pentecostal Christianity, whereby encounter with and union with God is prioritised over Western “cerebral” religiosity.¹⁷² In agreement with Nel, it is the vernacularised Pentecostal Christianity in Africa which can properly showcase African Pentecostal Christian experience. Nel also sees aspects of mystical tradition such as holiness, “magical realism” or “God-drenched reality,” “ecstatic speech” i.e., speaking in tongues to express unsayable mystery and emphasis on “encounter” as something already constituted in African Pentecostalism.¹⁷³

Nimi Wariboko traces the origins and character of African Pentecostalism in the context of Nigeria. Although he discusses other major players in Nigerian Pentecostalism, his focus is the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) where he is an active pastor, besides his academic role elsewhere. He rightly observes that African Pentecostalism is a product of “creative response” to African realities by utilising the indigenous worldview and the Bible.¹⁷⁴ He observes the susceptibility of African Pentecostals being simultaneously inside and outside African Traditional Religions (ATR),¹⁷⁵ which accounts for the distinctive nature of their experiential Christianity which drinks from the well of ATR and Biblical Christianity.

African Pentecostalism’s roots in the Aladura movement, an indigenous religious movement which emerged during the British colonial period, and which is known for its

¹⁷⁰ Nel, “African Pentecostal Spirituality as a Mystical Tradition,” 1–2.

¹⁷¹ Nel, “African Pentecostal Spirituality as a Mystical Tradition,” 2.

¹⁷² Nel, “African Pentecostal Spirituality as a Mystical Tradition,” 3–6.

¹⁷³ Nel, “African Pentecostal Spirituality as a Mystical Tradition,” 8.

¹⁷⁴ Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 17.

¹⁷⁵ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 5.

emphasis on prayer, contributed to the disposition of warfare type of prayers characteristic of African Pentecostalism.¹⁷⁶ However, Wariboko notes that African Pentecostals, whilst they borrow from Aladura spirituality, they view the Aladura movement as the “Pentecostal other” who are too rooted in ATR.¹⁷⁷ He also highlights the imprint of the Evangelical movement on African Pentecostalism in the area of “personal conversion experience” which was expanded to include the “empowerment experience” which in turn promoted the rise of religious entrepreneurship over and above occupying political and economic spaces.¹⁷⁸ Against this background, prosperity became a “theology of hope” in the face of poverty.¹⁷⁹ The criticism however is that whilst there has been an observable amelioration in the fortunes of some members in African Pentecostal circles, the majority of its followers remain in abject poverty, whilst being fleeced by some unscrupulous religious entrepreneurs. Wariboko is cognisant of this “epistemological crisis” which is created by so-called idolised preachers who insist on rejection of reason and demand loyalty to their “pronouncements.”¹⁸⁰

On church growth, Wariboko upholds the “providential outflow of the Holy Spirit,” and use of “home groups” which depicted the indigenous culture of the extended family, which were spaces for care and intimacy as strategic for the propagation of the gospel.¹⁸¹ Such home group settings have contributed to experiential spirituality where one can freely encounter God in proximity with people of a feather, unlike the impersonal nature of large gatherings.

In sync with Walter Hollenweger, Allan Anderson confirms that whilst Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon, it has its peculiar contextual expressions in different

¹⁷⁶ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 18.

¹⁷⁷ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 26.

¹⁷⁸ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 27.

¹⁷⁹ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 35.

¹⁸⁰ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 56.

¹⁸¹ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 29–30.

communities (including Africa), hence its adaptive character.¹⁸² The orality, narrativity and communality of African Pentecostalism as well as its syncretic tendencies and physical rigour in practices like prayer constitutes the African distinctives of Pentecostal experience as we shall see in chapter three.

Pentecostal scholars have attempted to define and explain the concept of religious experience from a Pentecostal viewpoint. This has contributed immensely to a comprehensive understanding of Pentecostal experience as a distinct field, as opposed to religious experience in general. The following summary of Pentecostal views on experience will provide the foundation upon which a definition of Pentecostal experience shall be proffered:

- Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of glossolalia is part of the Pentecostal initiation process.
- Glossolalia is a significant sacrament and medium through which God is uniquely incarnated and encountered evidentially.
- Pentecostal theology is a praxis-oriented and experience-certified theology in that its focus is on practically experiencing God.
- Direct experiential encounters with God are key drivers which propel believers to pursue the missiological agenda.
- Pentecostals have a genetic connection with the day of Pentecost whose experiential tangibles account for God's presence in contemporary times.
- Pentecostal theology is composed of pneumatic experiential encounters and pneumatological reflective and interpretive frameworks.

¹⁸² Allan Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World: Religious Dis/Continuity in African Pentecostalism* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2018), 204–5.

- Pentecostal experience is mediated through a cultural and linguistic context and framework.
- There is a growing awareness that Pentecostals are now accentuating the role of Scripture, tradition, and reason in shaping their experience of God.
- As relational theists, the Pentecostal experience of God influences their discourse about God.
- Pentecostalism aspires to be understood as experiential Christianity with the Holy Spirit as the source of Pentecostal power.
- Pentecostals seek to reignite the neglected reality of the New Testament, being the Holy Spirit in Christian experience, thus perpetuate the contemporaneity of apostolic Christianity.
- Pentecostals share a basic proclivity for experience as a prerequisite for doing theology.
- A trinitarian relational model of God is best suited for Pentecostals due to their emphasis on vertical relationship with God and horizontal communal relationships with other believers.
- Pentecostal experience has a double function of internal transformation which creates a desire for holiness and external manifestation, which in turn triggers glossolalia and other supernatural experiences.
- Pentecostal experience is a global phenomenon with diverse contextual spiritualities or cultural expressions.
- The theology of Pentecostal experience is embedded in the Catholic and Protestant theological heritage.

Having summarised the diverse views of Pentecostal scholars on experience, I define Pentecostal experience as “direct, pneumatic, and experiential encounters with God through the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit, with evidential tangibles of glossolalia and other

supernatural experiences, leading to empowerment of believers for missions.” This definition shall be further expanded to incorporate the meaning of African Pentecostal Christian experience, as expounded in the context of social sciences, Schleiermacher’s theological views and Pentecostal scholarship.

1.5 Definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience

In this section the researcher attempts to construct a working definition of the African Pentecostal Christian experience. This is done by borrowing some concepts from social sciences and Schleiermacher, in consultation with Pentecostal scholarship which includes Marius Nel, Nimi Wariboko and Allan Anderson who represent views from the global south. Key words used in the definition shall be explained thereafter.

Before delving into the definition project, it is plausible to evaluate what Slater calls Jesus’ direct experiences of God the Father in the Jewish milieu,¹⁸³ and supported by Neumann and Pallin who argue that religious experience is culturally and conceptually conditioned and mediated.¹⁸⁴ Slater mentions that since Jesus had direct experiences with God, this reflects the possibility that his followers can have a similar experience with God. Jesus’ “Abba-experiences” occurred within the ambience of the paradoxical Jewish system, in which God is seen and yet not seen, known and yet unknowable, revealed but remains hidden.¹⁸⁵ Dunn in Slater has this to say about the Jesus’ Abba-experience, “His direct experiences were a deep well out of which flowed his sense of mission, his authority, his gospel and his lifestyle. Jesus’s experiences of God became determinative for later Christian

¹⁸³ Jennifer Slater, “Jesus’ direct experiences of God the Father: A paradox within Jewish theology and gateway to Human experience of God,” *Koers* 76, no. 3 (2011): 479.

¹⁸⁴ David A. Pallin, *The Anthropological Character of Theology: Conditioning Theological understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 94.

¹⁸⁵ Slater, “Jesus’ direct experiences of God the Father,” 479.

experiences.”¹⁸⁶ From this standpoint, it becomes plausible for African Pentecostals to claim direct experiences with God within their African ambience. However, Christian experience as we shall see, is differentiated from other types of religious experience, owing to the social consciousness of the group which being Christian, subscribes its experience to the Biblical and theological content of Christianity.¹⁸⁷ But due to the paradox of syncretism prevalent in Africa and the democracy of the Spirit in Pentecostalism, variant types of religious experience have been accommodated.¹⁸⁸

Having noted that Jesus had an Abba experience with God within the context of Jewish culture, it is plausible that African Pentecostal Christians can have variant types of experiences of God within the African milieu. Pentecostal Christians should further have a trinitarian experience, consisting of a Jesus experience, an Abba/Father experience and a Pneuma/Spirit experience as reflected in Paul’s benediction.¹⁸⁹ It is further argued that the Jesus experience helps us to understand grace, the Abba/Father experience helps us to understand love, and the Pneuma/Spirit experience helps us to understand communion. I acknowledge that I am making this definition as a Pentecostal insider (emic)¹⁹⁰ and that being theologically tendentious is unavoidable just like Bible writers who also compiled their works with a theological bias.

Based on the views of Pentecostal scholarship on religious experience with some input from social sciences on the same, I define African Pentecostal Christian experience as, “the direct experiential encounters with the triune God through the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit, personally or corporately, with evidential tangibles like glossolalia and other

¹⁸⁶ Slater, “Jesus’ direct experiences of God the Father,” 479.

¹⁸⁷ Henry B. Robins, “The Significance of Psychology for the Interpretation of Religious Experience,” *The Biblical World* 45, no. 2 (February 1915): 82–93.

¹⁸⁸ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 197, and Robins, “The Significance of Psychology for the interpretation of Religious Experience,” *The Biblical World* 45, no. 2 (February 1915): 82–93.

¹⁸⁹ 2Corinthians 13:14 NIV

¹⁹⁰ Allan Anderson, et al, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 14.

supernatural experiences, reflecting Afro-biblical ambience out of which flows their mission, kerygma and lifestyle.” However, I am aware that my Oneness Pentecostal brethren may struggle with the trinitarian component in this definition, which is our point of divergence, although most of our Pentecostal views converge on many points.

The above definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience needs to be dissected and elaborated to broaden our perspective because it is loaded with what this study envisages to achieve. First, the Christian community, whose experience is being defined understands itself to be Pentecostal, because of its emphasis on the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives and mission.¹⁹¹ Second, they are Christians because they base their faith and experience on the Bible as the inspired word of God¹⁹² but interpret it in the light of their distinctive experientials and context.¹⁹³ Third, they are African because they belong to the continent of Africa within which Anderson’s continuity debate is practiced by borrowing from these ancient sources to augment their Pentecostal faith.¹⁹⁴ Fourth, their experiences are explained as direct experiential encounters with the triune God, because such experiences are extraordinary and involve God in three persons, although the Holy Spirit is given prominence due to the “interpretive matrix” ushered by the day of Pentecost.¹⁹⁵ Fifth, such experiences may be realised individually or corporately in light of the African Pentecostal cultural tradition, conditioning and interpretive framework.¹⁹⁶ Sixth, such experiences are not theoretical, but are characterised by evidential tangibles, some with intrinsic value and others with utility value,¹⁹⁷ which is supported by Anderson when he states that the success of Pentecostalism lies in addressing the material aspects of people’s existence.¹⁹⁸ Lastly, that out

¹⁹¹ Anderson, et al, *Studying Global Pentecostalism*, 15.

¹⁹² Nel, “Pentecostal Talk about God,” 3.

¹⁹³ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 184.

¹⁹⁴ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 195.

¹⁹⁵ Lee R. Martin, ed. *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader* (London: Brill, 2013), 1.

¹⁹⁶ Fraser Watts, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality: Concepts and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 55.

¹⁹⁷ MacMurray, *The Structure of Religious Experience*, 9.

¹⁹⁸ Anderson, et al, *Studying Global Pentecostalism*, 2.

of this distinctive experiential comes their Christian mission i.e. that which pushes them to preach a specific type of kerygma, counter the spirit-filled world and live a sanctified lifestyle.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have noted how religious experience has attracted the attention of social scientists, whose views have contributed to our understanding of religion as a lived experience. These views will assist in the analysis of the lived African Pentecostal Christian experience of the AFMZ adherents. Considering the religious experience of the AFMZ operating in the Shona cultural context, conversations will be made to ascertain how ATR informs this theology of experience. It has also been observed that religious experience provides raw data upon which theologising may be done, although theology reciprocally has the interpretive framework to analyse and evaluate religious experience. This reciprocity has been further explained by Schleiermacher in his first order and second-order theology, through which he places experience at the centre stage of modern theology. Pentecostal views on religious experience have been considered in our quest for a definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience out of which an African Pentecostal theology of experience can be explored. These Pentecostal features of religious experience are used to evaluate the experiences of the AFMZ as an indigenised classical Pentecostal church. Conclusively, African Pentecostal Christian experience has been defined as, “the direct experiential encounters with the triune God through the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit, personally or corporately, with evidential tangibles like glossolalia and other supernatural experiences, reflecting Afro-Biblical ambience out of which flows their mission, kerygma and lifestyle.”

This definition will determine how Pentecostal Christian experience is understood in the African context.

Chapter 2 : The theology of experience in the historical antecedents of the Pentecostal movement

The preceding chapter attempted to coin a definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience considering the input of social scientists, Schleiermacher, and Pentecostal scholarship on religious experience. Such an exercise helps in the analysis of how religious experience is enacted in various antecedences and how such experiences contributed to the theology of experience of the AFMZ. This chapter builds upon the preceding chapter by going further to trace the theology of experience through key historical antecedents which have influenced the AFMZ as a classical Pentecostal church. By theology of experience for purposes of this research, is meant the African Pentecostal Christian experience (as discussed and defined in the previous chapter) in the context of the broad Pentecostal Christian experience. The aim is to account for any commonalities and peculiarities between the two experiences. From an African cultural perspective, the ancestral lineage from which the AFMZ derived its experiential traits is traceable to specific historical antecedents. These experiential traits have already been extrapolated by Pentecostal scholarship in chapter one.

The first and foundational antecedent to be analysed is the Moravian and Wesleyan pietism from which John Graham Lake originated as a Methodist preacher. Lake was one of the founders and most influential figures of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFMSA) in its founding stage and AFMZ was also birthed out of this revival. It proceeds to critique the extent to which the antecedent of the healing movement in general, and Alexander Dowie in particular, impacted the doctrine and practice of healing in the AFMZ. Dowie's connection was through John Lake who once served as an Elder in Dowie's church

and later converted the entire Zion congregations in South Africa to the newly formed AFMSA.

The third antecedent is the Holiness movement, which is evaluated in the light of the impact of the Pentecostal fivefold gospel on African Pentecostalism, with the role of Jesus as sanctifier. It is the desire for holiness which influenced the AFMZ to regulate Christian behaviour among its followers and leaders through disciplinary measures enshrined in its constitution. The footprint of the Azusa Street revival, which is a fourth antecedent, is placed on a high pedestal by AFMZ adherents. This era will be evaluated in the light of its connection to the founding fathers of the AFMSA being the mother church of AFMZ, namely Thomas Hezmelhalch and John Graham Lake who maintained ties with the Azusa Street mission whilst doing their missionary work in South Africa. This antecedent also answers one of the key questions which addresses the central problem i.e., how a theology of experience has operated and witnessed in the Pentecostal movement?

Finally, the theology of experience within the African ambience is discussed against the background of the initial planting of the AFMSA and its subsequent growth and expansion into Zimbabwe. This historical analysis of the theology of experience in the AFMZ during its planting stage answers one of the key questions geared to address the central problem namely, how has the theology of experience contributed to the growth of the Pentecostal movement in Africa and the AFMZ? Aspects of the four antecedents under discussion feature highly in the AFMZ doctrines and practices like Methodist hymns were simply copied and pasted into AFMZ hymnody, healing through laying on of hands emanates from Alexander Dowie, a rigorous approach to sanctification was gleaned from both Alexander Dowie and the Holiness movement, whilst the Azusa Street revival is glamourised due to its emphasis on baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

This chapter begins with the antecedent of Moravian and Wesleyan pietism, followed by the Healing movement and Alexander Dowie, the Holiness movement, the Azusa Street revival and finally, the planting of the AFM.

2.1 Moravian and Wesleyan Pietism

Olson defines Pietism as, “an ecclesial movement in which a great premium is placed on divinely initiated experiential religion as the foundation for renewal actions.”¹ As a movement, Pietism was formally re-organised in Germany and is known for its emphasis on evidence-based experiential and heartfelt Christianity.² It is an established fact that John Wesley was impacted by Moravian pietism and in turn influenced modern Pentecostalism.³ Olson traces these pietist traits to Catholic mysticism.⁴

Westphal asserts that Moravian Pietism which was later to be associated with Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, originates from a Czech Protestant movement known as Unity of the Brethren (Latin: *Unitas Fratrum*) and was founded in 1457.⁵ The reformer John Hus is considered to be the architect and spiritual father of Moravian Pietism, influencing its worship and communal life.⁶ The original principles of *Unitas Fratrum* were: first, that the Bible should be the basis for Christian doctrine; second, that Christian worship should align with Scripture and model itself upon the New Testament apostolic Church; third, that the eucharist should be received in faith without human explanation of its meaning; fourth, that a

¹ Roger E. Olson, “Pietism: Myths and Realities,” in Christian T. Collins Winn et al eds. *The Pietist Impulse in Christianity* (London: James Clark Company Limited, 2012), 6.

² A.G. Roeber, “The waters of rebirth: The Eighteenth century and transoceanic Protestant Christianity,” *Church History* 79, no. 1 (March 2010): 44–76.

³ Allan Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism: Global and Charismatic Christianity* 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 25.

⁴ Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, 25.

⁵ Milton C. Westphal, “Early Moravian Pietism,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 3, no. 3 (July 1936): 164–181.

⁶ Westphal, “Early Moravian Pietism,” 166.

godly lifestyle should be the outcome of saving faith.⁷ Notably, some of these principles feature prominently in contemporary Pentecostalism, especially the desire to be a modern replica of the early church in experiential spirituality, which culminates into a godly lifestyle in the community.

These original thoughts were revived and expanded by Philip Jacob Spener, the godfather of Zinzendorf, in his 1675 text entitled *Pia Desideria* (Pious Desires),⁸ through which he protested the “arid religiosity” of Lutheran orthodoxy, in favour of a religion of feeling or inner spiritual experience.⁹ These concepts of the religion of feeling were later to be theologised extensively by Schleiermacher as already discussed in chapter one. Spener made several proposals, beginning with the idea of intentional spiritual formation through small bible study groups. He further embraced Luther’s concept of the universal priesthood of believers manifesting into corporate governance of the church. Thirdly, Spener postulated that there must be a reciprocal relationship between orthodoxy and orthopraxis in personal piety. The idea of orthopraxis is the basis upon which Pentecostals embrace the theology of experience as authoritative to their faith. He advocated for the sympathetic treatment of the unbelieving and those with anti-orthodox views (now known as anti-establishment). Further to that was the concept of reshaping theological curriculum to promote devotional life. Linked to this was the creation of a kerygma which presents biblical truths and calls for individual regeneration.¹⁰

The views by Spener became central to full-blown Moravian Pietism under the leadership of Zinzendorf. Concerning the priesthood of believers, Jonathan Strom comments that the Lutheran view was not only redefined to be inclusive in nature but also led to the

⁷ Westphal, “Early Moravian Pietism,” 166.

⁸ Westphal, “Early Moravian Pietism,” 169.

⁹ Elizabeth Zorb, “Reflections on Moravian Pietism,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 25, no. 2 (April 1958): 115–21.

¹⁰ Westphal, “Early Moravian Pietism,” 169.

involvement of the laity in ministry.¹¹ Although Pentecostalism subscribes to the brotherhood/sisterhood of all believers, some tensions persist between clergy and laity. An extreme repercussion of this view is that it renders the clergy a non-entity and has prompted the rise of episcopal independent charismatic churches in protest of too much reliance on the priesthood of all believers.

Roger Olson regards Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) as one of the major influencers on Moravian Pietism in Germany.¹² Zinzendorf was raised under the auspices of Moravian Pietism which was headed by Hermann Francke at his orphanage school in Halle.¹³ It is when he later became a councillor in the Saxon Court in 1722 that coincidentally a small group of religious fugitives from Moravia sought refuge at his estate near Betheldorf.¹⁴ These Bohemian and Moravian brethren re-established and revived the *Unitas Fratrum* community known as Herrnhut under the watchful eye of Zinzendorf.¹⁵ Westphal argues that this community observed a religious and economic order whose affairs were run by the entire congregation and a selected council, a setup which was intended to re-invent the primitive Christian community.¹⁶ This communal pietism became the norm in Moravian churches on the mission field the world over.¹⁷ Whilst this practice of Christian communalism was based on the utopian first century apostolic church ideals, it has been criticised as bound to fail insofar as it contradicted the missional agenda of the church. On the spiritual front Roger Olson notes that there were outbreaks of glossolalia and other ecstatic

¹¹ Olson, "Pietism: Myths and Realities," 42.

¹² Roger E. Olson et al, *Reclaiming Pietism: Retrieving an Evangelical Tradition* (London: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 57.

¹³ Westphal, "Early Moravian Pietism," 169.

¹⁴ Westphal, "Early Moravian Pietism," 170.

¹⁵ Westphal, "Early Moravian Pietism," 172.

¹⁶ Westphal, "Early Moravian Pietism," 172.

¹⁷ Westphal, "Early Moravian Pietism," 173.

experiences among Moravian Pietists of Scandinavian origins in Chicago, prior to the birthing of full-blown Pentecostalism.¹⁸

From his conversion in 1725, John Wesley (1703-1791) viewed holiness as central to Christian life. This quest for Christian perfection set the stage for the Aldersgate experience in 1738.¹⁹ The Aldersgate meeting was organised by the Moravian brethren in their European outreach and it was at Aldersgate, where Wesley claimed that he first felt his heart “strangely warmed.”²⁰ Equipped with the “faith” component from the Moravian brethren during the Aldersgate experience, Wesley had this to say, “I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”²¹ Henry Knight is of the opinion that Aldersgate marked the turning point and flowering of Wesley’s thought.²²

Imbued with the concept of “band meeting” as enunciated in Moravian Pietism, Wesley (together with others) formed the “Fetter Lane Society,” which popularised home-based meetings.²³ When he left the Fetter Lane Society, Wesley formed the Methodist society and maintained a spiritual formation based on communal band meetings. He preached the conviction that holiness could only occur within a supportive community.²⁴ The purpose of band meetings was to develop accountability systems under which participants confessed their sins publicly to one another (as enshrined in James 5:16). Ostensibly, the practice would enrich an individual’s vertical relationship with God and his horizontal relationship with others.²⁵ This search for social holiness in Wesleyan Methodism led to the development of

¹⁸ Roger E. Olson, “Pietism and Pentecostalism: Spiritual Cousins or Competitors?” *Pneuma* 34 (2012): 319–44.

¹⁹ Henry Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa: Wesley and the renewal of Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, no. 8 (January 1996): 82–98.

²⁰ Olson, “Pietism and Pentecostalism,” 324.

²¹ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 84.

²² Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 84.

²³ Kevin M. Watson, *Pursuing Social Holiness: The Band Meeting in Wesley’s Thought and popular Methodist practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3.

²⁴ Watson, *Pursuing Social Holiness*, 3.

²⁵ Watson, *Pursuing Social Holiness*, 4.

diverse practices such as class meetings, watchnights, love-feasts, public fasts, and covenant services.²⁶ Eventually, the class meetings became central to Christian communal formation in Methodism. Traits like communal spiritual formation and communal accountability in form of public confession of sins were characteristic of the AFMZ in its formative years were passed on from Wesleyanism.

Wesley was also influenced by the “mystical tradition,” especially the writings of William Law, which demystified the notion that holiness and Christian perfection were limited to monastics and the clergy.²⁷ Equipped with these teachings, Wesley expanded the notion of sanctified life to be accessible to ordinary folks, being a democratised system, which was later to be embraced by the AFMZ due to its Methodist roots. Wesley taught that there are two phases of experiential spirituality: the first being the “crisis experience” of conversion or justification and the second relating to Christian perfection or sanctification.²⁸ Wesley did not embrace the idea of “sinless perfection,” owing to his anthropological view that all humans have an innate sin emanating from Adam’s fall, which necessitated the “second blessing” of purification.²⁹ He challenged his followers to be inward looking, soul-searching, self-disciplined and to maintain a methodical devotional life in order to counter worldly attractions and live in victory over sin.³⁰ Vinson Synan describes Wesleyan Methodism as, “essentially a reaction against the prevailing creedal rigidity, liturgical strictness, and ironclad institutionalism that had largely depersonalised religion and rendered it incapable of serving the needs of individuals,”³¹ hence the position that “authentic

²⁶ Watson, *Pursuing Social Holiness*, 57.

²⁷ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 3.

²⁸ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 6.

²⁹ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 6.

³⁰ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 7.

³¹ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 10.

Christianity is experiential.”³² The AFMZ is equally sceptical about creeds, empty liturgies and institutional religion as enemies of experiential spirituality.

Wesley’s early critics however saw Methodism as one of those movements which were heavily inclined towards “religious enthusiasm,” a derogatory term for those perceived to mistakenly believe that they experienced God’s move in their lives in an extra-ordinary manner.³³ The critics contended that Wesley’s movement was operating in error and under ill-regulated religious emotions or hysterical behaviour.³⁴ They perceived the movement as delusional and totally out of line with the age of reason or Enlightenment.³⁵ Wesley rebutted this label by dissociating his movement from religious enthusiasm and describing it as a “religion of the heart.”³⁶ Some modern scholars however do not see the distinction and then regard Methodist enthusiasm as an unavoidable historical phenomenon.³⁷ Clark and Liderle actually celebrate enthusiasm as “flickerings of that original flame” which appeared to be suppressed by the institutional church but was re-ignited at the beginning of the twentieth century which ushered full-blown Pentecostalism.³⁸

Whilst John Wesley was instrumental in moulding the Methodist expression of pietism in the United Kingdom, the American version of Methodist pietism is equally relevant insofar as the Azusa Street Revival which took place on American soil was central to Pentecostal origins. Dayton argues that the American Methodist church experienced exponential growth leading it to become the dominant Protestant voice of the nineteenth century best celebrated as the “Methodist Age in American History.”³⁹

³² Adhurim Xhemajli, “The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry (1770s-1830s),” (PhD Thesis, The University of Birmingham, 2019), 78.

³³ Xhemajli, “The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry,” 90.

³⁴ Xhemajli, “The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry,” 91–92.

³⁵ Xhemajli, “The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry,” 92–93.

³⁶ Xhemajli, “The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry,” 95–98.

³⁷ Xhemajli, “The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry,” 95–98.

³⁸ Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Liderle, *What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* (Pretoria: Unisa, 1983), 7.

³⁹ Donald W. Dayton, “Methodism and Pentecostalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, eds. James E. Kirby and William J. Abraham (Oxford Handbooks Online, 2010), 178.

Vinson Synan points out that the American version of Methodism was formally organised in 1784 by missionaries who were sent by Wesley, namely Francis Asbury and Richard Wright.⁴⁰ Their mission triggered “revivalistic outbreaks” across America, which were characterised by experiences such as trembling, falling, weeping, shouting and leaping with joy.⁴¹ Lester Ruth attempts to analyse American Methodist piety through first-order theology as recorded in diaries, sermons, hymnals, letters, magazines and council minutes.⁴² He states that the character of Methodist spirituality encompasses the components of emotionalism, ecstasy, rigorousness, exuberance and evangelism.⁴³

By emotionalism, Lester Ruth refers to what Methodists termed “experimental religion,” now called “experiential religion” in Pentecostalism, where it is claimed that a person can be raptured into the presence of God inwardly and experience an ecstatic awareness in the realm of dreams and visions.⁴⁴ Ruth posits that this particular aspect of ecstatic spirituality was partly influenced by African Americans who joined the Methodist movement.⁴⁵ Nathan Hatch supports this sentiment, and notes Methodism’s adaptive and accommodative nature in the manner in which it embraced African-American preaching and the inclusion of lay preachers (including women) to work alongside the clergy.⁴⁶ Whilst emotionalism and ecstasy constituted the sweetness of Methodist spirituality, Ruth argues that rigorousness reflects its sour edge because it demanded a holy countercultural Christian lifestyle coupled by fasting and simplicity in dressing.⁴⁷ By exuberance, Ruth denotes that Methodist worship was expressive, energetic and vibrant but to some onlookers, it was unsavoury.⁴⁸ Allan Anderson adds that these early experiential expressions were viewed as

⁴⁰ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 8.

⁴¹ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 9.

⁴² Lester Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality* (London: Kingswood books, 2005), 4.

⁴³ Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*, 17.

⁴⁴ Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*, 17, 163.

⁴⁵ Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*, 17, 163.

⁴⁶ Hatch, “The Puzzle of American Methodism,” 186–88.

⁴⁷ Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*, 18.

⁴⁸ Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*, 18.

bizarre forms of enthusiasm which at worst were heretical and fanatical.⁴⁹ Ruth mentions that the Methodists' preoccupation with the salvation of souls propelled vigorous evangelism leading to numerical growth.⁵⁰ Lester Ruth's observations about the character of American Methodism like ecstatic spirituality, vibrancy in worship, and rigorous approach to holiness resonates with the Pentecostal character of the AFMZ. What the AFMZ contributes to these characteristics is the African flavour.

Adhurim Xhemajli focuses on the American Methodist Circuit-Rider ministry which he argues, significantly nurtured, and shaped the Methodist church in America. The ministry was driven by early Methodist preachers who conducted their itinerant preaching tours on horseback. Their experiences were characterised by experiential manifestations such as being "slain in the Spirit," dreams, visions, trances, "spiritual warfare with demonic forces, divine healing and spiritual ecstasy."⁵¹ Such manifestations are a common feature in AFMZ church services which reflects a spiritual connection between the two movements. There was emphasis on the "power and presence" of God especially through public slaying in the Spirit better understood as falling under the power of the Spirit during outreach services, leading to mass conversions.⁵² Outreach crusades conducted by the AFMZ also reflects similar practices with the additional activities of exorcism of spirits.

Nathan Hatch provides further enlightenment on Methodism in America. He points out that Methodism was a "grassroots movement" which accommodated and empowered common people through its proclamation of "individual freedom, autonomy, responsibility and achievement."⁵³ This led to the democratisation and contextualisation of Christianity by introducing lively gospel music, extemporaneous preaching, motivation of members to climb

⁴⁹ Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, 25.

⁵⁰ Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*, 19.

⁵¹ Xhemajli, "The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry," 52–55.

⁵² Xhemajli, "The Significance of the Supernatural in the American Methodist Circuit-Rider Ministry," 61–64.

⁵³ Hatch, "The Puzzle of American Methodism," 179.

the social ladder and making Christian service a voluntary enterprise.⁵⁴ The AFMZ adherents subscribe to Pentecostalism as a religion of upward social mobility and also embrace the priesthood of believers in Christian service.

It is interesting how despite the geographical, historical, and cultural differences between the movements, the AFMZ embraced Methodist practices, such as Quarterly meetings for worship and business, prayer vigils, camp meetings being worship meetings lasting several days.⁵⁵ In Zimbabwe, the Quarterly conferences as copied and pasted from American Methodism have remained a special feature of the AFMZ at provincial level countrywide. Although these meetings were originally convened strictly for full-time workers (pastors) and lay-workers (deacons, deaconesses, and elders), they eventually embraced everyone. Watch night prayer vigils, commonly referred to as all night prayers are normally organised at local congregation level, in the church building or on a nearby mountain where feasible. The annual camp meeting is a major event on the AFMZ calendar and attracts tens of thousands of adherents countrywide. AFMZ full-time workers and lay-workers convene a separate annual business council meeting known as the National Workers' Council (NWC). This council meeting is replicated at provincial level as the Provincial Workers' Council (PWC) and at assembly level as the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The different council meetings reflect the principle of group accountability as enshrined in the priesthood of all believers and the Presbyterian system of governance to which the AFMZ subscribes. These Methodist organisational and spiritual traits are arguably the result of symbiotic dynamics due to the assimilation of some Methodist preachers and congregants into the AFMSA by John Lake in his South African mission.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Hatch, "The Puzzle of American Methodism," 186–88.

⁵⁵ Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*, 9,10,25,27.

⁵⁶ David Maxwell, "Historicising Christian Independency: The Southern African Pentecostal Movement 1908–60," *The Journal of African History* 40. no. 2 (1999): 243–64.

In the light of the above discussion on Moravian and Wesleyan pietism, the following may hypothetically be listed as the distinctive features of pietism which has found continuity within the AFMZ (as we shall see in our examination of the theology of experience of the same) albeit with the eye of the African context and influence:

1. Evidence-based experiential and heartfelt Christianity;
2. The Bible as the basis of Christian doctrine and practice;
3. Holy, counter-cultural, and rigorous lifestyle characterised by fasting and simplicity of dress in search of social holiness;
4. Intentional spiritual formation through small Bible study groups;
5. Priesthood of believers culminating in corporate governance and shared ministry;
6. The existence of a reciprocal relationship between orthodoxy of doctrine and orthopraxis of personal piety;
7. Reshaping of theological curriculum to promote devotional life;
8. Vigorous proclamation of the Word or preaching which focuses on biblical truth and calls for individual regeneration;
9. The reinvention of the primitive Christian community in the form of communal pietism according to the Book of Acts;
10. Expressive, energetic, enthusiastic, and vibrant worship;
11. Ecstatic spiritual experiences of God's power characterised by being slain in the Spirit;
12. Focus on spiritual warfare and divine healing.

2.2 The Healing movement and John Alexander Dowie

John Alexander Dowie had direct impact on the AFMZ. There is however limited reference to other major players in Europe and America in this discussion. Paul Chappell posits that proponents of the divine healing movement maintained a conviction that “physical, mental and emotional illnesses can be cured by the supernatural intervention of God,” through the laying on of hands and/or anointing with holy oil, just as in biblical times.⁵⁷ This perception began to take root during an era when miracles were believed to have ceased due to the influence of Enlightenment thought which dismissed the supernatural in favour of the natural.⁵⁸ Kimberly Alexander also points out that the Healing movement embraced a soteriology which incorporated health and healing, and this later became a salient feature and trump card of Pentecostalism.⁵⁹

Some key players in Europe included Johann Blumhardt, Dorothea Trudel and Otto Stockmayer. Blumhardt was a Lutheran minister whose healing ministry commenced with the healing of a dying girl in a village in the Black Forest area of Germany in 1843.⁶⁰ A great awakening followed, leading to the establishment of a healing or faith home which could accommodate up to one hundred and fifty patients, undergoing tutoring on faith healing before being prayed for.⁶¹ Such teachings laid the foundation of biblical healing based on faith.⁶² Contemporaneously, Dorothea Trudel’s ministry of healing was born out of compassion for co-workers who fell ill in the Swiss village of Mannedorf.⁶³ She is said to

⁵⁷ Paul G. Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” in Pieter G.R. de Villiers ed. *Healing in the name of God* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1986), 60.

⁵⁸ Paul G. Chappell, “Origins of the Divine Healing Movement in America,” *The Journal of the School of Theology* 1, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 7.

⁵⁹ Kimberly E. Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing: Models in Theology and Practice* (Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2006), 1,2,6,9.

⁶⁰ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 62.

⁶¹ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 62.

⁶² Chappell, “Origins of the Divine Healing Movement in America,” 7.

⁶³ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 63.

have prayed for them with anointing oil as instructed in James 5:14-15 and they were instantaneously healed. Trudel thereon established healing homes which attracted international attention.⁶⁴ Otto Stockmayer is celebrated as the earliest theologian to articulate the basic tenets of divine healing, that “deliverance from sickness” was part of the package of redemption according to Isaiah 53:4.⁶⁵ The three European healing preachers influenced the concept of healing homes and the theology and practice of divine healing in America.

In the American setting, Ethan O. Allen is one of the pioneers (1846) of divine healing. His itinerant work as a healing evangelist spanned over fifty years.⁶⁶ Chappell posits that Allen subscribed to Stockmayer’s teaching that sickness was a result of sin and that the sanctifying work of the Spirit would not only purify human nature but eliminate sickness as well.⁶⁷ Charles Cullis, a medical doctor by profession is also well-known for propagating and popularising divine healing among prominent holiness leaders and the American church at large.⁶⁸ His ministry gained momentum with the cited healing of Mrs Lucy Drake of a brain tumour in 1870 and his subsequent European tour of the healing homes of Blumhardt, Trudel and George Muller in 1874.⁶⁹ Fascinated by these encounters, Cullis established country-wide faith conventions with an additive of divine healing. Considering the above examples Chappell accredits the American Holiness movement for influencing the Healing movement by providing the “theological environment for faith healing.”⁷⁰

John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907) towers highly in the healing and Pentecostal movement worldwide, especially in Africa.⁷¹ He is celebrated as a major minister of healing

⁶⁴ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 63.

⁶⁵ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 63.

⁶⁶ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 66–67.

⁶⁷ Chappell, “Origins of the Divine Healing Movement in America,” 11.

⁶⁸ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 67–68.

⁶⁹ Chappell, “The birth of the divine healing movement in America,” 69–70.

⁷⁰ Chappell, “Origins of the Divine Healing Movement in America,” 9.

⁷¹ William D. Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” *Brill, Pneuma* 29, no. 2 (January 2007): 226–53.

revivalism in America and beyond.⁷² Dowie's healing ministry was part of the radical holiness tradition.⁷³ It is however important to note that divine healing had already been embraced by both the Eastern and Western traditions of the Church in their thought and practice.⁷⁴

Dowie was born in Scotland in 1847. He migrated to Australia as a child and returned to Scotland for training, before he went and assumed the role of a minister at a Congregational church in Sydney.⁷⁵ In 1878 Dowie left his church to pursue independent itinerant ministry and suffered some setbacks, including the death of his daughter in 1882.⁷⁶ Faupel records that Dowie's fortune took a turn in 1883 when he shifted his focus to divine healing, which ministry attracted large crowds.⁷⁷ This led to the establishment of the Free Christian Church in Melbourne and subsequently, the Divine Healing Association.⁷⁸ In 1888 Dowie migrated to America. He initially settled in the Pacific West from where he travelled around the country, proclaiming the message of divine healing under the banner of International Healing Association.⁷⁹

In 1890 Dowie strategically moved his ministry to the city of Chicago and established his headquarters.⁸⁰ It is at this stage that one may discern and analyse Dowie's theology and practices pertaining to divine healing. Critics and sympathisers agree that Dowie had a clear conviction and passion for divine healing in his campaigns. Faupel posits that Dowie was not a psychopath but indeed a preacher with a coherent discourse based on a theology that is

⁷² David E. Harrel, *All things are possible: The healing and Charismatic revivals in modern America* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1975), 13.

⁷³ Baer, "Redeemed Bodies," 754.

⁷⁴ Harrel, *All things are possible*, 10.

⁷⁵ Timothy E.W. Gloege, "Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago," *Religion and American culture: A journal of interpretation* 23, no. 2 Summer 2013): 185–231.

⁷⁶ William D. Faupel, "Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie," *Brill, Pneuma* 29, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 226–53.

⁷⁷ Faupel, "Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie," 228.

⁷⁸ Faupel, "Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie," 229.

⁷⁹ Faupel, "Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie," 229.

⁸⁰ Faupel, "Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie," 229.

consistent with his worldview.⁸¹ Dowie taught that divine healing was centred on faith in Jesus.⁸² He lambasted professional or scientific medicine as a counterfeit route to true health – a stance which cost him public respectability among the social elite and orthodox Christians.⁸³ Although Dowie’s “divine” or “faith” healing was labelled as “sectarian” and “socially disruptive” by medical commentators, it was tolerated by more moderate healing evangelists such as Dwight L. Moody and Reuben A. Torrey.⁸⁴

Dowie’s theological views are better understood in the light of significant developments in his ministry. A major milestone was marked when in 1895, Dowie disbanded his healing association, and formed the Christian Catholic Church, which he later renamed the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion (CCACZ).⁸⁵ Secondly in 1900, Dowie constructed Zion City, a community located forty miles outside Chicago, secluded from worldly contaminations such as sin, disease and poverty which are purveyed through “liquor stores, theatres, pork abattoirs and hospitals.”⁸⁶ Dowie’s “utopian paradise” for the righteous had its own bank, church auditorium, healing rooms, a hotel and a lace making cooperative business, in line with the proclamation that “the church must have a business fellowship, a fellowship in getting money, in saving money and in spending money for Christ.”⁸⁷ Enshrined in these ventures was Dowie’s three dimensional gospel of salvation, healing and holy living, anchored on the atoning work of Jesus Christ as the saviour, sanctifier and healer (with Isaiah 35:5-10 as the scriptural basis).⁸⁸ Central to this teaching was the belief of holiness with wholeness or healthy life as the desired outcome, which could only be achieved in Zion, under the guidance of multiple regulations such as the prohibition

⁸¹ Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” 227.

⁸² Gloege, “Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago,” 194.

⁸³ Gloege, “Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago,” 185

⁸⁴ Gloege, “Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago,” 192.

⁸⁵ Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” 230.

⁸⁶ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 117.

⁸⁷ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 117.

⁸⁸ Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” 231.

of pork consumption.⁸⁹ Restoration and holiness according to Dowie, included sanctification of the body through healing and he propagated these views through preaching and praying for the sick whilst his publication *Leaves of Healing* provided “a continuous stream of healing narratives.”⁹⁰ On the spiritual side, the weekly home group prayer meetings provided a platform for exhortation, sharing personal struggles and public confession of sins.⁹¹ Faupel argues that Dowie interpreted the manifestation of sickness in a Christian as confirmation of sin in either the individual or the community at large, hence the need for confession.⁹² At a social level, Zion was modelled as a “multi-racial” and “multi-class” community for holy living, with a welfare system which included an orphanage, a hospice for “fallen women” and a retirement home for the elderly.⁹³

Although some aspects of the utopian Zion city (such as the corporate business ventures) were commendable, the idea of creating a paradise for the righteous may be criticised for contradicting the teachings of Jesus. It is arguable that in the texts of Matthew 5:13-16 and Luke 14:34-35, Jesus did not advocate for ascetic or monastic spirituality but rather that his followers must be the salt of the earth and the light of the world within the communities they reside.

Although Dowie’s healing movement (nicknamed “Dowieism” for refusing medical treatment) became an “incubator” of the early Pentecostal movement, the utopian vision of a “theocratic” settlement (Zion) ended as a total fiasco.⁹⁴ Dowie was criticised for his warped financial policies, indiscretions in his speeches and other conduct which bordered on “delusions of grandeur.”⁹⁵ Dowie further claimed to operate in the prophetic office of Elijah

⁸⁹ Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” 232, 234.

⁹⁰ Baer, “Redeemed Bodies,” 751–52.

⁹¹ Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” 234.

⁹² Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” 233.

⁹³ Faupel, “Theological influences on the teachings and practices of John Alexander Dowie,” 235.

⁹⁴ Gloege, “Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago,” 210.

⁹⁵ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 118, Gloege, “Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago,” 204.

as the restorer and in the apostolic office as “the first apostle of the Lord Jesus” in the premillennial era.⁹⁶ He ruffled too many feathers in both the medical fraternity and Protestant community.⁹⁷ Alexander highlights that Dowie dismissed doctors as advocates of the devil and their medicines and medical equipment like crutches as “instruments of torture.”⁹⁸ As his Zion centre began to have cracks amongst its leadership, Dowie was ousted from the leadership of the CCACZ.⁹⁹ The man who once demonstrated a high level of charisma and influence eventually suffered a stroke and died in disgrace.¹⁰⁰

It is significant however that some of Dowie’s teachings and practices which had the catalytic impact of the Holiness movement, became a template for African Pentecostalism including AFMZ practices during its formative years. The cardinal views of Dowie may be distilled as follows:

1. A clear conviction that Divine healing can be supernaturally experienced by the sick if they are prayed for;
2. Divine healing is centred on faith in Jesus Christ;
3. Establishment of healing rooms as places of recuperation for the sick;
4. Scientific medicine is a counterfeit route to healing and health;
5. Establishment of Levitical models of holy and healthy Zion cities which are free from worldly contaminations;
6. The three-fold full gospel that Jesus is saviour, healer, and sanctifier according to Isaiah 35:5-10;

⁹⁶ Jonathan R. Baer, “Redeemed bodies: The functions of divine healing in incipient Pentecostalism,” in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, eds. Euan Cameron et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge Online Press, 2009): 750.

⁹⁷ Gloege, “Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago,” 204.

⁹⁸ Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing*, 61–2.

⁹⁹ Gloege, “Faith healing, medical regulation, and public religion in progressive era Chicago,” 210.

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, 33.

7. Holy living must be regulated (for example, by not eating pork or drinking liquor) to have a desired outcome i.e., complete health;
8. The Deuteronomist view of sickness as a confirmation of sin in an individual or the community at large;
9. The public confession of sin for accountability purposes;
10. A strong and aggressive missional orientation in propagating the gospel.

2.3 Holiness movement

The Holiness movement (interchangeably known as the Evangelical movement) and composed of “Wesleyan and Baptistic” versions, is a nineteenth century phenomenon which is heavily indebted to Wesleyan Methodism of the eighteenth century.¹⁰¹ Dayton points out that much of the publications to promote “Christian perfection” in the Holiness movement heavily quoted Wesley and his theologian Fletcher.¹⁰² As stated earlier, Wesley viewed Christian perfection or sanctification as a gift of grace which however cannot be totally attained in this life, owing to the innate sin inherited from Adam. Although Wesley believed in the role of the Holy Spirit in the “second blessing” of sanctification, his advisor and theologian John Fletcher viewed the “second blessing” as baptism in the Holy Spirit and a “cleansing experience.”¹⁰³ Whilst Wesley’s teachings on holiness feature prominently in the Holiness movement, they have been modified and amalgamated with other Protestant strands of thought.

Although the Holiness movement had different strands, it exhibited certain commonalities such as for instance, “literal-minded Biblicism, emotional fervour, puritanical

¹⁰¹ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 82.

¹⁰² Dayton, “Methodism and Pentecostalism,” 178.

¹⁰³ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 7.

mores, enmity toward ecclesiasticism, and belief in a second blessing of sanctification.”¹⁰⁴

These strands are observable within and outside Methodism, as well as in new denominations which came out of the Methodist church. Henry Knight is of the opinion that Phoebe Palmer, Charles G. Finney, and the Keswick movement represent the three major strands and teachings of the Holiness movement.¹⁰⁵

Vinson Synan considers Phoebe Palmer to be a leading proponent of Methodist holiness.¹⁰⁶ Palmer experienced sanctification at “meetings for the promotion of holiness” at her sister’s house in 1835. By 1839 she had assumed leadership of this gathering and advocated for what she considered to be the “shorter way of achieving perfection and ecstasy.”¹⁰⁷ By this she meant total surrender, leading to instant sanctification through Spirit baptism.¹⁰⁸ As Henry Knight explains, Palmer insisted that total surrender at the altar of sacrifice needed to be accompanied by faith and after the experience, one was required to demonstrate thankfulness by openly testifying to encourage others.¹⁰⁹ Palmer’s view located sanctification as a second blessing after salvation or justification, as opposed to Wesley who located it at the end of life, because of man’s struggles with human nature. The importance of the sanctification experience as the work of the Holy Spirit was later to be popularised by the Pentecostal movement (including AFMZ) as part of the fivefold gospel.

Charles Finney’s teachings on holiness combined Wesleyan Methodism and “Arminianised” Calvinism with an emphasis on “radical social reform.”¹¹⁰ Just like Palmer, Finney believed in the baptism of the Holy Spirit (as occurred on the day of Pentecost) and entire sanctification, an experience which constituted a “second blessing” culminating in

¹⁰⁴ Robert M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The making of American Pentecostalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 28.

¹⁰⁵ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 88.

¹⁰⁶ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 17.

¹⁰⁹ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 89.

¹¹⁰ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 88.

spiritual enablement for Christian service.¹¹¹ Finney incorporated the concept of free will into his theology, interpreting the divine moral law to imply that sin does not emanate from an inherited moral defect, but is an act of will, under which an individual chooses to obey or disobey moral law.¹¹² He defined true conversion as an act of free will to “conform” or obey God’s precepts, which process is effected by the Holy Spirit.¹¹³ Finney’s conviction was that following a true experience of conversion through the enablement of the Spirit, the highly sought after state of perfection was achievable through the exercise of the same free will and baptism in the Holy Spirit was a medium of entering sanctification.¹¹⁴ Finney in a way shaped the concept of conversion based on human will as an important building block towards sanctification, which Pentecostalism established as the first experience in Christianity.

Donald Dayton highlights that the cradle of dispensationalism originates from Wesley’s theologian known as Fletcher who proposed a trinitarian dispensationalism where the Father represented the Old Testament era, the Son representing the life of Jesus Christ on earth and the Holy Spirit representing the Church age since Pentecost.¹¹⁵ Darby later developed the seven dispensations which R.M. Anderson contends that these teachings impacted Pentecostalism. R.M. Anderson argues that the British Keswick movement influenced Pentecostalism through its teachings on “dispensationalism, premillennialism and baptism in the Holy Spirit.”¹¹⁶ A short summary of the Keswick movement would suffice for this study. The movement originated from the Anglican “Back to the Bible” movement of the 1820s, out of which emanated a Dublin-based splinter group known as “The Brethren,” in 1827. A significant figure in this group was John Nelson Darby who in 1830 crafted

¹¹¹ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 89, 91.

¹¹² Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 90.

¹¹³ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 90.

¹¹⁴ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 15.

¹¹⁵ Donald W. Dayton, “Methodism and Pentecostalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, eds. James E. Kirby and William J. Abraham (Oxford: Oxford Handbooks Online, 2010), 175.

¹¹⁶ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 43.

“dispensational” teachings, articulating that God operates in epochs or dispensations with different “ground rules.”¹¹⁷ Hence, the era of grace began with the incarnation of Christ, and the second coming of Christ would usher the millennium epoch.¹¹⁸ Like other revivalist movements, Darby’s teachings were assimilated into the Christian community by figures such as Dwight L. Moody in America. This development paved the way for the conferencing of some ministers from the Brethren, Anglican, Calvinist Baptists, and Presbyterian in 1875, at a resort town of Keswick in the Lake District, hence the name “Keswick movement.”¹¹⁹ Members of the Keswick movement, besides committing themselves to revivalism, missionary enterprise and higher life, embraced Darby’s dispensational teachings and concluded that the end of the world would be signalled by mass evangelisation of all humanity.¹²⁰

The Keswick movement is a Reformed holiness strand which amalgamates Wesleyanism and Calvinistic theology as taught by Finney, but subscribing more to Reformed theological views on the original sin and the salvific role of Christ.¹²¹ The movement, although originating from British soil, found proponents in America, such as Dwight Moody, R.A. Torrey, C.I. Scofield, J.M. Gray and Arthur T. Pierson of the Higher Life movement.¹²² It adopted the Wesleyan teaching that humanity suffers an innate tendency to sin but rejected Finney’s doctrine of free will.¹²³ The movement however resorted to the “finished work of Christ” as the basis of justification, with sanctification being a process of becoming and to be completed in the life to come.¹²⁴ Accordingly, grace does not annihilate sin but helps the believer to forestall it, hence the “already” status of salvation and the “not

¹¹⁷ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 39–40.

¹¹⁸ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 39–40.

¹¹⁹ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 40.

¹²⁰ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 40.

¹²¹ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 91.

¹²² Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 41.

¹²³ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 91.

¹²⁴ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 91.

yet” status of Christian perfection.¹²⁵ Keswick proponents distinguished sanctification from baptism in the Holy Spirit, and deemed sanctification to be a second blessing and a life-long process, while Spirit baptism was a third blessing for purposes of empowerment.¹²⁶ R.A. Torrey taught that baptism in the Holy Spirit was such a defining experience with an indelible evidence by one who experiences it.¹²⁷ This view was subsequently expanded to implicate speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism, by Pentecostals.

The later strand of the holiness movement to emerge before Pentecostalism was the “radical fire baptised” holiness groups, which emphasised the tripartite blessing of salvation or justification, sanctification or Christian perfection and Spirit baptism which empowered the believer, as a third experience.¹²⁸ Dayton points out that Pentecostal rhetoric began with the move from purity through entire sanctification to Spirit baptism and its orientation to power during the radical Holiness movement.¹²⁹ This radical holiness movement escalated the moral battle with sin to “spiritual warfare” against Satan, the accuser of the brethren who was counteracting the sanctification project.¹³⁰ This teaching would create a “demonological worldview” which was later popularised by Pentecostalism.¹³¹ Notably, African Pentecostalism perpetuates this demonological rhetoric because it resonates with African realities as shall be discussed hereafter.

Melvin Dieter also posits that the latter Holiness movement and its theological and experiential orientation emanated from the higher life revival milieu whose “dominant genes” upheld “Christocentric Pneumatology” which yearned for the “demonstrable” evidence of

¹²⁵ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 92.

¹²⁶ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 41.

¹²⁷ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 42.

¹²⁸ Knight, “From Aldersgate to Azusa,” 92–93.

¹²⁹ Dayton, “Methodism and Pentecostalism,” 182–83.

¹³⁰ Ben Pugh, “Under the Blood’ at Azusa Street: Exodus Typology at the heart of Pentecostal origins,” *Journal of Religious History* 39, no. 1 (August 2014): 86–103

¹³¹ Pugh, “Under the Blood’ at Azusa Street,” 86–103

Spirit baptism.¹³² Dieter points further that this experiential orientation was labelled as religious fanaticism and that it was out of this desire for experiential spirituality which led to the birth of the Pentecostal revival of 1906 at Azusa Street.¹³³

Steven Ware reiterates that the radical wing of the Holiness movement added the ecclesial “restoration” ethic as an interpretive tool to explain the sanctification experience.¹³⁴ The rationale behind restorationism, which is sometimes called “primitivism,” is that Christianity was corrupted during the epochs following the Apostolic age and a return to the primitive New Testament Church is synonymous with a return to the original, corruption-free, sanctified and Spirit-filled apostolic Christianity.¹³⁵ The AFMZ considers itself to be a church which represents apostolic Christianity in the modern world. Restorationists locate the antecedents of restoration of the New Testament church in the Protestant Reformation although they accuse “institutional Protestantism” for embracing the structural apostasy which characterised Catholicism.¹³⁶ Steven Ware comments that the major type of restoration was “spiritual restoration” which related to issues of spirituality, faith and biblical teachings or doctrines.¹³⁷ The minor form of radical holiness focused on “ecclesiastical restoration” whose interests were constituting the church, ordinances and offices.¹³⁸ In sum, the central argument of the radical Holiness movement was that the experience of entire sanctification marked the restoration of Apostolic Christianity to its primitive glory.

Although some of the radical holiness proponents opted to remain in mainstream Methodism and other mainline churches, a greater number turned “come-outers,” like the

¹³² Melvin, E. Dieter, “The Wesleyan/Holiness and Pentecostal Movements: Commonalities, Confrontation, and Dialogue,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (Spring, 1990): 5–13.

¹³³ Dieter, “The Wesleyan/Holiness and Pentecostal Movements,” 11–13.

¹³⁴ Steven L. Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church: Varieties of Restorationism in the Radical Holiness Movement of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 21, no. 2 (1999): 233–50.

¹³⁵ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 235.

¹³⁶ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 236.

¹³⁷ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 240.

¹³⁸ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 240.

Church of God Holiness, Church of God Reformation, Church of the Nazarene, and Pilgrim Holiness church.¹³⁹ These new “proto-Pentecostal” formations developed “Pentecostal phraseology” which reflected greater interest in the Holy Spirit as imparted on the day of Pentecost, to which Steven Ware comments that:

*...by associating the experience of entire sanctification with the biblical image of Pentecost, they gave it a new meaning as an experience of restoration to apostolic standards.*¹⁴⁰

From “come-outism” was birthed a utopian vision of ecumenism which would wipe away denominationalism, teaching that the true church existed at a congregational level with all other institutional structures above it being of no value.¹⁴¹ Traces of anti-institutional structures continue to persist within the AFMZ although it is a classical Pentecostal church which is getting institutionalised as determined by changing circumstances. Empowerment of the local congregation as the key driving force for church growth remains the AFMZ strength as we shall see later in chapter four and five. A.B. Simpson of the Christian Missionary Alliance coined the idea of and laid the foundation for the five-fold Pentecostal gospel, that Jesus saves, sanctifies, heals, baptises in the Spirit and is returning soon.¹⁴² He is also celebrated for envisaging the coming of “latter rain,” an outpouring of the Holy Spirit like the “early rain” of the biblical Pentecost.¹⁴³

The following points as discussed above may be listed as the Holiness movement’s major contributions to Pentecostalism:

1. Christian perfection as a cleansing grace experience which is achievable through baptism in the Holy Spirit:

¹³⁹ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 241–46.

¹⁴⁰ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 243.

¹⁴¹ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 243, 246.

¹⁴² Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 247.

¹⁴³ Ware, “Restoring the New Testament Church,” 248.

- (i) The Phoebe Palmer wing proposed that instant sanctification through Spirit baptism is possible by total surrender, faith, and subsequent thankfulness through testimony;
 - (ii) The Charles Finney wing believed that entire sanctification was attainable by Spirit baptism, through free will, and culminating with spiritual enablement for Christian service;
 - (iii) The Keswick wing acknowledged humanity's innate tendency to sin but added that the finished work of Christ is the basis for our one-off justification and continual sanctification which is to be completed in the life to come.
2. The Radical Holiness group had a tripartite view of God's blessing, that is: salvation, sanctification, and baptism in the Spirit:
- (i) Radical Holiness developed a demonological worldview which saw Satan as the hindrance to entire sanctification, hence spiritual warfare;
 - (ii) The experience of entire sanctification marks the restoration of Apostolic Christianity to its primitive ecumenical glory;
3. The best model of the church is the local congregation.
4. The full gospel is a five-fold package with Jesus Christ at the centre as the Saviour, Healer, Sanctifier, Baptiser in the Spirit and soon coming King.
5. God operates in epochs and humanity is at the borderline of the dispensation of grace and the new Millennium:
- (i) The day of Pentecost ushered the early rain of the Spirit and that in the last days God will make the latter rain to fall.
 - (ii) Interest in end-time biblical prophecy which viewed evangelisation of all humanity as the greatest sign of the end-times.

2.4 Azusa Street revival

The Azusa Street revival of 1906 to 1915 which was led by William Joseph Seymour (1870-1922) was birthed out of the Holiness movement and is generally considered to be the cradle of modern Pentecostalism, although this impactful event can be traced to the foundation laid by Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929) in Topeka, Kansas in 1901.¹⁴⁴ Although the Holiness movement was the immediate precursor to the Pentecostal movement, Donald Dayton maintains that “Pentecostalism cannot be understood apart from its deep roots in the Methodist experience.”¹⁴⁵ Cecil Robeck, Jr. cautions us of the challenges surrounding the making of Pentecostal history in that much of the accounts contained in diaries, tracts, pamphlets and religious newsletters were written by ordinary people with no training in compiling historical accounts hence the need for critical analysis of such reports.¹⁴⁶ Roberts Liardon argues that Parham lit the fire of Pentecostalism and his protégé, namely Seymour, “stirred it into a blaze,” leading to a worldwide spread.¹⁴⁷ Parham was a Holiness preacher of the Methodist fold who grew up with health-related frailties; hence his proclivity to emphasise the doctrine of healing in his later teachings.¹⁴⁸ R.M. Anderson considers Parham to be a Holiness preacher of Keswick disposition in his embrace of the five-fold full gospel which eventually became the pillars of Pentecostal doctrine as we shall see later.¹⁴⁹

It was at Parham’s Bible school in Topeka, Kansas in January 1901 that an outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues took place, with Agnes Ozman

¹⁴⁴ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 34–41.

¹⁴⁵ Dayton, “Methodism and Pentecostalism,” 171.

¹⁴⁶ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. “The Origins of Modern Pentecostalism: Some Historiographical Issues,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, edited by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and Amos Yong. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13.

¹⁴⁷ Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival: When the fire fell* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 2006), 63.

¹⁴⁸ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 49.

¹⁴⁹ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 50.

singled out as the first person to experience it.¹⁵⁰ The event reportedly followed a period of soul-searching, scripture-searching, fasting and prayer, tarrying in faith and “extemporaneous expositions” from the Bible to increase the spirit of expectation.¹⁵¹ The AFMZ in its planting stage subscribed to extemporaneous preaching rather than the production and presentation of homiletically and hermeneutically astute sermons which were perceived to be devoid of the Spirit. Parham was inspired by Dowie’s healing centre in Zion City, Simpson’s Bible and Missionary Training centre, and especially Frank Sandford’s Shiloh centre where Parham and his team received six weeks training.¹⁵² The Topeka outpouring reignited the utopian view of the imminent return of Christ, preceded by a major outpouring of the Spirit.¹⁵³ Parham viewed speaking in tongues as a “linguistic blessing” to world missions, because with xenolalia, missionaries would no longer need to study native languages but “missionary tongues” would aid them to speak any indigenous languages they encountered during missions.¹⁵⁴ History has it on record that Parham’s theological views did not work because he misunderstood the purpose of glossolalia in the scheme of things, hence the move of Pentecostal thought from xenolalia to glossolalia. However, Albrecht maintains that glossolalia which later became a classical Pentecostal doctrinal distinctive was established by Charles Parham.¹⁵⁵

In 1905 Parham moved to Houston Texas where he opened a Bible school, at which an African American, William Seymour enrolled for a short stint and learnt whilst sitting outside the classroom, in observance of the prevailing “segregation laws” to which Parham subscribed.¹⁵⁶ This marked the beginning of Seymour’s association with Parham’s Apostolic Faith Movement. Apart from teaching at his Bible school, Parham, and his students engaged

¹⁵⁰ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 57.

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 51.

¹⁵² Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 34.

¹⁵³ Craig Borlase, *William Seymour: A Biography* (Lake Mary Flo: Charisma House, 2006), 59.

¹⁵⁴ Borlase, *William Seymour*, 60.

¹⁵⁵ Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 31.

¹⁵⁶ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 35.

in community outreaches, often dressed in the regalia of a Bishop, and preaching on healing which demonised medical treatment, thus attracting negative publicity from secular newspapers.¹⁵⁷ When Seymour was called to be a pastor of a Holiness congregation in Los Angeles, Parham commissioned him through the laying on of hands, to carry the Apostolic Faith Movement's doctrinal distinctives of baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.¹⁵⁸ R.M. Anderson notes that although Seymour embraced the doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit with evidential tangibles of speaking in tongues, he became its proponent before he personally experienced it.¹⁵⁹

R.M. Anderson asserts that Seymour came into a highly “charged atmosphere” with a cross-pollination of ideas from the proponents of the Welsh revival in the United Kingdom, which preceded the Azusa street event.¹⁶⁰ The Welsh revival commenced with a 1903 Welsh Keswick retreat in the Cumbrian mountain and ignited localised outbreaks of revivals in 1904 in Wales, London, Liverpool, and the British isles before it extended to the Welsh missions in India.¹⁶¹ It is reported that these outpourings were accompanied by speaking in tongues. This assertion is consistent with Allan Anderson's theory of multiple sporadic origins of Pentecostalism.¹⁶² F.B. Meyer, an English Keswick preacher, visited Los Angeles in 1905 where he encouraged the Holiness community to pray for Pentecost to come.¹⁶³ Frank Bartleman, a key Holiness itinerant preacher who was to become instrumental in publicising the Pentecostal movement, had arrived in Los Angeles in 1904.¹⁶⁴ Robeck, Jr. says that Bartleman was a “restorationist” who saw the Azusa Street outpouring of the Spirit as “latter rain” signalling the second coming of Christ whilst the “early rain” began with the day of

¹⁵⁷ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 59.

¹⁵⁸ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 60–61.

¹⁵⁹ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 60.

¹⁶⁰ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 65.

¹⁶¹ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 44.

¹⁶² Pugh, “Under the Blood” at Azusa Street,” 88.

¹⁶³ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 64.

¹⁶⁴ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 64.

Pentecost being the first chapter of church history.¹⁶⁵ Albrecht sums up the Azusa Street revival as “the confluence of several distinct religious impulses, ideologies and movements from the late nineteenth century” like the Holiness movement in its various versions, the healing movement, Wesleyanism, and the Keswickians.¹⁶⁶

On his arrival in early 1906, Seymour preached a typical Wesleyan Holiness message combined with his new-found doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues according to Acts 2:4.¹⁶⁷ This sermon led to his dismissal by Julia Hutchins, the interim leader, and her superiors. Seymour and a few sympathisers thereupon convened prayer meetings characterised by fasting at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street, resulting in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.¹⁶⁸ It is reported that Seymour later received Spirit baptism together with other seekers on 12 April 1906 after embarking on ten days of fasting.¹⁶⁹ The sanctity of fasting and praying and particularly the traditional ten days of prayer in January of each year in the AFMZ shall be analysed in chapter four and five. Due to growing numbers of attendees, Seymour and his group moved to a more spacious but disused building (now well known as 312 Azusa Street) where the revival attracted attention, received publication in local newspapers and made Azusa Street a magnetic centre of Pentecostal happenings.¹⁷⁰ Miller notes that this world-shaking revival occurred in the “humble settings” of a former Methodist church turned horse stable in downtown Los Angeles.¹⁷¹ Ministers, evangelists, missionaries, religious workers, and migrant workers from nearby hometowns and from afar came to Azusa to receive their Pentecost and carry the message home.¹⁷² Albrecht notes that events of the “Apostolic Faith

¹⁶⁵ Robeck, Jr. “The Origins of modern Pentecostalism.” 14.

¹⁶⁶ Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 30.

¹⁶⁷ Pugh, “Under the Blood at Azusa Street,” 91.

¹⁶⁸ Pugh, “Under the Blood at Azusa Street,” 91.

¹⁶⁹ Denzil R. Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations* (Springfield: AIA Publications, 2015), 12.

¹⁷⁰ Pugh, “Under the Blood at Azusa Street,” 91.

¹⁷¹ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 14–15.

¹⁷² Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 70–71.

Mission” (the official name of the Azusa Street revival) were catapulted nationally and internationally by religious periodicals of other church related organisations.¹⁷³ R.M. Anderson reports that the Azusa revival was “characterised by the move of the Spirit with people speaking in tongues, prophecy, casting out demons, healing of innumerable diseases, visions, singing in the Spirit, and praise and worship.”¹⁷⁴ However, Parham who had tutored Seymour, found the practices at the Azusa Street revival to be unsavoury and too fanatical for his liking which led him to denounce Seymour’s work as heretical and counterfeit.¹⁷⁵ This outrageous behaviour by Parham to the work of Seymour manifests the Pentecostal black spot of racial bias which continues to raise its ugly head whenever black and white Pentecostals fellowship together.

Despite these setbacks, the Azusa group eventually established itself as an ecclesiastical organisation known initially as Apostolic Faith Mission or Apostolic Faith Movement but later as the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission, with a twelve-member board of elders, who handled ministry finances, correspondence, publications, ministerial credentials, and the commissioning of Apostolic Faith missionaries.¹⁷⁶ This board of elders included women. Robeck, Jr. argues that the “dominant story line” of modern Pentecostalism favours the Azusa Street revival with Seymour as the chief protagonist.¹⁷⁷ This model of church governance by the board of elders which was gleaned from the Azusa Street revival is embraced by the AFMZ as taught by John Lake that Pentecostal church governance follows the apostolic and eldership system enshrined in the book of Acts¹⁷⁸ and also enshrined in the AFMZ constitution as we shall see in chapter four and five.

¹⁷³ Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 34.

¹⁷⁴ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 68.

¹⁷⁵ Robeck, Jr. “The Origins of modern Pentecostalism.” 19.

¹⁷⁶ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 70–72.

¹⁷⁷ Robeck, Jr. “The Origins of modern Pentecostalism.” 20.

¹⁷⁸ John G. Lake, “Church Organisation and Government,” *The Comforter and Messenger of Hope* 1, no. 1 (September-October 1911): 5.

Robeck portrays the Azusa Street revival as originally a peripheral movement which was shunned by newspapers unlike the other more affluent and upper class African American churches in Los Angeles.¹⁷⁹ He characterises this Afro-Pentecostal movement as a system which embraced informal structures and styles of operation like preaching which was dialogical, worship which was open to ecstatic phenomena like glossolalia and being slain in the Spirit, and espoused lived experience of the Spirit.¹⁸⁰ Robeck locates these traits in slave religion when he says, “The impact of the African American folk church tradition would make a significant contribution to worship at the Azusa Street mission.”¹⁸¹ The Azusa Street revival is further analysed as anti-formal as they viewed things like formal education to be irrelevant pertaining issues to do with spirituality and that affluence was purported to be a trapping to be avoided in order to live a holy life.¹⁸² Similar sentiments exist in the AFMZ wherein the spirituality of the affluent is perceived to be compromised by the luxuries of this world.

Miller highlights that the success of the Azusa Street revival to expand beyond its locality into a “national and international happening” was due to the publication of its own paper called *The Apostolic Faith* which arguably reached about 50,000 within a short period.¹⁸³ The Azusa Street revival witnessed salvation of souls, miraculous healings, and continuous outpourings of the Holy Spirit during services which were not liturgically time conscious.¹⁸⁴ Miller goes further to say that these meetings were characterised by “spontaneous” preaching, singing and testimonies, speaking in tongues and accompanying interpretation of tongues, whilst others testified of encountering the Holy Spirit through

¹⁷⁹ Cecil Robeck Jr. “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches: Two Worlds in conflict in Los Angeles’ African American Community,” in *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*, ed. Amos Yong and Estrelida Y. Alexander (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 35.

¹⁸⁰ Robeck Jr., “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches,” 31–33.

¹⁸¹ Robeck Jr., “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches,” 33.

¹⁸² Robeck Jr., “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches,” 32.

¹⁸³ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 18.

¹⁸⁴ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 19–20.

visions and dreams.¹⁸⁵ Albrecht comments that “the characteristic emphases of the Apostolic Faith Mission (was) restorationism, revivalism, divine healing, sanctified holy living, or a higher life and millenarianism (which) marked the movement for the rest of the century.”¹⁸⁶

In the September-October publication of the AFMSA Pentecostal paper called *The Comforter* John Lake comments on church organisation and government, “With the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Los Angeles, California, came the abundant liberty of the Spirit that characterises the Pentecostal movement everywhere.”¹⁸⁷ He further justifies that liberty as having been instigated by the move of the Spirit culminating in extemporaneous singing, praying, preaching and exhorting as opposed to rigid liturgy existent in mainline churches.¹⁸⁸ Such experiential variables at the Azusa Street revival are replicated in African Pentecostalism of the AFMZ brand which may confirm the antecedental connection.

Another important character of the Azusa Street revival was its attraction and “blending of races” where people of various races and social status mingled together to a point where Bartleman exclaimed that “the color line was washed away in the blood.”¹⁸⁹ Miller argues further that the distinction between the clergy and the laity became “blurred” since there was “active participation” by all especially in seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹⁰ Active involvement of ordinary believers together with the clergy remains a key strength of the AFMZ missional strategies arguably gleaned from the Azusa Street revival. Sadly, there was also a momentary mingling of races during the planting of the AFM in South Africa but in both cases the season of mingling together was short-lived due to the deep-seated racial lines created by the state machinery in both countries.

¹⁸⁵ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 20.

¹⁸⁶ Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 35.

¹⁸⁷ Lake, “Church Organisation and Government,” 5.

¹⁸⁸ Lake, “Church Organisation and Government,” 5.

¹⁸⁹ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 21.

¹⁹⁰ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 21.

Seymour was known to emphasize salvation, divine healing, holiness, baptism in the Holy Spirit and the second coming of Christ in his proclamation.¹⁹¹ In the process, he empowered believers to be missions minded which eventually led many to become Pentecostal missionaries going to the ends of the earth. Miller posits that the “message of missions” was not only central to the Azusa Street revival but to the Pentecostal revival at large hence its global impact.¹⁹² The five-fold gospel, although it was not properly spelt out at the Azusa Street revival, these five major experiences are central to the AFMZ proclamation.

Augusto Cerillo asserts that the Azusa revival was a melting pot from which the explosion of the fires of Pentecostalism spread countrywide and internationally, thus birthing a religious movement which became a “permanent addition” to Christianity.¹⁹³ He explains the theology of experience within the Pentecostal movement through four interpretative frameworks, namely: the providential approach, the historical roots approach, the multicultural approach, and the functional approach.¹⁹⁴

The providential approach is gleaned from the writings of eye-witness participants, whose reports are theologically tendentious with the view that the Azusa revival was a product of supernatural intervention.¹⁹⁵ Participants like Frank Bartleman assert that the revival came directly from heaven.¹⁹⁶ George Taylor, another participant viewed the Holy Spirit as the leader of the Pentecostal movement, a “spontaneous, providentially generated, end-time religious revival.”¹⁹⁷ Pomerville in Cerillo expands the providential approach to include other isolated “global outpourings” such as the Irvingite movement of the 1830s, the 1905 Welsh revival, the Russia revival of 1862, the Armenia revival of 1880 and many

¹⁹¹ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 21.

¹⁹² Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 23.

¹⁹³ Augusto Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 19, no. 1 (1997): 29–52.

¹⁹⁴ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 29.

¹⁹⁵ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 31.

¹⁹⁶ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 31.

¹⁹⁷ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 32.

others, hence the universal origins of Pentecostalism.¹⁹⁸ Whilst Cerillo limits the providential approach to the origins of the Pentecostal movement, it is noted that the providential understanding still exists among twenty-first century Pentecostals. For instance, where schisms and splits occur due to human conduct, such occurrences are attributed to God who wants His work to grow. This escapism from admitting leadership failure may be questionable.

To Cerillo, the historical roots approach interprets the theology of experience's relevance because "Pentecostalism shares so many of its doctrinal beliefs, leadership and organisational politics, behavioural practices and social thought with prior nineteenth century holiness and evangelical movements."¹⁹⁹ This study subscribes to this continuity theory, that the twentieth century Pentecostal movement is a product of various antecedents locatable in prior centuries. This chapter is an attempt to establish the impact of various antecedences to Pentecostalism in general and the AFMZ in particular. The antecedents are found in the Wesleyan holiness movements and the Reformed evangelical movements such as the Keswickians (as discussed earlier). From these two major strands, early proponents of Pentecostalism like Parham, crafted the existing five-fold gospel into a Pentecostal distinctive by adding glossolalia.

The multi-cultural or synthetic approach is an inclusivist argument which, instead of viewing the Azusa revival as originating only from the "womb of the black religious experience" as posited by Leonard Lovett and Walter Hollenweger, proposes the interracial nature of the revival.²⁰⁰ This makes the Azusa revival a melting pot of multi-cultural theological views, with Protestant thought and African spiritual heritage as the major influences. Cerillo notes the contribution of Africa folk religion to Pentecostalism concepts

¹⁹⁸ Cerillo, "Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins," 35.

¹⁹⁹ Cerillo, "Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins," 36.

²⁰⁰ Cerillo, "Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins," 43–45.

like community cohesion, spiritual power, integration of the natural with the supernatural, whilst Protestantism promoted concepts of freedom, equality, desire for revolution, the second coming, and many others.²⁰¹ Unfortunately the ideal of interracial multi-cultural community at Azusa did not last long because the ugly head of racism and ethnicity manifested itself through denominational formations which were defined along colour lines.

The functional approach analyses how and why the teachings and practices of Pentecostalism attracted new adherents within their socio-economic context.²⁰² Scholars like Robert Anderson, Grant Wacker, John Nichol, James Goff and Edith Blumhofer agree that early Pentecostals came from the disenfranchised people living “outside the mainstream” or the periphery of society.²⁰³ The scholars however differ on their evaluation of the purported reaction of the converts to the progressive era America.²⁰⁴ Robert Anderson proposes that the early Pentecostal practice of glossolalia and longing for the end times appealed to the disenfranchised people, as a “way to escape” the painful realities of life. Grant Wacker’s view is that the failure by Pentecostal adherents to fit into modernity forced them to create their socio-religious space and develop their own standards of respectability. John Nichol sees Pentecostal teachings and practices as egalitarian in nature, hence accommodative and compensatory to the marginalised members of society. He adds that baptism in the Spirit empowered its incumbents with a certain boldness to face the tough realities of life. James Goff posits that the five-fold gospel appealed to the social and spiritual needs of the struggling farmers and urban workers. It is argued by Edith Blumhofer that the “restorationist” outlook of Pentecostalism gave its followers hope and “staying power.”²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 45.

²⁰² Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 46.

²⁰³ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 46–49.

²⁰⁴ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 46–49.

²⁰⁵ Cerillo, “Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,” 46–49.

However, most modern scholars of Pentecostalism do not subscribe to Anderson's deprivation theory.²⁰⁶

From the foregoing, the Azusa Street revival's Pentecostal character may be summarised as follows:

1. The Belief in the providential, supernatural intervention and involvement of God in the church and world. This includes:
 - (i) The belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues;
 - (ii) The belief in deliverance as an additive to salvation as seekers and new converts are exorcised from demons;
2. The five-fold gospel as a summary of the major Pentecostal experiences as follows; salvation as the initiation experience, sanctification as a purification/deification and consecration experience, Spirit baptism as a transforming and empowering experience, healing as a tool for evangelism and the soon-coming Christ as the driving force for participating in the great commission;
3. The commissioning of apostolic faith missionaries after short-term basic bible school training;
4. A vision of a multi-cultural, inter-racial, egalitarian, and empowering Christian community;
5. The theology of restoration that extends to social and economic development
6. Church governance that is inclusive of all believers and church services that give room to the move of the Spirit

The Azusa Street revival is still having a bearing on the AFMZ.

²⁰⁶ Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 18.

2.5 The planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) on African soil had an influence from the classical Pentecostal movement and its precursors such as the Holiness movement, the healing movement and the Moravian and Wesleyan pietism, and the input of its founding missionaries such as Thomas Hezmalhalch (1847-1934) and John Graham Lake (1870-1935).²⁰⁷ The influence of the preceding revivals in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), under which one of the longest serving presidents of the AFM in South Africa (AFMSA), P.L. Le Roux was mentored by Andrew Murray will also be examined.²⁰⁸ Other influences deserving analysis include the Zionist Movement of Alexander Dowie which was later incorporated into the AFMSA,²⁰⁹ the Doornfontein revival,²¹⁰ and the sporadic planting of AFM churches in Rhodesia now known as Zimbabwe by African agents and a cluster of missionaries.²¹¹ Although the AFM is an international denomination and maintains unity and diversity in spiritual values, doctrines and practices, this study focuses on AFM in Zimbabwe (AFMZ).

Thomas Hezmalhalch and John G. Lake were leading members of a team of missionaries who founded the AFMSA. Their Holiness and Methodist background largely explain the Presbyterian system of governance implemented by the AFMZ, in terms of which group accountability is the norm. Frank Chikane points out that Hezmalhalch and Lake had connections with Alexander Dowie's Zion church in Chicago and William Seymour's Azusa

²⁰⁷ Allan Anderson, *Spreading the Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 168.

²⁰⁸ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 120.

²⁰⁹ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 120.

²¹⁰ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 121.

²¹¹ Frank Chikane, "The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein revivals," in Harold D. Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck Jr., eds. *The Azusa Revival and its legacy* (Cleveland: Pathways Press, 2006), 264.

Street mission.²¹² Miller adds that Seymour was a personal friend of John Lake.²¹³ Allan Anderson further explains that Hezmalhalch was a holiness preacher who received Spirit baptism at Azusa, whilst Lake, a former elder under Dowie, received Spirit baptism through the ministry of Charles Parham in Zion.²¹⁴ These details confirm the historical context of the theology of experience existent in these antecedents. The experience of Spirit baptism served both as an initiation into Pentecostalism and authority to spread the Pentecostal gospel. The team took off from Indianapolis and arrived in South Africa in May 1908.²¹⁵

The religious terrain in South Africa before the arrival of these Pentecostal missionaries was marked by revivals in the Dutch Reformed church (DRC) as led by Andrew Murray (1828-1917), a holiness preacher of the “Keswick model.”²¹⁶ The 1860, 1874 and 1884 revivals were characterised by hunger for prayer, conviction of sin leading to the conversion of many unbelievers, and a level of piety and morality which permeated the South African society.²¹⁷ These factors created a conducive atmosphere for the birthing of the AFMSA.²¹⁸ These traits of spirituality were passed on to Pieter L. Le Roux (1864-1943), a convert of Murray who later trained as a DRC missionary and served in Wakkerstroom (now Mpumalanga).²¹⁹ Le Roux was introduced to the ministry of healing by his mentor Andrew Murray in the DRC.²²⁰ Kalu argues that Andrew Murray influenced Pentecostalism in general through his writings on Spirit baptism, holiness and healing.²²¹ In the result, Hezmalhalch and

²¹² Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein revivals,” 261.

²¹³ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 49.

²¹⁴ Anderson, *Spreading the Fires*, 168.

²¹⁵ Anderson, *Spreading the fires*, 169.

²¹⁶ Isak Burger and Marius Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa: A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa* (Vireeniging: Christian Art Publishers, 2008), 26.

²¹⁷ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 25.

²¹⁸ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 25.

²¹⁹ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 27,85.

²²⁰ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 115.

²²¹ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 14.

Lake found in South Africa, an already softened and “charismatized” environment which enabled their Pentecostal gospel to quickly take root.²²²

Before the arrival of the Pentecostal gospel, the Zion movement of Alexander Dowie was already established in South Africa, through the work of Johannes Buchler, who was later replaced by Daniel Bryant.²²³ Daniel Bryant made it possible for Le Roux and a large number of his African DRC members in Wakkerstroom, to join the Zionist movement from 1903 to 1908, before they moved to the newly formed AFMSA.²²⁴ Le Roux and his group were attracted to the Zion Movement because of the healing practices, and to the AFMSA because of the baptism in the Spirit, which would empower people to heal the sick. Isak Burger and Marius Nel argue that whilst a connection and possible influence on AFMSA from the Zion movement exists, the AFMSA should not be “misconstrued to be a continuation of Zionism” because it is a classical brand of Pentecostalism and a product of a “definite experience.”²²⁵ They however acknowledge that trine baptism and healing practices were inherited from the Zion Movement.²²⁶ It is contended in this research that although the White section of the AFMSA to which Burger and Nel belong, could have been influenced by Zionism at a lesser extent, the Black or African section of the AFMSA was heavily influenced by Zionism at an unprecedented scale. This was due to mass exodus of Le Roux’s African Zionists to the AFMSA fold thus making the first African section of the AFMSA purely composed of Zionists and creating an environment prone to Zionist practices, as we shall see later.²²⁷

²²² Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 14.

²²³ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 15.

²²⁴ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 27.

²²⁵ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 28.

²²⁶ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 56.

²²⁷ Christiaan R. De Wet, “The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa: 1908–80 A case study of Church Growth in a segregated society,” (PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989), 34.

Hezmalhalch, Lake and their missionary entourage arrived in Johannesburg, South Africa mid-May 1908 where they quickly established “Christian networks (especially in the DRC and the Zionist movement) and geared for another revival.”²²⁸ Their first meetings were held in a Zionist church in Doornfontein, Johannesburg due to the historical relationship of John G. Lake as a former elder of Dowie’s church in Chicago.²²⁹ It was at this black/coloured church that a great revival and outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place, leading to the official establishment of the AFMSA, an event annually celebrated worldwide by the AFM community on the 25th of May.²³⁰ The AFMSA considers Doornfontein to be the African replica of the Azusa revival and a return to “original Christianity of the early church.”²³¹ A proclamation issued at this revival and thereafter emphasised divine healing, baptism in the Spirit and the salvation of humanity.²³² Although the Pentecostal gospel was first preached and demonstrated in a black church, many whites visited Doornfontein to witness the revival, leading to the mingling of races in the Spirit.²³³ Frank Chikane comments that, “In a sense, what happened at Azusa and Doornfontein brought together the biblically sound Wesleyan holiness theological elements with those of Pentecost (baptism in the Spirit) to develop what we regard today as Pentecostal Theology.”²³⁴ The theology of experience became arguably the trademark or a distinctive feature of Pentecostalism.

Due to the growing number of attendees at Doornfontein, the church moved to a bigger Zion church building along Bree Street in Johannesburg.²³⁵ This new location eventually became the AFMSA Central Tabernacle, the mother church of all AFM churches

²²⁸ David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 38.

²²⁹ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 120.

²³⁰ De Wet, “The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa,” 51.

²³¹ Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein revivals,” 260, 262.

²³² De Wet, “The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa,” 57.

²³³ Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein revivals,” 261.

²³⁴ Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein revivals,” 263.

²³⁵ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 73.

Continent wide, the AFM headquarters and conference centre.²³⁶ The location also served as the base of operations for Hezmalhalch's and Lake's efforts to spread the Pentecostal message across South Africa. Some of their most celebrated achievements relate to the conversions of Le Roux and his African Zionist group, and Elias Letwaba, an African Lutheran minister.²³⁷ Le Roux and Letwaba created further in-roads into the African community.²³⁸ The work of Hezmalhalch and Lake was reportedly followed by signs and wonders, especially miraculous healings.²³⁹ It should be noted that although the American team did not plan to create a denomination, the circumstances demanded that they and their followers become an organised entity.²⁴⁰ Hence the first executive council was elected on 27th May 1909 with Thomas Hezmalhalch as the AFMSA President and John G. Lake as the Vice President.²⁴¹ But by the end of 1910 however, Hezmalhalch was relieved of his position following allegations that he tolerated lies peddled by Lake's haters who depicted him as someone with unsavoury conduct, like misappropriation of donated funds for missions, operating with a "Dowie spirit" i.e. a perception linking Lake with dictatorial tendencies purportedly practised by Alexander Dowie, and engaging in extra-marital affairs. Although Lake was exonerated of these allegations, the executive council required Hezmalhalch to relinquish his post.²⁴² Ironically, this event could have contributed to the popularisation of Lake at the expense of Hezmalhalch's contribution to the birthing of the classical Pentecostal movement.

²³⁶ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 73.

²³⁷ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 27, Frank Chikane, "The Apostolic Faith Mission: The case of a lone mission and evangelism journey outside the Conferences on World Missions and Evangelism," (World Council of Churches, John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2019), 363.

²³⁸ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 27.

²³⁹ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 38.

²⁴⁰ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 35.

²⁴¹ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 35.

²⁴² Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 35–43.

Initially the AFMSA was registered as an unlimited liability company (in 1913) but obtained church status in 1961.²⁴³ The name “Apostolic Faith Mission” was initially used interchangeably with “Apostolic Faith Movement,” and both names were used by Parham and Seymour at Azusa.²⁴⁴ This confirms the link which exists between Azusa and the AFM in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The incorporation of Le Roux’s black Zionists into the AFMSA however encountered some challenges, owing to the reluctance on the part of the group to abandon the name “Zion” under the new affiliation. This prompted a 1910 Executive Council resolution which read as follows:

*And whereas the natives deem the name Zion so essential that this portion of our Mission be known henceforth as the Zion Branch of the Apostolic Faith Mission.*²⁴⁵

The resolution did not fully resolve the issue of affiliation because eventually, Zionism evolved into a Black revivalist movement and seceded out of the AFMSA to create formations with syncretic tendencies of interweaving Zionism, Pentecostalism and African traditional religions (ATR).²⁴⁶ On the other hand the native branch of the AFMSA flourished through the efforts of ordinary/lay people who had little or no formal education (with the exception of Elias Letwaba who was a fully trained Lutheran church minister) but were full of the Holy Spirit.²⁴⁷ Frank Chikane acknowledges the regrettable impact of Apartheid on the missiological perspectives of the AFMSA which led to the formation of separate councils to run the work of the AFMSA, although the White wing had an upper hand in the native division.²⁴⁸

Although by 1913 both Hezmalhalch and Lake had permanently left South Africa, some independent, indigenous AFMSA churches had been formed, and would become self-

²⁴³ De Wet, “The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa,” 55–56.

²⁴⁴ De Wet, “The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa,” 57.

²⁴⁵ De Wet, “The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa,” 34.

²⁴⁶ De Wet, “The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa,” 35–36

²⁴⁷ Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein revivals,” 264.

²⁴⁸ Chikane, “The Apostolic Faith Mission,” 363–74.

propagating, self-supporting and self-governing.²⁴⁹ Miller refers to the missionary efforts of John Lake (obviously together with his teammates) as reported by Gordon Lindsay as having resulted in 1,250 preachers, planting of 625 congregations, and 100,000 converts within a span of five years.²⁵⁰ The strength of the church was in what Allan Anderson calls “democratisation of Christianity,” whereby every member was empowered to be a witness, a missionary and a preacher in line with the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.²⁵¹ Frank Chikane supports this assertion and states that,

*The first members of the AFM (in South Africa) held a dim view of all professional church leaders. The result of this attitude was that ministerial leadership...was organised along the New Testament concept of voluntary ministry of the whole body of Christ.*²⁵²

This phenomenon led to the establishment of workers’ councils whose membership to date includes lay workers (deacons, deaconesses, elders)²⁵³ and full-time ordained workers (pastors), who periodically convene to discuss the Church’s missional agenda. David Maxwell correctly observes that the AFMSA was generally sceptical about ecclesiastical hierarchy from its inception, hence even Hezmalhalch and Lake were addressed as brothers although they were the founding fathers of the church.²⁵⁴ Hezmalhalch and Lake succeeded in inculcating the importance of the healing ministry into their followers as evidenced by the practice of laying hands on the sick, which continues to this day in most AFM services including Zimbabwe.²⁵⁵ Their success can also be attributed to making Christianity a “lived religion” with a symbiotic relationship with the African context.²⁵⁶ On this note, Ogbu Kalu comments that:

²⁴⁹ Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein Revivals,” 262.

²⁵⁰ Miller, *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations*, 49–50.

²⁵¹ Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa and Doornfontein revivals,” 265–66.

²⁵² Chikane, “The blessings of Azusa Street and Doornfontein revivals,” 266.

²⁵³ Whilst in other churches these designated positions are part of ordained ministry, in the AFM these are purely lay-worker positions which are not considered under ordained ministry.

²⁵⁴ Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 43.

²⁵⁵ Burger and Nel, *The Fire falls in Africa*, 38.

²⁵⁶ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 135.

*Lake attracted Africans because he resonated with the indigenous worldview and responded to African conditions through faith healing, exorcisms, Spirit baptism, prophecy, speaking in tongues, spiritual revival, vibrant liturgy in worship, prayer, evangelism, and sanctified life.*²⁵⁷

As noted earlier, it was the ordinary people in the AFM who carried the gospel to their various communities and across borders into Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. David Maxwell credits the African agents, mainly former migrant workers from South Africa, for spreading the newly found Pentecostal gospel to their rural villages.²⁵⁸ David Maxwell and Patrick Harris further argue that the success of the Christianisation of Africa should be credited to African agents like itinerant preachers, translators, and labour migrants.²⁵⁹ Even John Lake acknowledged the superior quality and capacity of his new converts to preach the gospel to such an extent that there was no need for more missionaries from America.²⁶⁰ Whilst it may be acknowledged that converts like Le Roux and Letwaba came to the AFMSA as fully trained ministers, the majority were not highly educated. It is these untrained but Spirit-filled returning labour migrants (mainly mineworkers) of Zimbabwean and Malawian origins who brought Pentecost to Zimbabwe.²⁶¹ Their work was not necessarily an organised venture but a case of zealous effort which was sporadic in nature. These sporadic rural congregations started to exist independently from around 1913, although 1915 is the official date of birth of the AFMZ.²⁶²

The earliest documented communities to receive the Pentecostal gospel in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) include Gwanda and the surrounding areas in the Matabeleland Province (with

²⁵⁷ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 15.

²⁵⁸ Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 40.

²⁵⁹ Patrick Harris and David Maxwell eds. *The Spiritual in the Secular: Missionaries and Knowledge about Africa* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 3.

²⁶⁰ Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 42.

²⁶¹ Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit*, 46.

²⁶² David Maxwell, "Historicizing Christian Independency: The Southern African Pentecostal Movement 1908-60," *The Journal of African History* 40, no. 2 (1999): 243-64.

Gobatema as the mission centre), Kadoma in the Mashonaland West Province and Mutare in the Manicaland Province. David Maxwell notes that Zacharias Manamela, a former migrant worker founded the AFMR in Gwanda, which by 1917 had about four hundred members, despite the scrutiny and suspicion from the settler state machinery.²⁶³ In 1918 Mr and Mrs Goldie were seconded as missionaries in this area.²⁶⁴ Likewise, Isaac Chiumbu, another former migrant worker, started the AFMR in Gatooma (Kadoma) and ended up as its black head minister, while in 1918 Mr and Mrs Luttig became missionaries in that area.²⁶⁵ Chiumbu's greatest success was the conversion of the four Gwanzura brothers who became the next generation of pastors with Enoch and John (nicknamed Chihari) becoming the most prominent of them.²⁶⁶ The conversion of people and their households remains one of the strengths of the AFMZ, as evidenced by the existence of second and third generation pastors from the Gwanzura and many other families. In Umtali (Mutare), Mr Lucas Holtzhousen planted the AFMR, but it was Joel Juma, one of the converts who later headed the Church from 1929.²⁶⁷

During its flowering days, the AFMR suffered setbacks and criticism from the British native commissioners and some leaders of other main line churches. The AFMR gospel of "personal transformation" was deemed to be contrary to the colonial agenda of civilisation through education and healthcare, which was central to conventional missionary methods besides emphasis on Christian conversion.²⁶⁸ The AFMR preachers were also accused of crossing religious boundaries set by the settler government to regulate areas of operation of each designated denomination by attracting and baptising members of other churches into the

²⁶³ Maxwell, "Historicising Christian Independency," 253.

²⁶⁴ David Maxwell, "Historicising Christian Independency," 253.

²⁶⁵ Maxwell, "Historicising Christian Independency," 253.

²⁶⁶ Maxwell, "Historicising Christian Independency," 253.

²⁶⁷ Maxwell, "Historicising Christian Independency," 254.

²⁶⁸ Maxwell, "Historicising Christian Independency," 254–56.

AFMR fold thereby establishing congregations there.²⁶⁹ This religious mobility which persists today confirms the power of charismatic experiences accentuated by the AFMZ.²⁷⁰ David Maxwell further characterises the AFMR thus:

*“...their methods appeared somewhat unorthodox to those from the older missionary traditions: night meetings, exorcism, witch-finding, divine healing, ecstatic possession by the Spirit; but certainly, had results. By 1931 there were 3000 adherents in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).”*²⁷¹

Munetsi Ruzivo reveals the political fears which the settler colonial government harboured about the roving African preachers of the new Pentecostal brand of Christianity. He points out that the arrival of the AFMR in 1915 coincided with the Chilembwe uprising in the British settler controlled Nyasaland (now Malawi) which lasted the whole of January 1915, resulting in the death of many Africans including Rev John Chilembwe.²⁷² Chilembwe was a Baptist preacher who acquired his theological training in the United States of America (USA) and taught that all human beings were equal before God and that Africa is for Africans in as much as Europe is for Europeans.²⁷³ His message and the uprising in Nyasaland unnerved the British colonial government in neighbouring Rhodesia, hence the negative perception that the AFMR African agents and their sporadic activities were causing disharmony among native communities.²⁷⁴ The settler government regarded the idea of illiterate Africans preaching without supervision by European or White missionaries as unacceptable, even though some African preachers like Zachariah Manamela were certified by the Mother church in South Africa.²⁷⁵ Hence, although the African agents contributed

²⁶⁹ Maxwell, “Historicising Christian Independency,” 254–56.

²⁷⁰ Frans Linde and Johann Zaaiman, “A Sociological exploration of church migration with special reference to the AFM Goodwood,” *Society in Transition* 29 (1998): 174–82.

²⁷¹ Maxwell, “Historicising Christian Independency,” 254.

²⁷² Munetsi Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe 1908–80,” (PhD Thesis, University of South Africa, 2014), 71–75.

²⁷³ Ruzivo, “A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 84.

²⁷⁴ Ruzivo, “A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 84.

²⁷⁵ Ruzivo, “A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 92.

more to the growth of the AFMR, they were viewed as perpetual minors and subservient to the authority of European missionaries until 1983, when pursuant to independence, the work was handed over to African leaders.

As a result of his work in the 1930s, Louis Lodewyke Kruger, an Afrikaner missionary from AFMSA, is celebrated for making the AFMR a properly organised entity from grassroots levels up to national level and attempting to bring respectability to a movement which was originally viewed as a mere, sporadic sect.²⁷⁶ For this reason the AFMZ is proudly called “*Chechi yekwa Kruger*” meaning a church strongly associated to Kruger. Nevertheless, Kruger, his team of missionaries and the African agents were setback by the lack of state recognition and support accorded to mainline missionary churches, who received huge pieces of land and government grants.²⁷⁷ The AFMR was initially granted limited recognition with stringent restrictions in April 1931.²⁷⁸ The restrictions included a requirement that the AFMR would propagate their faith without taking people out of other churches, respect traditional authorities and not build any schools or churches, on the pretext that the AFMR did not have qualified personnel to run such institutions.²⁷⁹ In reality, the measures were deliberately designed to frustrate the work of AFMR, a brand of Pentecostalism which the Rhodesian authorities regarded as “frenzied behaviour,” a threat to mainline churches, and a challenge to traditional authority because of its demonological view of spirits in African Traditional Religion (ATR).²⁸⁰ Ruzivo mentions that the AFMR acquired multiple versions, whereby some of the African agents “ended up mixing African religious practices and Pentecostalism, thereby creating their own version of Pentecostalism which was regarded with suspicion by the Rhodesian authorities.”²⁸¹ Some of the practices included “witchcraft eradication,”

²⁷⁶ Maxwell, “Historicising Christian Independency,” 262.

²⁷⁷ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 145–47.

²⁷⁸ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 186.

²⁷⁹ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 180–86.

²⁸⁰ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 192–93.

²⁸¹ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 193–94.

rainmaking prayers, group devotional prayers on mountains dubbed *masowe* (wilderness), all night prayers known as *pungwe* and burning charms brought by new converts.²⁸² Some of these early practices shall be analysed in chapter four and five. Unfortunately, the honeymoon period was short-lived and ended with the withdrawal of the limited recognition for the AFMR in June 1934, on the main charge that Kruger was failing to keep his roving evangelists on leash.²⁸³

The agenda to obtain respectability for the AFMR was further advanced by the Wilson brothers, Willard and Bill, and other missionaries who in 1938 came from America and South Africa, to promote theological training, build churches and implement discipline against those who preached “old style religion” such as emphasising Levitical laws.²⁸⁴ Limited state recognition was re-enacted in 1940, a development which encouraged the missionaries to implement stringent rules against any purported “disorderly behaviour” by AFMR African preachers.²⁸⁵ The measures led to the controversial exit of a prominent African evangelist Isaac Chiumbu, who later formed the African Apostolic Faith Mission (AAFM) in 1943.²⁸⁶ The high-handed approach by missionaries who enjoyed state machinery support, led to some breakaway Apostolic groups and forced the African evangelists who remained loyal to the AFMR, to disguise their activities as extra-curriculum activities i.e., spiritual activities taking place outside missionary stipulations.²⁸⁷

Ruzivo identifies Enoch Gwanzura, one of the Gwanzura brothers, as the father of the Apostolic-type, African Initiated Churches (AIC).²⁸⁸ An example of such churches is the Johanne Masowe sect, whose founder Gwanzura baptised and commissioned.²⁸⁹ Underlying

²⁸² Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 193.

²⁸³ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 194.

²⁸⁴ Maxwell, “Historicising Christian Independency,” 263.

²⁸⁵ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 197–201.

²⁸⁶ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 197–201.

²⁸⁷ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 203.

²⁸⁸ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 204.

²⁸⁹ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 204.

the extra-curriculum activities was the desire to form an African Pentecostal expression of Christianity as we shall see in chapter four and five.

Willard Wilson was the longest serving missionary who facilitated the formal and full recognition of the AFMR in November 1947.²⁹⁰ By the time he retired in 1977, he had built several churches as well as the Rhodesia African Bible College now known as Living Waters Theological Seminary (LWTS) in 1974.²⁹¹ I also received my initial theological training as a pastor at LWTS from 1981–83. Prior to the establishment of LWTS, pastoral candidates were trained at Kasupe Bible College (KBC) in Zambia (formerly called North Rhodesia). I can confirm that theological training contributed to the astronomical growth of the AFMZ as well as the grooming of indigenous African leaders like the late Rev. Langton Kupara (the first black President of AFMZ, the late Rev. Jeffreys J. Mvenge (the second President) and the late Rev. Peter Stephen Mutemererwa (the third President), all who were trained at Kasupe. The fourth retired President Rev. Enos Manyika and the rest of the presidents, overseers and pastors were trained at LWTS.

Whilst the respectability project of the AFMR had some positive attributes, it equally generated some negative consequences. Formal bible school training to preach the gospel was viewed by some as contradictory to the original qualification to preach, which is baptism with the Spirit. Marius Nel attributes this “anti-intellectualism” mentality as noted in chapter one to “the historical circumstances where the first converts were predominantly from the disinherited of society,” and feared that their faith and spirituality would be endangered.²⁹² Further, the highhanded approach by missionaries to impose “orthodoxy” led to the breakaway movements such as Habakkuk, Mugodhi, Chiumbu and many others whose intention was to uphold old apostolic practices.²⁹³ Despite the new religious formations

²⁹⁰ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 206, 229.

²⁹¹ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 218.

²⁹² Nel, *Aspects of Pentecostal Theology*, 78–82.

²⁹³ Maxwell, “Historicising Christian Independency,” 263.

breaking away from the AFMR, some of the old style religious practices persisted within the AFMR by night while others were adopted and adapted by day. For instance, traditional rainmaking ceremonies were adopted and adapted by AFMR churches into days set to pray and fast for rain. Night prayer vigils on the mountains persist to this day, albeit with a semblance of modernity whereby the outings are properly organised and monitored. In some isolated AFMZ circles, opposition to formal education and medical treatment persist albeit in mild forms. These die-hard practices together with the conventional AFMZ doctrines and practices will be analysed to retrieve the thread of the theology of experience in the African context.

The following may be the distinctive AFM experiential orientations during the initial planting of the AFM in South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), with later developments and modifications dealt with in the following chapters:

1. Presbyterian system of governance which promotes group accountability, shared ministry, and the democratisation of Christianity;
2. Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues as the initiation ritual into experiential spirituality and a stamp of authority to spread the gospel;
3. Ministry of divine healing with some anti-hospital and anti-medicine tendencies;
4. Triune baptism by immersion as a formula to accentuate the trinitarian doctrine at new birth;
5. Sporadic and revivalist proclamation focused on salvation of humanity and imminent return of Christ;
6. Inclination towards original Christianity as reflected in the Acts of the Apostles;
7. Belief in signs, wonders and miracles as accompaniments to the work of the Spirit;
8. A self-modernising church with an indigenous and contextualised approach to responding to and solving African realities;

9. Organisation of ministerial service along New Testament concept of voluntary ministry and living by faith as full-time workers;
10. Consultative approach to the missional agenda through periodical workers' council meetings;
11. Making Christianity a transformational and lived religion accompanied by an enthusiastic, energetic, and vibrant liturgy;
12. Levitically regulating holiness and the confession of sins in search of sanctified life;
13. Disciplinary measures on preachers and parishioners to instil holiness and compliance to the AFM doctrines and practices;
14. Perpetuation of the demonological worldview accompanied by spiritual warfare;
15. Embracing the five-fold gospel as the major Pentecostal experiences.

Conclusion

This chapter was geared on retrieving aspects of the theology of experience imbedded in some key historical antecedents which influenced the AFMZ. It has been observed that both Moravian and Wesleyan Pietism have been characterised by evidence-based experiential and heartfelt Christianity which is intentionally shaped by spiritual formation, leading to social holiness and personal piety. The Healing movement added the conviction that divine healing can be experienced by the sick through prayer. The Holiness/Evangelical Movement in its various strands built upon and expanded the Wesleyan understanding of Christian perfection or sanctification. The Radical Holiness proponents added the demonological worldview which saw Satan as the hindrance to entire sanctification, hence necessitated involvement in spiritual warfare. The Holiness Movement also created the framework of the five-fold gospel. The Pentecostal Movement through the Azusa revival added baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by glossolalia, thus perfecting the five-fold gospel as testified by Pentecostal

scholarship. The Azusa revival further enhanced the missional agenda leading to the commissioning of apostolic faith missionaries (including Thomas Hezmelhalch and John Graham Lake) who took the Pentecostal gospel to selected African nations. The planting of the AFMR saw the amalgamation of some previously discussed experiential traits within the African ambience, especially Spirit baptism and divine healing. This led to the birth of an indigenous and contextualised classical Pentecostal church on African soil.

Chapter 3: The relationship between African Pentecostalism, Scripture, and African Traditional Religion and Culture

The preceding chapter attempted to address the central problem of how the theology of experience has attracted African Pentecostals of the AFMZ. The chapter analyses key antecedents like Moravian and Wesleyan pietism, the Healing movement, the Holiness movement, the Azusa Street revival and the planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa and Zimbabwe. These antecedents have immensely contributed to the shape, depth, and breadth of religious experience in Pentecostalism including the AFMZ. However, of special interest is the distinctive footprint of AFMZ on Pentecostal Christianity in the context of Shona culture. In this historical analysis, one of the key questions i.e., how the theology of experience has operated and witnessed in the Pentecostal movement was addressed.

Considering the broader central problem of analysing how the theology of experience has distinctively appealed to African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand, this chapter attempts to answer two key questions i.e., to what extent does the African Shona worldview contribute to or influence the religious experience and identity of AFMZ? Furthermore, can Pentecostal Christianity in the AFMZ maintain its identity without the theology of experience? To achieve the above objectives this chapter addresses the dynamics which influence and guide the planting and propagation of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa, an environment historically, anchored in pre-existing religious and cultural practices. This aspect is deliberately canvassed in the context of the fundamental tenets of Shona traditional beliefs and culture. It is this Shona cultural context in which the AFMZ experiential spirituality is enacted. The reason for this approach is that although there are other minority tribes in Zimbabwe such as the Ndebele, what is clear is that the Shona ethnic groups are dominant,

both culturally and demographically. In addition, while the AFMZ exists amongst the Ndebele and other minority ethnic groups, it is predominantly followed by the Shona people. This phenomenon makes the Shona community an ideal framework for describing the AFMZ experience.

African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand embrace their understanding of the supernatural contained in biblical literature and utilise its resonance with ATR in enacting their theology of experience. An analysis of the parallels between Shona cosmology perceived to be full of spirits and the supernatural elements contained in selected Scriptures shall be briefly presented. Thereafter, this chapter shall engage the continuity and discontinuity debate in African Pentecostal discourse and how this informs and influences the Pentecostal indigenisation or Africanisation of Pentecostal Christianity project.

I begin with an overview of African traditional religion and culture, followed by a comparison of ATR and the supernatural in Scripture, after which I engage the continuity and discontinuity debate in African Pentecostal discourse (APD).

3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and culture

This section on ATR and culture serves to demonstrate the contextual religio-cultural dynamics in which the AFMZ indigenises itself by adopting and adapting Shona religious and cultural traits consistent with Pentecostal Christianity. It shows how ATR prepared African Christians to embrace experiential spirituality.

The Shona people of Zimbabwe are clustered among the *Bantu* people who are geographically located South of the Sahara.¹ Prior to the coming of the *Bantu*, hunters and

¹ Shirley A. Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991), 31.

gatherers known as the *Khoisan* were the first documented inhabitants of Zimbabwe.² The name *Bantu* derives from *abantu* which in Shona means people (*vanhu*) the singular of which is *umuntu*, meaning person (*munhu*).³ From the same term comes *ubuntu* and in Shona *unhu*, reflecting the sum total of what it means to be a well-rounded and well-cultured person. This understanding of a real person (*munhu chaiye*) entails someone who is selfless, humble, empathetic, prepared to adhere to a communal lifestyle and observes social and religious values.⁴ From these notions, it will be noted that the Shona culture and religion aim to mould a person who fits well into the community and that to be truly human, a person must embrace noble values such as humility, honesty, good behaviour and respect for other people.

The Shona people have a historical connection with the Great Zimbabwe, a stone walled settlement of an ancient culture which encompassed most of present day Zimbabwe, the archaeological ruins of which lie in the Masvingo district of the country.⁵ Similar archaeological monuments and smaller ruins are dotted around Zimbabwe, evidencing the existence of people with a well-established communal system and sophisticated building skills.⁶ Today, the Shona community is comprised of the following tribes: *Makaranga*, *Mazezuru*, *VaManyika*, *VaNdau*, and *Makorekore*.⁷ These tribal groups and their sub-groups are distinguished through various dialects (Shona accents) and to an extent, different totems.

From the onset, it must be noted that far from a one size fits all circumstance, African traditional religion and culture is comprised of multiple practices which are scattered across the continent.⁸ The common denominator, however, is that African cosmology recognises the

² Lilian Dube, "The Shona people of Zimbabwe," in Stephen Hayes ed. *African Initiatives in Healing Ministry* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2011), 25.

³ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 31.

⁴ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 53.

⁵ Thomas Huffman and Johann C. Vogel. The Chronology of Great Zimbabwe, *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 46, no. 154 (Dec. 1991): 61.

Published by: [South African Archaeological Society](#)

⁶ Canisius Mwandayi, *Death and After-life Rituals in the eyes of the Shona: Dialogue with Shona Customs in the Quest for Authentic Inculturation* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2011), 37.

⁷ Dube, "The Shona People of Zimbabwe," 25.

⁸ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 1.

pre-eminence of a Supreme Being, below whom exist benevolent and malevolent spirits. At the bottom of the hierarchy are living human beings, amongst whom are found traditional spiritualists or guides.⁹ Shona traditional spiritualists such as traditional healers (*n'angas*), are believed to receive their skills from either benevolent spirits or through training or mentorship. They have been derogatorily labelled as witchdoctors by Western anthropologists. On the other hand, are witches and sorcerers, who are believed to attain their powers from malevolent spirits.¹⁰ It is the existence of spirits that the Shona are conscious of in their rituals, practices, and beliefs. Most of their songs confirm their spiritual consciousness. And the spirits are also linked to the totems.

Shona totems (*mitupo*) are generally names or titles derived from animals and the environment, which identify a person or their tribal group (e.g., this writer's totem is buffalo). Historically each totem group occupied a specific area, although modernity and the scramble for greener pastures have blurred these geographical boundaries or filters. Totems for the Shona nevertheless still help one to identify distant relatives, and their places of origin.¹¹ Among the Shona people, being addressed through your totem is the highest form of honour, since totems are regarded as praise names.¹² With this cultural background, the Shona people come into Pentecostal Christianity with a clear understanding of the idea and concept of praising God. Praising is part of the way they experience the divine through music and dance. A life without interaction with the spiritual world is taken as dry and dead.

Life among the Shona people is located in the context of community, with the concept of the extended family acting as the backbone.¹³ These relational connections

⁹ Hans Moscicke, "Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews of the Bible, African Traditional Religion, and African Christianity," *Journal of Missiology*, 45, no. 2 (2017): 127.

¹⁰ Moscicke, "Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews," 130.

¹¹ Munyaradzi F. Murove, "The Shona Ethic of Ukama with reference to the Immortality of Values," *Mankind Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2007): 185–86.

¹² Murove, "The Shona Ethic of Ukama with reference to the Immortality of Values," 187.

¹³ Marius Nel, "The African background of Pentecostal Theology: A critical perspective," *In die Skriflig* 53, no. 4 (2019): 1–8.

(*ukama*) mean all members are family (*hama*) by virtue of either blood kinship or marriage.¹⁴ In the *ukama* ethics, life and relationships are an interconnected whole, from which it is impossible and unthinkable for one to disentangle themselves.¹⁵ Even in spiritual matters, the Shona expect every member of the community to participate in all communal activities. Life in the *ukama* kinship setting is shared communally, as expressed in a popular Shona proverb to the effect that, *ukama igasva, hunozadziswa nokudya* (kinship is empty if there is no eating together). Kinship is also observed through “communal interdependence,”¹⁶ involving the sharing of ideas, in line with the proverb, *zvikomo zvivakidzani zvinopana mhute* (nearby hills share the mist) and meaning that ideas are shared freely with the next of kin.¹⁷ The Shona are part of the African community, and they share a lot of similarities when it comes to socio-religious, political, and cultural issues.

In the context of Shona, are religious and cultural dimensions, in which everyone is a participant at different levels. John Mbiti posits that Africans have a holistic lifestyle which is permeated by religion, and “to ignore these traditional beliefs, attitudes and practices can only lead to a lack of understanding African behaviour and problems.”¹⁸ Africans are depicted as carrying their religion everywhere; on the fields in search of a bumper harvest, at weddings, funerals or in addressing any crisis situations.¹⁹ Religion defines their holistic life. It is part of their experiential world. Although, the Shona religion is not missionary per se, the trait of Africans carrying their religion everywhere, has prompted adherents to carry and propagate their faith wherever they go but not looking or seeking for converts.

¹⁴ Murove, “The Shona Ethic of Ukama with reference to the Immortality of Values,” 179–89.

¹⁵ Murove, “The Shona Ethic of Ukama with reference to the Immortality of Values,” 180.

¹⁶ Kudzai Biri, *African Pentecostalism, the Bible, and Cultural Resilience, A Case of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg, 2020), 117.

¹⁷ Murove, “The Shona Ethic of Ukama with reference to the Immortality of Values,” 181, 185.

¹⁸ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1.

¹⁹ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2.

Among the traditional rural Shona people, day to day life involves working on the fields, herding cattle, fetching water and household chores. Seasonal events include attending beer parties, entertainment parties and religious events such as the annual traditional ceremony which commemorates the dead in general (*bira*).²⁰ *Kurova guva* is a traditional ceremony through which the spirit of a deceased family member is brought back into the home to take his/her role as an ancestor.²¹ It is significant to note that music, dance, and drinking traditionally brewed beer are a central feature at African entertainment parties or religious ceremonies. Whilst spirit possession is the desired outcome at religious ceremonies, at entertainment parties the music and dance are “therapeutic” and a means of dancing your problems away.²² In African Pentecostalism, music and dance besides its therapeutic propensities as adopted from African culture, they also serve as a point of experiential contact with God through the worship and celebration experience.

Shona people characterise their lives by observing rituals from birth, through puberty, marriage, work, death and even after death.²³ Believing that health and welfare fall under the jurisdiction of the spirits, As a result, Shona people constantly engage in ritual contact with the spirit world, in order to counter illness and other misfortunes of life.²⁴ At birth, part of the child’s umbilical cord is buried around the homestead to establish connection with the soil, which makes one son/daughter of the soil (*mwana wevhu*). This is followed by the application of protective herbs and a period of isolation, during which the baby is not allowed to be taken outdoors. After the official isolation period, a naming ceremony is conducted and marked with celebrations.²⁵ Due to birthing in hospitals and the influence of Christianity, the

²⁰ Tabona Shoko, “Health and Healing in traditional Shona society,” in Stephen Hayes, *African Initiatives in Healing Ministry* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2011), 31.

²¹ Mwandayi, *Death and After-life Rituals in the eyes of the Shona*, 288–89.

²² Biri, *African Pentecostalism, the Bible, and Cultural Resilience*, 135.

²³ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 110–61.

²⁴ Shoko, “Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society,” 38.

²⁵ Shoko, “Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society,” 39.

birth rituals have been modified into baby welcome and baby shower events although the isolation period seems to be continued until its deemed safe to move the baby outside the homestead. Every stage of life amongst the Shona is religiously defined or connected to the spiritual world.

At puberty, Shona communities like *the Varemba* tribe some of whom are members of AFMZ, carry out initiation rituals, during which boys and girls are ushered into adulthood through circumcision or the application of herbs, in preparation of future manhood and womanhood roles.²⁶ It must be mentioned however that due to the risk associated with girl circumcision, female genital mutilation (FGM) is a criminal offence in the United Kingdom as well as in Zimbabwe.²⁷ Every stage of life defines the connection that is there with the spiritual world.

After puberty, comes the marriage ritual, which is characterised by the giving of a bride price (*roora* or *lobola*) charged by the parents of the bride. Among other reasons, the bride price (*roora*) ritual serves to invoke the family spirits to approve and bless the new union.²⁸ The blessing involves the experiential endowment of the spirits in the couples' life. To this day, *lobola* remains the official ticket to the Christian holy matrimony, and in the same way many Shona traditions persist during weddings. One of the key observances is the beast of motherhood (*mombe yeumai*), essentially a cow which is given by the suitor to the mother-in-law, in recognition of her birthing role.²⁹ If payment of this cow or other *lobola* charges are not settled, and one's wife dies, the in-laws may decline to bury her until the outstanding dues are paid. This practice of preventing the burial of a deceased person on the grounds of outstanding payments has been criticised as inhuman and disrespectful to the

²⁶ Shoko, "Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society," 39.

²⁷ cps.gov.uk "Female Genital Mutilation Prosecution Guidance," (2020); African Child Forum, "Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): International and Regional Framework," African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990.

²⁸ Shoko, "Health and Healing in the Traditional Shona Society," 39.

²⁹ Shoko, "Health and Healing in the Traditional Shona Society," 33.

deceased. The government of Zimbabwe has openly discouraged the practice of demanding outstanding bride price due upon the death of the wife.

Canisius Mwandayi sums up the Shona traditional worldview as a composition of the “world above” where God (*Mwari*) resides, the “world around” which is the abode of the living human beings and the “underworld” (*vari pasi*) or space for tribal spirits (*mhondoro*),³⁰ ancestors or the living dead (*vadzimu*) and other kinds of spirits.³¹ In other Shona communities, the abode of the spirits is in the sky or the “air space” (*vari kumhepo*).³² The concept of God (*Mwari*) as the Supreme Being existed before the advent of Christianity³³ and the *Mwari* cult originated from Matopo Hills i.e. (*Mabweadziva*) or (*Emathonjeni*) in Ndebele.³⁴ The Shona world is saturated with the existence of the spirits. This explains why spiritual experience is critical amongst the Shona.

This belief that mountains and hills are the abode of the spirits and God in ATR was hijacked by African Pentecostals who “re-sacralise” these shrines for their prayer vigils.³⁵ God (*Mwari*) is placed on the highest pedestal as a universal God, the “final authority” who is in control of everything including the fertility of all human beings and the land, and the giver of rain.³⁶ Thorpe says, “While the ordinary ethics of justice and right living are upheld by the ancestors, it is believed that (God) *Mwari* personally punishes those who do not observe *chisi*, the ancestral day of rest.”³⁷ Similarly individuals may not bother God with their personal or family issues, since these fall under the jurisdiction of Ancestors (*Vadzimu*)³⁸ who can be consulted for help or questioned over inaction during times of crisis. Any issues

³⁰ Dube, “The Shona People of Zimbabwe,” 25.

³¹ Mwandayi, *Death and After-life Rituals in the eyes of the Shona*, 63.

³² Masiwa Ragies Gunda, “Christianity, Traditional Religion, and Healing in Zimbabwe: Exploring the Dimensions and Dynamics of Healing among the Shona,” *Swedish Missiological Themes* 95, no. 3 (2007): 229–46.

³³ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 54.

³⁴ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 54.

³⁵ Biri, *African Pentecostalism, the Bible, and Cultural Resilience*, 151.

³⁶ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 54–55.

³⁷ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 55.

³⁸ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 55.

affecting the entire tribal community, such as droughts, famines and epidemics are considered to fall under the jurisdiction of the tribal spirit (*mhondoro*).³⁹ Whilst ancestral spirits are perceived as the guardian spirits of families, tribal or territorial spirits, are regarded as the guardians of the tribal territory.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, both ancestral and tribal spirits play a mediatory role between people and God. Against this cultural background, religious practitioners in African Pentecostalism came into a “conducive environment” where the idea of mediation was already accepted.⁴¹ African Pentecostals cannot imagine a world that does not connect with the spiritual world especially God.

Shona religious tradition observes God, as the “trans-tribal Supreme Being” who is communally consulted through rainmaking ceremonies.⁴² The attributes of God are expressed through some of the praise names used by Africans. As a rain maker, God is addressed as the Great Pool (*Dzivaguru*). Other praise names are *Nyadenga* (the one who owns and dwells in the skies), *Musikavanhu* (the creator of humanity) and *Mutangakugara* (the one who existed before everything was created).⁴³

The Shona people believe in the existence of spirits which are generally categorised into tribal spirits (*mhondoro*), ancestral spirits (*midzimu/vadzimu*), alien or roaming spirits (*mashavi*) and avenging spirits (*Ngozi*).⁴⁴ One’s experience with the divine is wider as the environment is saturated with spirits. Ancestral spirits are considered to be “protective spirits” whose duty is to preside over the general welfare of each extended family.⁴⁵ They are essentially the spirits of deceased relatives (who qualify to undertake that role like having

³⁹ Dube, “The Shona People of Zimbabwe,” 26.

⁴⁰ Dube, “The Shona People of Zimbabwe,” 26.

⁴¹ Obert B. Mlambo and Taurai R. Mukahlera, “Tradition and Adaptation in African Initiated Churches,” in Ezra Chitando et al eds. *Multiplying in the Spirit: African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe* (University of Bamberg Press, 2014), 83–84.

⁴² Dube, “The Shona People of Zimbabwe,” 26.

⁴³ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 55.

⁴⁴ Francis Machingura, “The Shona Concept of spirit possession (*kusvikirwa*) and the Pentecostal phenomenon of getting into the Spirit (*kupinda muMweya*),” *Hope’s Reason: A Journal of Apologetics* 1, no. 1 (2010): 85–102.

⁴⁵ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 57.

been married and had children) who are brought home through the ritual or ceremony of (*kurova guva or magadziro*), which is conducted a year after a person dies.⁴⁶ The purpose of this home bringing ceremony is twofold: to ritually invoke the deceased's spirit to become part of the living dead who protect the living members of the family and to prevent the deceased's spirit from becoming a roaming spirit (*shavi*).⁴⁷ The home bringing ceremony is preceded by another death ritual known as consolation (*nyaradzo*). This ceremony is conducted at least three months after a person dies and is structurally therapeutic or designed to comfort the family of the deceased.⁴⁸

The home-bringing ceremony is usually followed by the inheritance ceremony, during which the deceased's movable and immovable property are shared. The ceremony is more significant where the deceased was male, in which case it must be decided as to who takes over the welfare of the widow⁴⁹ but this practice is waning out due to modernity. Ancestral spirits remain in a venerated position as long as they are actively remembered by the living members of the family.⁵⁰ Their continued existence makes them to be addressed as the "living dead" to which Mbiti says, "The living dead is a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of the spirits."⁵¹ They are generally believed to be benevolent in that they reside around homesteads in order to protect the family⁵² although they may sometimes display malevolent dispositions or become vicious and capricious, especially where traditional values and taboos have been violated.⁵³ Experiencing the divine has to be broadly understood amongst the Shona. The

⁴⁶ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 65.

⁴⁷ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 65.

⁴⁸ Mwandayi, *Death and After-life Rituals in the eye of the Shona*, 57.

⁴⁹ Shoko, "Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society," 40.

⁵⁰ Moscieke, "Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews," 130.

⁵¹ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 25.

⁵² Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 88.

⁵³ Moscieke, "Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews," 130.

existence of the spirits and their role is not limited to indigenous Shona people but the exogenous Shona people, it includes even spirits of foreigners and animals.

Alien or roaming spirits (*mashavi*) are either animal spirits or the foreign spirits of those who died within the Shona community (including the spirit of a white person) but were not conferred a decent burial as required by the Shona customs. These spirits roam in search of a host to possess.⁵⁴ Some alien spirits are sometimes benevolent if the spirit possesses a person and imparts one with beneficial skills such as divination or hunting. The spirits are malevolent if they cause the host to practise witchcraft (*uroyi*). Witches are feared and hated among the Shona people for being anti-community hence the practice of witch-hunting as a cleansing exercise.⁵⁵ Witchcraft however is difficult to detect, since witches are believed to operate under cover of night.

The avenging spirits (*Ngozi*) which are clearly malevolent, emanate from people who have been murdered or killed by witchcraft and did not receive a proper Shona burial.⁵⁶ Such spirits are invoked by their relatives to afflict the murderer's family members (sometimes to death) until the murderer confesses his deeds and pays a stipulated ransom. Under this practice, a revenge ritual, equivalent to the "back to sender prayers" made in some sectors of African Pentecostalism, is administered through the assistance of a traditional healer. Usually, the stipulated ransom is a virgin girl who is required to raise offspring and replace the deceased person. The ransom may also be some cattle or the monetary equivalent of the cattle.⁵⁷ Another form of an avenging spirit is believed to emanate from a deceased mother, who dies without resolving some disputes with her rebellious child (particularly where the child assaulted the mother during her lifetime). In such a case, the avenging spirit may afflict

⁵⁴ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 57.

⁵⁵ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 59.

⁵⁶ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 57.

⁵⁷ Shoko, "Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society," 33.

the offending child with illness, usually affecting one's mental health.⁵⁸ Healing or recovery may be attained through what is known as the chase the curse ritual (*kutanda botso*), which involves administering a public disgrace ceremony to cleanse the delinquent child.⁵⁹ Similarly a mother who dies before receiving the beast of motherhood (*mombe yeumai*) can bring illness or misfortune on her grandchildren.⁶⁰ The impasse or illness can be resolved by paying the required cow to her relatives.

How the Shona culture deals with avenging spirits exposes deep-rooted patriarchal dominance and the disenfranchisement of women. For instance, the appeasement of an evil spirit through offering an innocent girl has been criticised as an evil belief and practice which is strongly opposed by African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand. Further, the belief that aggrieved mothers can return as avenging spirits against their own progeny is grounded in the explanation that women are not strictly speaking, part of the household in which they produce children. Among the Shona people, women are labelled as foreigners (*vatorwa*) where they are married, although they may wield the authority of the aunt (*tete*) where they originate from. On this aspect of female subjugation, African Pentecostalism has evolved and accepts the ordination of women into ministry, thereby attempting to address gender imbalances arising from patriarchal dominance in both Shona tradition and Christianity.

Kudzai Biri argues that when a murder committed by an individual causes the whole clan to suffer, this renders the offence a "communal responsibility" as opposed to an individual one.⁶¹ The concept of collective responsibility is not only legally questionable but prejudicial to other innocent members of the clan, who may be required to contribute towards the compensation charges.

⁵⁸ Shoko, "Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society," 32.

⁵⁹ Shoko, "Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society," 32.

⁶⁰ Shoko, "Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society," 33.

⁶¹ Biri, *African Pentecostalism, the Bible, and Cultural Resilience*, 117–18.

The Shona peoples generally associate most of the challenges in life with malevolent spirits or angry ancestors, who require appeasement. Problems such as barrenness, impotence, sickness, poor crop yield, mental illness, bad dreams, miscarriages, misfortunes (*minyama*) and many other mysterious ailments are directly attributed to “mystical forces.”⁶² This consciousness of mystical causality is central to how African Pentecostals address existential issues. Tabona Shoko points out that among the Shona, the major causes of illness include witchcraft, sorcery, immorality and natural causes.⁶³ Witches and sorcerers who are possessed by malevolent spirits, are perceived as major purveyors of illnesses and suffering, through dispatching “spiritual entities” such as witch crones (*zvitupwani, zvishiri, zvikwambo*), the use of poisonous herbs, and the “ritual manipulation of natural forces” such as causing lightning to strike someone.⁶⁴ An unfaithful spouse or adulterer is likely to suffer from a complex venereal disease known as (*runyoka*) which can only be remedied through confession and the payment of a ransom.⁶⁵ In contrast however, ordinary diseases such as flu, coughs, fever, stomach aches and headaches are attributed to natural causes and treated with common herbs.⁶⁶ The overriding desire of the Shona people is to attain holistic well-being in terms of health and wealth. African realities of pain and suffering are the subject matter in African Pentecostal proclamation accompanied by deliverance sessions which are part of the theology of experience which has a background in ATR beliefs and practices. Traditional practitioners then play a great role in the spiritual fulfilment.

The Shona people regard a traditional healer (*n'anga*) to be a significant person whose role is multi-faceted. The traditional healer plays a major role in the “traditional health delivery system,” serving both as a “therapeutic herbalist” and a “diagnostic diviner.”⁶⁷ Some

⁶² Mbiti, *African Traditional Religions*, 168–70.

⁶³ Shoko, “Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society,” 34–35.

⁶⁴ Shoko, “Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society,” 34–35.

⁶⁵ Shoko, “Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society,” 35.

⁶⁶ Shoko, “Health and Healing in Traditional Shona Society,” 35.

⁶⁷ Gunda, “Christianity, Traditional Religion, and Healing in Zimbabwe,” 235.

traditional healers may specialise as either herbalists or diviners. In either case, traditional healers (*n'angas*) carry an aura of both high regard and fear because of their knowledge and connection with the spirit world. They are perceived as symbols of hope who can address African realities of pain and suffering.⁶⁸ This aura, high regard and fear of traditional healers could account for the same view of pastors, prophets and apostles in African Pentecostalism as we shall see in chapter four and five.

Traditional healers play a significant role in home-bringing ceremonies, protecting homesteads, countering impending evil or misfortunes, officiating rainmaking ceremonies, increasing crop yields, purging witchcraft, and many other roles.⁶⁹ Traditional healers are reputed for their diagnostic skills, informing patients of their real ailments and promoting unity in the community.⁷⁰ They also provide charms and amulets which are believed to protect people from evil forces.⁷¹ Their methods include casting divine bones or dice (*hakata*) for diagnostic purposes, dispensing herbs for therapeutic purposes, exorcising evil spirits, manifesting spirit possession during their practice,⁷² and sometimes applying psycho-social skills. African Pentecostal practitioners adopt and adapt these practices by diagnosing spiritual and physical ailments through prophecy and dispensing therapeutic prayers as well as exorcising evil spirits as part of the theology of experience.

On a negative note, Mbiti states that some traditional healers abuse their roles and engage in “harmful practices.”⁷³ It could be this involvement in harmful practices which influences African Pentecostals to demonise them. Gann notes the struggles and clashes which occurred between the settler government and traditional healers particularly in their purported role to protect the Shona community against witches leading to the public

⁶⁸ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 170.

⁶⁹ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 168–69.

⁷⁰ Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 60.

⁷¹ Gunda, “Christianity, Traditional Religion, and Healing in Zimbabwe,” 235.

⁷² Thorpe, *African Traditional Religions*, 60.

⁷³ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 171.

execution of witches for their alleged evil practices.⁷⁴ These harmful and barbaric executions emanating from kangaroo courts presided by traditional healers were eventually suppressed by the settler government officials by legislating the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1899.⁷⁵ This act suppressed witch beliefs and practices and whosoever accused or executed another person on the grounds of witchcraft was breaking the law and liable to the wrath of the law. Similarly, although traditional healers are generally expected to levy reasonable charges for their services, if a client defaults or fails to make payment, the traditional healer may invoke his powers and direct misfortunes to revisit the patient. Traditional healers are therefore believed to possess the power to divert any misfortunes back to their original authors or senders,⁷⁶ which power is analogous to the “back to sender prayers” often made in some sections of African Pentecostalism. The similarity has prompted accusations that African Pentecostal practitioners usurped the role of traditional healers in the Shona community, hence the perennial rivalry between traditional healers and Pentecostal practitioners. Some traditional healers openly boast that Pentecostal practitioners clandestinely consult them to obtain powers to perform magical type of miracles in public.

Shona midwives (*mbuya nyamukuta*) are another important group in the traditional health delivery system. They play a significant role in pre-natal care, post-natal care, and the actual delivery of babies.⁷⁷ Their skills are acquired through traditional training and passed onto the next generation. Their role includes preparing pregnant mothers for birth by expanding the birth passage and providing charms and amulets which protect newly born babies from evil charms which are carried in public places.⁷⁸ This midwifery role in the AFMZ is practised by the elderly women who are usually wives of elders of the church

⁷⁴ Lewis H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 334.

⁷⁵ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 334.

⁷⁶ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 168.

⁷⁷ Gunda, “Christianity, Traditional Religion, and Healing in Zimbabwe,” 235.

⁷⁸ Gunda, “Christianity, Traditional Religion, and Healing in Zimbabwe,” 236.

mainly in rural areas where access to Western medical healthcare facilities is in scarcity. It is observed that although the Shona traditional community has a patriarchal bias, birthing and early child raising are the responsibility of women, hence their greater attachment to the children.

In sum, it has been observed that Shona cosmology is multi-faceted, with God as the Supreme Being, below whom are both benevolent and malevolent spirits, and human beings operating as the mediums of the spiritual forces and powers. This spirit-repleted structure induces fear or reverence, love or hate amongst the Shona people. The Shona people are part of the Bantu and have clearly defined cultural traditions and values which are based on communal living, under which the extended family is central to kinship. To enhance protection from evil forces, Shona life is a sum of rituals, practices, and beliefs from birth to death and life beyond death. Prominent among these multiple rituals, is the marriage and death rituals, the reality of which African Pentecostals have dealt with in their missional agenda. In this context, the traditional healer is the kingpin of the Shona society (though there are other practitioners), with the multi-faceted role of addressing the African realities of pain and suffering yet in some cases, causing harm. It shall be argued that AFMZ practitioners adopt and adapt certain Shona cultural traits continuous with their Pentecostal Christian faith to address African realities of pain, poverty, and misfortunes.

3.2 Comparison of ATR and the supernatural in scripture

Having tabulated the worldview of African/Shona traditional religion and culture, a context in which the AFMZ operates as one of the most successful Pentecostal churches, it is prudent to briefly analyse those sections of scriptures which demonstrate a certain cosmology akin to African spirituality. I argue that such similarities (especially belief in the existence of

benevolent and malevolent spirits which is also witnessed in the scriptures) could have influenced the Shona people to embrace Pentecostalism to a point of making it their homegrown spirituality. This section sheds light on how African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand deliberately use such scriptures as they counter evil spirits in their daily lives. Such a balanced stance where traditional views of the supernatural are understood and resolved from a scriptural point of view assures African Christians of safety in the new Faith.

Oluikpe defines the term “worldview” as, “[a] set of assumptions that influences how people interpret the world and how they answer the most important questions of life such as where did we come from? How should we live and where are we going?”⁷⁹ Kalu expands the understanding of worldview, “as a picture that points to the deep-level assumptions and values based on which people generate surface-level behaviour; it provides the motivation for behaviour and gives meaning to the environment. Like the rest of culture, it is inherited unconsciously but deliberately transmitted.”⁸⁰ A person’s interpretation of reality, day to day experiences (including religious experience) and destiny is directly influenced by the assumptions and values which one inherits in each context. The Shona brand inherited or received both the Pentecostal gospel and the Pentecostal understanding of scriptures from Pentecostal missionaries and they indigenised the foreign through the eye of the local context.

There is a shared belief in the existence of benevolent and malevolent spirits i.e., in the Shona cosmology, ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*), tribal spirits (*mhondoro*) and some roaming spirits (*mashavi*) are believed to be benevolent whilst other roaming spirits (*mashavi*) and avenging spirits (*ngozi*) are deemed to be malevolent. In the Shona experience, members of

⁷⁹ Ikechuku Michael Oluikpe, “Beyond Science: A look at the Biblical Christian view of the Supernatural,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 28, no. 2 (2019): 193.

⁸⁰ Ogbu Kalu, “Sankofa: Pentecostalism and Cultural Heritage,” in *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Context*, ed. Velli-Matti Karkkainen (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 140.

the family or clan must regularly appease benevolent spirits in search of protection against malevolent spirits. When such people embrace Pentecostal Christianity, they do so on the backdrop that the new religion will offer better protection or see similarities in the two religions especially on the role of practitioners and spiritual beings.

In Christianity as understood by AFMZ adherents, angels are believed to be benevolent while Satan and his demons or evil spirits are considered as malevolent. These benevolent divine beings (angels) in scripture are functionally called messengers of YHWH and sometimes depicted as “mysterious men” in the Patriarchal narratives.⁸¹ Angels are generally responsible for delivering “divine messages” (1Kings 13:18, Galatians 3:19, Hebrews 1:14) and protecting or guarding the saints (Genesis 24:7, Exodus 14:19, Psalm 91:11-13, Matthew 18:10, Acts 5:19). They can unveil God’s plan for salvation (Luke 1:19-20, 26-39).⁸² Angels also serve as guardians of churches and individuals (Numbers 11, Revelation 2-3)⁸³ and in some instances, they appear as the army of YHWH (Joshua 5:13) or members of the “heavenly council.”⁸⁴ In the Shona context, ancestral spirits besides being guardians or protectors of families, they also play a mediatory role between God (*Mwari*) and people. African Pentecostals give high value to angelic protection through the power of the Holy Spirit. Oluikpe argues further that angels primarily exist to praise and serve YHWH in heaven (Psalm 148:2, Revelation 5:11-12) and also make errands of “divine mission” on earth, where they may manifest in human form (Genesis 18:1-33, 19:1-38, Hebrews 13:2) of whom angel Gabriel is specifically named as a messenger-type of angel.⁸⁵ It is not uncommon

⁸¹ Matthias Kockert, “Divine Messengers and Mysterious Men in the Patriarchal Narratives of the Book of Genesis,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings-Origins, Development and Reception*, eds. Friedrich V. Reiterer et al (Berlin: De Gruyter Inc, 2006), 51.

⁸² Hans Moscieke, “Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews of the Bible, African Traditional Religion and African Christianity,” *Journal of Missiology* 45, no. 2 (2017): 138.

⁸³ Moscieke, “Reconciling the supernatural worldviews,” 139.

⁸⁴ Kockert, “Divine Messengers and Mysterious Men,” 52–55.

⁸⁵ Oluikpe, “Beyond Science,” 196.

to find African Pentecostal practitioners claiming angelic visitations to authenticate their call to Christian service.

The concept of a polished theology or doctrine of “Satan” who acts as an anti-figure to YHWH (Isaiah 10:5-15, 14:4-21, Ezekiel 38:1-39:22, Nahum 1:11-14) originates (according to Christian dogma) from a rebellion purported to have taken place in YHWH’s divine family or heavenly council when Lucifer, a leading member of the council attempted to usurp the glory of YHWH for himself (Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:11-15).⁸⁶ This cosmic drama of rebellion involved a cluster of angels who were influenced by Lucifer and became “fallen angels” after being thrown out of heaven, at which juncture Lucifer became known as Satan or the devil (Revelation 12:7-9).⁸⁷ The event drew clear demarcations between YHWH and the good angels on the side of good and Satan (Lucifer) and the fallen angels who were subsequently labelled “demons or evil spirits” representing evil and serving as agents of Satan to unleash evil in the natural world.⁸⁸

Satan, in the AFMZ community is perceived as the “mastermind” of all evil on earth and operates under titles such as the devil (Acts 10:38, 13:10), the great dragon (Revelation 12:9, 20:2), the tempter (1Thessalonians 3:5), the serpent (2Corinthians 11:3), the god of this world (2Corinthians 4:4), the prince and ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), the enemy (1Timothy 5:14), the evil one (2Thessalonians 3:3, Ephesians 6:10), and the commander of the host of evil angels (Revelation 12:7-9).⁸⁹ Satan is further responsible for the human propensity to sin and all moral decadence, as exemplified in Judas Iscariot who was used as a tool by the devil.⁹⁰ African Pentecostals embrace a world full of evil spirits and categorise all spirits (benevolent and malevolent) in Shona cosmology as demons or evil spirits

⁸⁶ Moscicke, “Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews,” 136–37.

⁸⁷ Oluikpe, “Beyond Science,” 196.

⁸⁸ Oluikpe, “Beyond Science,” 196.

⁸⁹ Oluikpe, “Beyond Science,” 196.

⁹⁰ Derek R. Brown, “The Devil in the details: A Survey of Research on Satan in Biblical Studies,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 9, no. 2 (2011): 211.

masquerading as ancestral spirits and must be exorcised by those who are baptised by the Holy Spirit. This militant struggle with the spirit-filled world developed a certain kind of spiritual disposition and attitude which Africans carry into Pentecostalism which manifests as “warfare praying”. Whilst warfare prayers are beneficial to counter malevolent spirits, African Pentecostals are reminded to balance countering spirits with encountering God through the Holy Spirit which is a key characteristic of Pentecostal spirituality. The continuity and discontinuity debate shall help us to appreciate the reciprocal relationship that exists between ATR and AFMZ out of which comes the theology of experience as a biproduct.

3.3 The Continuity and Discontinuity debate in African Pentecostal Discourse

The African Pentecostal discourse (APD) is a discursive conversation about key aspects that shape indigenous Pentecostal Christianity which has thrived phenomenally in a context dominated by African traditional beliefs, practices, and rituals, making the global south the new centre of Christianity. The main subject matter is about understanding how Africans have managed to maintain their cultural identity or Africanness but at the same time indigenising Pentecostal Christianity to be something relevant to Africans by way of sifting what is continuous and discontinuous with Christianity. Both critics and sympathisers are participants in the APD. Scholars like Walter Hollenwegger, Allan Anderson, Ogbu Kalu, Francis Machingura, Marius Nel, Simon Degbe, Kwabena Asmoah-Gyadu, Nimi Wariboko and many others have made immense contributions to the APD. Whilst the Shona culture is the context in which the theology of experience of the AFMZ is analysed, the views of African scholars from other countries like Nigeria and Ghana address similar African realities which are viewed with the common perspective of mystical causality. The continuity and

discontinuity debate in APD therefore, accounts for the continuing interplay between ATR and Pentecostal Christianity in shaping the theology of experience in African Pentecostalism. This is where there is divergence between European centred views on experience viz-a-vis African scholarship due to contextual differences. European views are shaped by Enlightenment perspectives which view reality with the eye of rationality, whilst African scholarship appreciates the African enchanted worldview where mystical causality is embraced *voetstoots*.

Put in the context of the theology of experience in the AFMZ, the APD of continuity and discontinuity is a conversation about the process of adopting and adapting African/Shona religio-cultural practices which are consistent with Pentecostal Christianity and rejecting what they deem to be hazardous. This has led the AFMZ to transform itself into a homegrown Christianity, as opposed to Missionary Christianity. However, some scholars of “ecclesial externality” like Paul Gifford strongly contend that Pentecostalism was transplanted as a full package from the United States of America (USA).⁹¹ Paul Gifford’s position easily gets challenged when analysed considering the AFMZ. The first western oriented missionaries played a great role in the inception and growth of AFMZ. In the case of the AFMZ, some of its Pentecostal shape and features may be credited to its American founders and the continuing interaction which persists due to global networks which are driven by technology and media platforms. Although the AFMZ as a classical Pentecostal church has American roots, linkages, and “internal particularities”⁹² it is the initial efforts of African agents and the latter work of the trained indigenous clergy which arguably contributed to the African shape of the AFMZ.

⁹¹ Afe Adogame, “Reconfiguring the Global Religious Economy: The Role of African Pentecostalism,” in *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism*, eds. Donald E. Miller, et al (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013), 186.

⁹² Adogame, “Reconfiguring the Global Religious Economy,” 188.

The first attempt to plant Christianity in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) was made by the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries like Goncalo da Silveira who converted Negomo the young Monomatapa to Christianity, an experience which was short-lived as he reverted back to ATR at the instigation of Muslim emissaries who further influenced Negomo to kill Father Goncalo da Silveira in 1560.⁹³ Due to the martyrdom of Father Silveira efforts to evangelise the Monomatapa kingdom were short-lived and did not yield lasting results. In the nineteenth century however, various missionary organisations made meaningful inroads into missionary work.⁹⁴

The first nineteenth century missionary group to arrive in Rhodesia which would later become Zimbabwe in 1859 was the London Missionary Society (LMS) led by Robert Moffat, John Moffat, and David Livingstone. They are considered to be the first people of European descent to settle among the Ndebele people where they founded the first mission station known as Inyati mission.⁹⁵ These were followed by the Roman Catholics, Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans and many others.⁹⁶ The arrival of missionaries coincided with the coming of the British colonial group known as the “Pioneer Column” which was sponsored by Cecil John Rhodes (after whom the country of Rhodesia would be named).⁹⁷ Rhodes’ dream was to bring British rule without engaging in military conquest but through commercial means using the British South Africa company to seek for a “concession” granting him the right to mine for gold and other minerals from Lobengula, king of the Ndebele kingdom which at that time extended to Mashonaland.⁹⁸ Rhodes made a clandestine “treaty of friendship” with Lobengula, through the assistance of Reverend Helm

⁹³ Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd, 1977), 11–12.

⁹⁴ Alois S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 97.

⁹⁵ T.G. Standing, *A Short History of Rhodesia and her neighbours* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1935), 41.

⁹⁶ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 98.

⁹⁷ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 30.

⁹⁸ Standing, *A Short History of Rhodesia and her neighbours*, 53–58.

of the London Missionary Society (LMS). The official signatories to this concession were C.D. Rudd, R. Maguire, F.R. Thompson and Lobengula on 30th October 1888 leading to the “Pioneer Column” migrating to “Fort Salisbury” (now Harare and capital city of Zimbabwe) on 12th September 1890 and Matabeleland and Mashonaland officially becoming a country called Rhodesia in 1895.⁹⁹ The treaty, known as the Rudd Concession, conferred mining rights on Rhodes, which were later expanded to include land rights, paving the way for colonialism.¹⁰⁰

From the onset, therefore, missionaries, “wittingly or unwittingly” became part of the colonial discourse¹⁰¹ of “othering others” which Mudimbe calls the discourse of “African primitiveness.”¹⁰² Maxwell and Harris point out that missionaries were accused to be complicit in the colonial discourse due to the way they undermined indigenous cultures.¹⁰³ The purpose of the colonial discourse was to “invent Africa” with Western epistemes.¹⁰⁴ Like all other colonialists, the British (together with the missionaries) regarded themselves as superior, civilised and modern, in comparison to Africans whom they regarded as inferior, uncivilised and in need of help through the civilising, commercialising and Christianising project so as to “improve African social conditions.”¹⁰⁵ In the context of the colonial project, the missionary discourse degraded African identity, culture, religion, value systems and health delivery systems as “barbaric,” pagan, sorcerous and demonic hence their concerted efforts to evangelise “pagan primitives.”¹⁰⁶ Christian conversion was therefore to be both cultural and religious.¹⁰⁷ The Africans had to experience Christian spirituality via embracing

⁹⁹ Standing, *A Short History of Rhodesia and her neighbours*, 58,67,91.

¹⁰⁰ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 38.

¹⁰¹ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 98.

¹⁰² Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 1.

¹⁰³ Harris and Maxwell eds. *The Spiritual in the Secular*, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 331.

¹⁰⁶ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 332.

¹⁰⁷ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 98–99.

European culture and abandoning their African cultural heritage. This belief led to the establishment of mission schools which were intended to enlighten the African mind, and hospitals which would replace the traditional health system.¹⁰⁸ The settler government's educational and medical agenda was done on the backdrop of freeing the uneducated "natives" from their beliefs in spirits and "witch doctors" now better known as traditional healers.¹⁰⁹ The coming of colonialism had a serious impact on the religio-political, cultural and economic context of the Shona people. However, this did not wholesomely dislodge the indigenous Shona people particularly their religious and spiritual disposition.

The AFMZ was initially planted (from 1913) by migrant workers of Malawian and Zimbabwean origins who encountered Pentecostal Christianity as noted earlier in chapter two. The White missionaries were late comers (from 1917) as they trickled into the then Rhodesia from South Africa and United States of America per the settler government requirement that mission work needed to be managed by European missionaries as the uneducated (according to Western view of education) African preachers could not be trusted to participate in its civilising, Christianising, and commercialising agenda.¹¹⁰ African preachers were suspected of having the potential to cause political unrest leading to the legislation of rules targeted to suppress "undesirable religious sects" and putting the AFMZ activities under the "watchful eye of the Rhodesian spy apparatus."¹¹¹ The indigenous religious remnants of ATR had an influence on the thinking and contact of Shona people even after converting to the different Churches that had been allowed to operate in Zimbabwe. The AFMZ together with these religious sects (now known as African Initiated Churches) were according to Maxwell, othered as syncretic movements devoid of orthodoxy

¹⁰⁸ Gunda, "Christianity, Traditional Religion, and Healing in Zimbabwe," 229.

¹⁰⁹ Standing, *A Short History of Rhodesia and her neighbours*, 181–82.

¹¹⁰ Ruzivo, "A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe," 93.

¹¹¹ Ruzivo, "A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe," 117–24.

yet they were contextualising Pentecostal Christianity to suit the African context.¹¹² The AFMZ missionaries were under duress to fight for the respectability of their Pentecostal brand of Christianity considering the negative perception of the same by settler authorities and main line churches, hence they had to exert disciplinary measures against the so-called “disorderly behaviour” of the African emissaries in order to get the church registered.¹¹³ In spite of the contemptuous treatment of AFMZ African preachers by the settler government machinery and the missionary complicity, it can be argued that the respectability agenda contributed to responsible syncretism within the AFMZ in its planting stage. This research envisages to exonerate the efforts of African emissaries during the missionary era by positing that their indigenising project is beginning to gain attention from scholars of the APD.

These missionary endeavours of main line churches and their Pentecostal counterparts birthed what may be termed “Missionary Christianity” on African soil, where this type of Christianity predictably did not however, fully appeal to the African hearts and experiences. During this period and perhaps earlier in North Africa, there were identifiable sparks of African Christianity which were labelled as heretical and syncretistic. Examples of this type of Christianity included Donatism, the Kimpa Vita movement, and African Initiated Churches (AICs) such as the Aladura, Zionists and Apostolic churches.¹¹⁴ These movements propagated Christianity which was based on pre-existing African cultural realities and cosmological perspectives¹¹⁵. Mwandayi notes that in later reflections, the Catholic Bishops of Southern Africa acknowledged that the “deep wound” of cultural ostracization and demonization of African culture perpetuated by the missionary discourse required healing.¹¹⁶ The process of healing through the inculturation project has been viewed as another version

¹¹² Maxwell, “Historicising Christian Independency,” 253.

¹¹³ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 195–99.

¹¹⁴ Paul Kollman, “Classifying African Christianities: Past, Present and Future Part One,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 40, no. 1 (2010): 3–32.

¹¹⁵ Kollman, “Classifying African Christianities,” 14.

¹¹⁶ Mwandayi, *Death and After-life Rituals in the eyes of the Shona*, 24.

of the continuity and discontinuity debate from the mainline churches' point of view. Several African scholars of the mainline Church-fold like John Mbiti, Benezet Bujo, Emmanuel Martey and many others have addressed inculturation and liberation issues in African Christianity. This continuity and discontinuity debate is therefore not limited to African Pentecostals, but other mainline denominations are grappling with the same discourse, to be relevant to the African/Shona community.

L.H. Gann, a historian posits that critics of Missionary discourse blamed the “early missionaries for failing to understand their flock’s religious heritage, and for refusing to graft Christianity on existing concepts of African spirituality.”¹¹⁷ The early missionaries would have achieved more if they embraced responsible syncretism whereby, they would sift certain aspects of African cultural tangible and intangible heritage consistent with Christianity. However, Gann highlights early voices appreciative of the modern inculturation project like Father A. Burbridge, a learned Jesuit missionary who proposed the need to embrace African culture by use of “value judgments” thus differentiate what is “harmless” and “wicked.”¹¹⁸ Although the Missionary discourse has been criticised for its bias against ATR, it may be commended for adopting the Shona name of God (*Mwari*), when translating the English Bible into the Shona vernacular.¹¹⁹ In a way, this adoption served to contextualise Christianity in Africa. Asamoah-Gyadu views the Bible translation project into African languages as one which paved the way for “indigenous innovation,”¹²⁰ a concept which aimed at adapting the Christian message to address matters of African concern, hence the APD.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 206.

¹¹⁸ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 328.

¹¹⁹ Marthinus L., Daneel, *The God of the Matopo Hills: An Essay on the Mwari Cult in Rhodesia* (The Hague: Moulton and Company, 1970), 15–16.

¹²⁰ Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Get up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt: Transforming Christianity into a Non-Western Religion in Africa,” *International Review of Missions*, World Council of Churches, (2011): 337–54.

¹²¹ Isabel Mukonyora, “Commentary on Volz, Houle, Stoner-Eby, Urban-Mead,” in Volz et al, “Inventing Orthodoxy: African Shaping of Mission Christianity during the Colonial era,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 38, no. 2 (2008): 247–51.

The continuity and discontinuity debate may be better understood if the concept of syncretism is revisited. The semantic origins of syncretism derive from the ancient Greek prefix *syn* meaning “with” and *krasis*, “mixture” and when combined *syngkrasis*, “a mixing together.”¹²² This means that wherever there is cultural or religious interaction, this mixing together or “creative borrowing” is an unavoidable reality.¹²³ Hence Allan Anderson proposes “responsible syncretism” in these “creative adaptations” in the continuity and discontinuity debate.¹²⁴ Syncretism must not be negatively understood or misconstrued as bad. It can be helpful in the growth of Christianity as in the case of some African indigenous churches and Pentecostal churches as in the case of AFMZ.

The term syncretism may be impugned as an adulterated word, and one loaded with implications of impurity, contamination and inauthenticity.¹²⁵ In this context syncretism is perceived to be a concoction of “incompatible traditions” of African religion (which is pagan, fetish, demonic, sorcerous and primitive) with the “supposedly pure” Christian religion resulting in the creation of an impure entity.¹²⁶ Both the colonial discourse and missionary discourse used this interpretation of syncretism to classify ATR and AICs’ practices as demonic and therefore, for one to become a genuine Christian, she/he needed to abandon such a culture and embrace not only the Christian message but European culture as well. Anthropologists however view syncretism differently as something “neutral” and “beneficial,” and that “syncretic processes” are a common and continuing feature wherever two or more religions or cultures interact.¹²⁷ It is the interaction between Pentecostal Christianity and Shona traditional religion and culture which has led to the making of a

¹²² Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 3.

¹²³ Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 7,69.

¹²⁴ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 195,197.

¹²⁵ Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 1,70.

¹²⁶ Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 1.

¹²⁷ Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 1–3.

homegrown African Pentecostal Christianity of the AFMZ brand. The dynamics of this interaction accounts for the theology of experience distinctive to the AFMZ.

Walter Hollenweger's contribution to APD comes from his argument that Pentecostalism worldwide must be understood as an amalgamation of "contextual spiritualities" and he applauds the so-called "third world Pentecostalism" better known as the global south for its "down-to-earth and this-worldliness," a trait which has made it to win the African community which has to deal with the enchanted world and its accompanying realities of misfortunes.¹²⁸ He cites the Azusa Street revival of 1906 under the leadership of William Seymour, an African American to conclude that the character of Pentecostalism cannot dismiss the contextual influence of "African heritage of orality."¹²⁹ The theology of experience of the AFMZ has some characteristic features of the contextual spirituality of the Shona culture and religion due to the process of adoption and adaptation to be discussed in chapter four and five. Hollenweger goes further to argue that Christianity in all its forms and shapes be it Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical or Pentecostal has "syncretic elements" and much of what we call "Christian rites and festivals" contain some aspects borrowed from the host cultures due to adaptation.¹³⁰ For Hollenweger, syncretism is an unavoidable exercise hence his outcry for "responsible syncretism" as Pentecostal Christianity in Africa rubs shoulders with ATR as a "dialogue partner."¹³¹

Allan Anderson evaluates the extent to which (African) Pentecostal experience of the Spirit tends to "unconsciously" make use of existing religious and cultural beliefs.¹³² He states, "Pentecostalism draws from these ancient sources in continuity with them, while also simultaneously confronting them in discontinuity," thus Pentecostalism finds itself embroiled

¹²⁸ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2.

¹²⁹ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 48.

¹³⁰ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 132–34.

¹³¹ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 134–35.

¹³² Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 3.

in a conundrum where it is drinking from a cistern which it deems contaminated.¹³³ He deals with this “paradox” and how it has been addressed through the process of “translation,” whereby the African spirit world was re-imaged as the realm of Satan and his evil spirits and offered a solution (deliverance) through exorcism by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁴ The emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit presented a better alternative to Africans who were already acclimatised to the spirit world. Thus, Anderson comments that, “people need power that will cater for all necessities of life and protect them from the uncertain perils of the spirit world, power that will produce a life that is full, prosperous, healthy, peaceful, and secure.”¹³⁵ This promise of power which addresses existential issues is democratically extended to everyone and not just a chosen few, unlike the glamourised position of traditional healers in African religion and culture. Apparently, African Pentecostalism is guilty of placing charismatic personalities such as prophets on a higher pedestal, as if they have privileged access to the spirit-world, unlike the rest.

Whilst Allan Anderson deals with the continuity and discontinuity debate mainly from a Southern African context, Nimi Wariboko engages the same debate in the context of Pentecostalism in Nigeria when he analyses the origins and development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. His perspective is that Nigerian Pentecostalism is deeply rooted in African cosmology and can be retrieved by analysing how Nigerian Pentecostals creatively responded to Christianity.¹³⁶ He points out that the Aladura movement and its various versions (white garment churches known for their emphasis on prayer) represents the first indigenous Pentecostal-type groups which embrace a lot of African traditional religious practices in their liturgy.¹³⁷ Adam Mohr serves to shed light on the origins of the Aladura movement when he

¹³³ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 3,5.

¹³⁴ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 175

¹³⁵ Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World*, 214–15.

¹³⁶ Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 17.

¹³⁷ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 18,20,26.

explains its shared genealogy with its sibling Zionism movement (the South African version) expounded through the teachings of John Alexander Dowie.¹³⁸ Mohr correctly observes that both the Aladura movement in West Africa and Zionism in Southern Africa utilise Dowie's teachings on divine healing and institutionalised them in the African context.¹³⁹ Wariboko and Mohr confirm what can be regarded as types of most indigenous African Pentecostal churches where ATR gives or contributes to some of their practices. Mohr traces the Dowie connection through the Philadelphia Gospel mission (started by J.T. Wilhide in 1896) which was initially affiliated with Dowie's church and later became independent but continued to embrace the healing teachings of Dowie.¹⁴⁰ In 1904 the Philadelphia Gospel Mission changed its name to Faith Tabernacle. From this American group originated the Aladura movement in the 1920s, mainly through its literature, hence the typical emphasis on divine healing and total rejection of medical healing.¹⁴¹ Most modern Nigerian Pentecostals are chagrined by how the Aladura movement overly indulges into the African past and they address them as the "Pentecostal other."¹⁴²

Wariboko correctly observes the African Pentecostal paradox of "simultaneously being inside and outside African traditional religions."¹⁴³ When inside ATR, they enculturate those cultural aspects that are consistent with Pentecostalism and when outside they demonise all the spiritual cosmology of Africans. For Wariboko, Nigerian Pentecostalism is also composed of two major characteristics of being both other-worldly (a not-of this world orientation leading to world-negation) and this-worldly (a world-affirming lifestyle).¹⁴⁴ He acknowledges the eschatological nature of "soul care" as the original thrust of the Christian

¹³⁸ Adam Mohr, "Zionism and Aladura's shared genealogy in John Alexander Dowie," *Religion* 45, no. 2 (2015): 239–51.

¹³⁹ Mohr, "Zionism and Aladura's shared genealogy in Alexander Dowie," 239–40.

¹⁴⁰ Mohr, "Zionism and Aladura's shared genealogy in John Alexander Dowie," 241.

¹⁴¹ Mohr, "Zionism and Aladura's shared genealogy in John Alexander Dowie," 245–48.

¹⁴² Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 26.

¹⁴³ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 3,26.

¹⁴⁴ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 1.

gospel, although this was later complemented by “body care” which focuses on realised eschatology, as propounded through the prosperity gospel.¹⁴⁵ This sentiment resonates with Mensa Otabil who states that, “Preachers from Africa... can no longer continue preaching an escapist pie-in-the-sky message. We cannot continue singing about flying away... whilst our people battle harsh realities of life... God created man (humans) on earth to have dominion and not to be dominated by poverty, ignorance and fear.”¹⁴⁶ Wariboko argues that these two traits (other-worldly and this-worldly) originated from the Aladura movement’s holistic approach to salvation, as incorporating both the soul (representing life hereafter) and the body in terms of good health, fertility, posterity, prosperity and long life (in the here and now).¹⁴⁷ In search of holistic life where nothing is missing and nothing is broken, Nigerian Pentecostals follow the Aladura footsteps by embracing the “imagery of God as an ever-present and problem-solving supernatural being.”¹⁴⁸ From the ensuing conversation by Wariboko, one notes that soul care is eschatological and body care manifesting as prosperity gospel depicts realised eschatology where the Pentecostal gospel addresses felt needs (soul care) and African realities of poverty and suffering (body care). These observations demonstrate the commonalities of the African experience and how Pentecostal Christianity is embraced to address the same.

In doing theology, Wariboko says that Nigerian Pentecostals use both the culturalist thesis to promote African culture and the liberation ethic to empower people to stand for their rights in life, especially in the marketplace.¹⁴⁹ This theological approach resonates with the adopting and adapting strategy by the AFMZ as we shall see in chapter four and five. In

¹⁴⁵ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 3.

¹⁴⁶ Kingsley Larbi, “African Pentecostalism in the context of Global Pentecostal Ecumenical Fraternity: Challenges and opportunities,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal studies* 24, no. 2 (2002): 138–66.

¹⁴⁷ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 25.

¹⁴⁸ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 26.

¹⁴⁹ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 3.

support of the culturalist thesis, Wariboko attributes the growth of Pentecostalism to the “home group strategy” (also known as cell/mission groups in the AFMZ) in urban areas, which is a new form of the indigenous village, a traditionally recognised space for the extended family to share life, vulnerability, and intimacy.¹⁵⁰ The liberation ethic is demonstrated through empowerment of believers to occupy public spaces politically, religiously, technologically, socially, and economically. The AFMZ’s liberation ethic is not openly pronounced due to the suppression of the African voice during the colonial period. But to date, several AFMZ members hold key posts in national politics as members of parliament with the example of Edna Madzongwe (daughter of Enoch Gwanzura one of the early African preachers) having held several government ministerial positions in the ZANU (PF) government. To date, Nelson Chamisa a pastor in the AFMZ is a leader of the largest opposition party in Zimbabwe. This empowering ethic is strategically couched in the prosperity gospel as a theology of better prospects, although this has led to a new phenomenon of religious entrepreneurship, under which some African preachers have become extremely prosperous.¹⁵¹ Wariboko laments over this “clerical indulgence” by idolised preachers who focus on “belly politics” in a context of scarcity, where unsuspecting parishioners are impoverished unawares.¹⁵² In sum, he also acknowledges the place of “spiritual warfare” as a Pentecostal practice which originates from an understanding of the dangerous nature of evil spirits and the occult in African cosmology.¹⁵³

As a classical Pentecostal church, the AFMZ experienced its own struggles at the planting stage of the church. These included the challenge of demonstrating respectability to Colonial authorities as argued earlier, who regarded the AFMZ practices of divine healing and exorcism of demons as similar to those of the derogatorily deemed “syncretistic” groups

¹⁵⁰ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 29–30.

¹⁵¹ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 27,28,35.

¹⁵² Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 55.

¹⁵³ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 35.

such as Zionist and Apostolic (sects).¹⁵⁴ This need to maintain respectability remained as the AFMZ transformed from being run by missionaries and its move from being a rural-based church into an urban-based church, and subsequently an international church operating outside the African continent in Europe, America, Australia and Asia.

Francis Machingura (argues from a linguistic point of view) that there is a similarity between being spirit-possessed in the Shona religion and being Spirit-filled in African Pentecostalism.¹⁵⁵ His view is that the Pentecostal “operational concept” of the Holy Spirit is embedded in African traditional beliefs which has led some analysts to wittingly or unwittingly conclude that Pentecostalism is participating in the rejuvenation of African spirituality.¹⁵⁶ According to Machingura, both African traditionalists and African Pentecostals acknowledge that spirit-possession and being Spirit-filled is borrowed from the Shona traditional world-view and is induced by singing, chanting and dancing, in order to manifest through “ecstatic behaviour.”¹⁵⁷ Experiential spirituality in the AFMZ is induced by singing during the praise and worship segment of Pentecostal liturgy where ecstatic encounters with God tend to take place.

The process of spirit-possession in Shona religion causes the host or spirit medium (*svikiro*) to enter an unconscious realm, whereby one loses control of their faculties and will only be told what the spirit was pronouncing through them. The concept of entering the realm of the spirit world originates from Shona religion but African Pentecostalism of the AFMZ brand considers getting into the Spirit (*kupinda mumweya*) as a conscious experience of entering another realm, on the pretext that the spirit of a Prophet is always under the control of the Prophet (1Corinthians 14:32). This idea of entering or getting into the Spirit realm in the AFMZ context is perceived to be the climax of religious experience where one soaks

¹⁵⁴ Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 70.

¹⁵⁵ Machingura, “The Shona concept of spirit possession,” 85.

¹⁵⁶ Machingura, “The Shona concept of spirit possession,” 85.

¹⁵⁷ Machingura, “The Shona concept of spirit possession,” 91–93.

herself/himself in the Holy Spirit. Unlike the Shona experience of spirit-possession, getting into the Spirit is clearly understood to be a conscious experience which is simultaneously enveloped by the Holy Spirit. Music and dance which are recognised as communication tools with the spirit world in Shona religion, have been adopted and adapted by African Pentecostals to suit their new setting of Pentecostal Christianity.¹⁵⁸ AFMZ adherents believe that a certain atmosphere must be created (which is akin to Shona religion) for people to get into the Spirit, in the same manner that the prophet Elisha required a harpist to get into the Spirit (2Kings 3:15). Machingura concludes that spirit possession in Shona religion and getting into the Spirit in African Pentecostalism (the AFMZ version) are “coincidental parallels” because African Pentecostals do not perceive themselves as people who are spirit possessed.¹⁵⁹ The exchange of religious vocabulary clearly shows the borrowings from ATR into vocabulary usage and religious understanding in the AFMZ.

Simon Degbe subscribes to the compatibility approach used by Machingura to analyse Pentecostal spirituality to which he critiques “primal orientations” tacitly depicted in African Pentecostalism. Degbe posits that whilst African Pentecostals label the generality of ATR cosmology as demonic to demonstrate discontinuity, there is an apparent exploitation of its “philosophy and worldview” in their “contextualised” proclamations and demonstrations being a tacit reflection of continuity.¹⁶⁰ From Degbe’s perspective, although African Pentecostal theology is in agreement with mainstream Christian teachings, their demonological views are partly informed by African cosmology with which they engage the African realities of ancestral curses, sicknesses and misfortunes.¹⁶¹ Degbe’s argument is that there is a reciprocity of beneficial existence between ATR and African Pentecostal

¹⁵⁸ Machingura, “The Shona concept of spirit possession,” 97.

¹⁵⁹ Machingura, “The Shona concept of spirit possession,” 97.

¹⁶⁰ Simon Kouessan Degbe, “Generational curses and the four horns: Illustrating the shape of the Primal Worldview in Contemporary African Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 23, no. 2 (October 2014): 246–65.

¹⁶¹ Degbe, “Generational curses and four horns,” 252–54.

practitioners. In that context, removal of the African traditional worldview, which is central to understanding African realities, would render the Pentecostals irrelevant and put them out of business. Similarly, ATR seems to thrive on the African demonological perspectives being propounded by African Pentecostals who are by default becoming proponents of primal spirituality.¹⁶² ATR will continue to be the Pentecostal point of reference by commission, omission, or default.

Degbe illustrates his argument by providing an analysis of the teachings of two prominent Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic preachers, namely Mensah Otobil and Duncan-Williams. He observes that whereas Otobil teaches self-development, nurturing, use of talents and gifts in order to prosper and succeed in life, Duncan-Williams emphasises the principle of sowing and reaping, spiritual warfare, breaking generational curses and declaring supernatural intervention.¹⁶³ He concludes that Otobil sounds “practical, philosophical, intellectual, and theological,” whilst Duncan-Williams sounds “mystical, spiritual, supernatural, aggressive and biblical,” thereby insinuating that less educated preachers like Duncan-Williams appear to incline themselves more into the African worldview than their educated counterparts.¹⁶⁴ He goes further to discuss Duncan-Williams’ views on “generational curses” which he (Duncan-Williams) associates with ancestral actions or failures biblically through the sin of Adam and culturally through one’s African background.¹⁶⁵ To address this conundrum Duncan-Williams proposes the application of the blood of Jesus Christ to counter curses which manipulate one’s blood-line.¹⁶⁶

Ogbu Kalu is a towering figure in the continuity and discontinuity debate in the APD. He is sympathetic with the Aladura movement which has suffered ostracization by both

¹⁶² Degbe, “Generational curses and four horns,” 251–52.

¹⁶³ Degbe, “Generational curses and the four horns,” 254.

¹⁶⁴ Degbe, “Generational curses and the four horns,” 255.

¹⁶⁵ Degbe, “Generational Curses and the Four Horns,” 255.

¹⁶⁶ Degbe, “Generational Curses and the Four Horns,” 255.

main-line church scholars and Pentecostal scholars. Kalu argues that Pentecostalism and the Aladura movement in Nigeria are “bedfellows” with “common roots” and have similarities in the way they experience pneumatic spirituality.¹⁶⁷ He views the Aladura as a movement which challenged the “muted pneumatic” elements in missionary discourse and asserts that the Pentecostals later popularised this “pneumatic dimension.”¹⁶⁸ On the African setting, Kalu posits that both movements drink from the same “wellspring of the African primal worldview” although some Pentecostals maintain the position of discontinuity, and hence demonise Aladura.¹⁶⁹ Although both movements drink from the same African well, what matters most is how they each drink, hence the importance for “responsible syncretism” being a cautious approach to adopting and adapting certain African cultural traits which are continuous with Pentecostal Christian faith whilst categorically rejecting those traits which distort Pentecostalism. It then becomes interesting in this discourse to demonstrate whether the AFMZ practises responsible syncretism in their adoption and adaptation of some Shona cultural practices deemed beneficial to Pentecostal Christianity.

Kalu pays attention to the role of Western influence on African Pentecostalism as catalyst in nature, in that it is accountable for igniting the fire, although, “the continuity in African religion, pre-Christian and Christian, is due in large measure to continuing worldviews, the application of the material of the Christian tradition to the already existing African maps of the universe.”¹⁷⁰ He further states that this continuity with African cosmology is inspired by the “kindred atmosphere” in the Old Testament which resonates with African culture.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Ogbu Kalu, “Estranged Bedfellows? The Demonisation of the Aladura in African Pentecostal rhetoric,” in Marthinus L. Daneel, ed. *African Christian Outreach Volume 1: The African Initiated Churches* (Southern African Missiological Society, 2001), 122.

¹⁶⁸ Kalu, “Estranged Bedfellows,” 122.

¹⁶⁹ Kalu, “Estranged Bedfellows,” 123.

¹⁷⁰ Kalu, “Estranged Bedfellows,” 126–28.

¹⁷¹ Kalu, “Estranged Bedfellows,” 135.

Kalu further argues that African cosmology cannot be erased from the African soul neither by formal education nor by urbanisation and migration abroad.¹⁷² His observations resonate with African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand whose cosmology could not be erased by colonial settlers and missionaries but opted to utilise such a primal spirituality to inform and shape Pentecostal spirituality in Africa. Kalu's sentiment also suggests that churches of African origins in the diaspora like the AFMIM (UK) are also conduits of the continuity of African worldviews. He posits that the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa can be accounted for by its "cultural fit" with African primal cosmology and its response to African existential questions thereof.¹⁷³ The theology of experience as a distinctive mark of Pentecostalism with the AFMZ as a case study is examined in how its adherents address existential questions pertaining African realities. For Kalu, African Pentecostalism is expressed and shaped by its dialogue with ATR, the Bible, Christian theological heritage, and contemporary culture.¹⁷⁴ On the how part, Kalu states that, "the genius of the (Pentecostal) movement lies in the degree of cultural creativity in appropriating, gestating and reconstructing the extraordinary with fresh imagination and energy."¹⁷⁵

Kalu demonstrates how African Pentecostalism can be characterised by use of a Ghanaian cultural heritage bird (well-known for its head which looks back) called *Sankofa*, a symbol which denotes the "go back and take it" or "look back and reclaim the cultural heritage" sentiment.¹⁷⁶ In this vein, African Pentecostalism, instead of deleting its African past, looks back to its African primal heritage and capitalises on areas of "resonance," in order to continue with Pentecostalism.¹⁷⁷ Kalu illustrates this phenomena with the findings of

¹⁷² Ogbu Kalu, "Sankofa: Pentecostalism and African Cultural Heritage," in Veli-Matti Karkkainen, ed. *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 135.

¹⁷³ Kalu, "Sankofa," 136.

¹⁷⁴ Kalu, "Sankofa," 136.

¹⁷⁵ Ogbu Kalu, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping of the African Religious Landscape in the 1990s," *Mission Studies* 20, no. 1 (January 2003): 106.

¹⁷⁶ Kalu, "Sankofa," 137.

¹⁷⁷ Kalu, "Sankofa," 138.

David Maxwell, who identifies the “common appeal” of the practice of exorcism to combat evil forces like witchcraft in ATR and African Pentecostalism (although Pentecostals prefer to call their practice “deliverance”).¹⁷⁸ Kalu reveals how “affliction” is a pivotal issue in both ATR and Pentecostalism and that such realities emanate from the spirit world.¹⁷⁹ The story of Moses and Pharaoh’s magicians is referred to illustrate that although religious practitioners in African religion have power like Pharaoh’s magicians who could turn their rods into snakes, as well as Moses did, Pentecostal power is far much greater.¹⁸⁰ Kalu concludes that “Pentecostalism in Africa derived its colouring from the texture of the African soil and from the interior of its idiom, nurture, and growth; its fruits serve more adequately the challenges and problems of the African ecosystem than the earlier missionary fruits.”¹⁸¹ African realities of affliction which are the subject matter needing to be addressed in ATR also turn out to be central to African Pentecostal proclamation as we shall see in chapter four and five.

Nel acknowledges that Africans live in an “intentional world” where all events of life are linked to a spiritual cause and that “pneumatic Christianity” resonates with African cosmology.¹⁸² He concurs that Western Christianity was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment worldview which dismissed the supernatural and its demonological manifestations while embracing psycho-analytic explanations to demonic phenomena.¹⁸³ Such a Western interpretation of reality, through which Western missionaries couched the Christian gospel, was not sympathetic to the existing African religious heritage. It is such a religious perspective towards spirituality that has failed to gain tract with African/Shona Pentecostal Christians on experience.

¹⁷⁸ Kalu, “Sankofa,” 138–39.

¹⁷⁹ Kalu, “Sankofa,” 142–43.

¹⁸⁰ Kalu, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping of the African Religious Landscape in the 1990s,” 84–109.

¹⁸¹ Kalu, “Sankofa,” 143.

¹⁸² Marius Nel, “The African background of Pentecostal theology: A critical perspective,” *In die Skriflig* 53, no. 4 (2019): 1–8.

¹⁸³ Nel, “The African background of Pentecostal theology,” 1.

Nel argues that the practices of deliverance and exorcism in Pentecostal churches in Africa, confirm that there are inescapable “existential challenges,” which western forms of Christianity are incapable of addressing.¹⁸⁴ He correctly observes that “intercommunion” between humans and the spirit-world is a “cardinal belief” from which Africans can never be uprooted, hence “primal spirituality shapes Pentecostal spirituality” in Africa.¹⁸⁵ The theology of experience in the AFMZ is influenced by primal spirituality. Nel goes further to state that, “Pentecostal spirituality in the non-literate cultures of the global south shares the orientation of primal religions towards the experiential, the direct involvement of the supernatural in everyday events and the potential divine transformative influence on the natural order, allowing for miracles and healings to be expected as a daily occurrence.”¹⁸⁶ It is not surprising that, AFMZ adherents perpetuate their experiential spirituality on the backdrop that the Holy Spirit is directly, holistically, and supernaturally involved in addressing African realities of pain, poverty and misfortune bedevilling African Christians.

While Nel’s assertions may be true on African Pentecostal experiential spirituality, which embraces the miracle working God in everyday life, it is arguable that he misses the point when he associates this phenomenon with the so-called “non-literate cultures” only. Nel’s argument gives the impression that African views on Pentecostal spirituality will die a natural death with the implementation of the literacy project. Africans (whether literate or otherwise) share the experiential orientation of primal religions.

Nel however correctly concludes that, “African Pentecostalism refers to the distinctive modes of being Pentecostal that have come about because of processing and assimilating some African religious and cultural values.”¹⁸⁷ Put in another way, African Pentecostal theology is a distinctive process of assimilative engagement with African

¹⁸⁴ Nel, “The African background of Pentecostal theology,” 2.

¹⁸⁵ Nel, “The African background of Pentecostal theology,” 3.

¹⁸⁶ Nel, “The African background of Pentecostal theology,” 3.

¹⁸⁷ Nel, “The African background of Pentecostal theology,” 4.

cosmology by African Pentecostal Christians, in the light of biblical Christianity. It is this “creative transformation” into an African faith¹⁸⁸ which matters most in the continuity and discontinuity debate.

Benkole Tokunbo adds to the continuity and discontinuity debate by examining how African philosophical thought has shaped the Pentecostal practices of healing, deliverance, casting out of demons and belief in spirits in Ekitiland.¹⁸⁹ He applauds Pentecostalism’s capacity to interact with African culture with a view to modifying the later for contextual relevance and meeting existential needs.¹⁹⁰ He notes that Pentecostalism’s biblical worldview and African cosmology have an affinity in their understanding, of the existence of benevolent and malevolent spirits and how these influence the livelihoods of people. As a result, healing and deliverance in Pentecostalism are conducted against the backdrop of “metaphysical causation.”¹⁹¹ Application of “metaphysical causation” in diagnosing problems originates from the African religious practices of traditional healers (*n’angas*). African Pentecostal practitioners of the AFMZ brand have also thrived by accepting the continuity of mystical causality in addressing African realities of misfortunes through healing, deliverance, and exorcism of evil spirits. Even the ritual of exorcising spirits in Pentecostal deliverance services was equivalent to the common pre-Christian practice of removing evil spirits. Notwithstanding the major difference of invoking the name of Jesus in Pentecostalism, some additives or healing techniques reflect the desire for rituals in the process of exorcism.¹⁹²

Tokunbo discusses the re-description project in African Pentecostalism, where the African world of spirits is perceived as demonic from a biblical point of view and the practice of deliverance from evil as a practical way of meeting a “felt need.”¹⁹³ This agenda of

¹⁸⁸ Nel, “The African background of Pentecostal theology,” 4.

¹⁸⁹ Tokunbo, “African factors in the metamorphosis of indigenous Pentecostalism,” 151.

¹⁹⁰ Tokunbo, “African factors in the metamorphosis of indigenous Pentecostalism,” 155.

¹⁹¹ Tokunbo, “African factors in the metamorphosis of indigenous Pentecostalism,” 156.

¹⁹² Tokunbo, “African factors in the metamorphosis of indigenous Pentecostalism,” 157.

¹⁹³ Tokunbo, “African factors in the metamorphosis of indigenous Pentecostalism,” 157.

meeting the “felt need” has become an attractive product on Africa’s religious market, with some Pentecostal practitioners passing for tourist attractions as people flock from near and far away places in search of help. Similarly, in the AFMZ conferencing at Rufaro has become a tourist attraction which draws thousands of adherents annually in search of healing, deliverance, and a word from the Lord to felt needs.

Tokunbo concludes by highlighting the impact of African music and dance in Christian worship.¹⁹⁴ The incorporation of African music and dance introduced vibrancy to worship, unlike the imported foreign hymns. This trend has led to the popularisation of gospel music in the AFMZ which uses various African genres, thus attracting the young and the old generations into Pentecostal Christianity.

Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu sets the foundation of his argument by analysing the impact of the Enlightenment on the decline of the “Christian presence” in Europe and America, communities from which missionary Christianity originated.¹⁹⁵ He correctly observes that “secularism” created a morally permissive and individualistic society, demystified the supernatural and pushed religion to become a private matter with no effect on “public affairs.”¹⁹⁶ According to Asamoah-Gyadu, this Enlightenment Christianity was too “cerebral,” and failed to touch Africans at deeper levels of spirituality, because an effective religion should revolve around the “experiential dimension.”¹⁹⁷ Cerebral type of Christianity is shunned by African/Shona Pentecostals who go for the vibrant type of Pentecostal Christianity where the emphasis is on the trans-rational experience of God; a phenomenon popular in ATR.

¹⁹⁴ Tokunbo, “African factors in the metamorphosis of indigenous Pentecostalism,” 158.

¹⁹⁵ Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt: Transforming Christianity into a Non-Western Religion in Africa,” *International Review of Missions*, World Council of Churches, (2011): 337–54.

¹⁹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt,” 339, 342.

¹⁹⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt,” 340.

The story of baby Jesus' sojourn in Egypt, away from the threats of Herod, inspires Asamoah-Gyadu's argument that Africa is now the "flag bearer and preserver" of Christianity in the epoch of secularisation.¹⁹⁸ By inference, he is implying that the movement of Christianity's centre to the global south can be equated to God's rescue plan, as what happened to baby Jesus. Concerning the story of Jesus in Egypt, he argues, "From this passage the God of mission who revealed himself in Christ gravitates towards those who are open to his presence, a presence that is experienced in the activities of the Holy Spirit."¹⁹⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu consolidates the openness and receptivity of African people to pneumatic spirituality where this trait originates from their African religious background. His view on the capacity of African Christians to transform Christianity into a non-Western religion is based on David Barret's forecast on the same point in 1970.²⁰⁰

In attempting to justify the role of Africa in preserving Christianity through the work of the Holy Spirit, Asamoah-Gyadu postulates that this is possible because of the nature of "African hospitality" which has always welcomed foreigners for time immemorial.²⁰¹ On the same note Asamoah-Gyadu acknowledges the loyal nature of Africans, to the Bible and to "indigenous religious sensibilities," leading to the proclamation of a kerygma which is rooted in Christ but related to African realities.²⁰² The sense of hospitality embedded in the African soul through Shona philosophical statements like , *muenzi haavazhi dura* (a visitor cannot consume everything in the granary) reflects that visitors are welcome in any African home and should not be treated as an inconvenience. It shall be noted in chapter four and five that the *ukochekoche* communal life is continued in the AFMZ to perpetuate the hospitable nature of African life which is supported by how the early church continued in the Apostles'

¹⁹⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, "Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt," 339.

¹⁹⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, "Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt," 339.

²⁰⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, "Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt," 340.

²⁰¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, "Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt," 342.

²⁰² Asamoah-Gyadu, "Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt," 344–45.

teaching and fellowship (Acts 2:42). Unfortunately, history records that the colonial visitor abused African hospitality by looting African resources among other things.

Asamoah-Gyadu concludes his discussion on de-westernising Christianity by citing pioneers of African theology like John Mbiti, Bolaji Idowu, Jean Marc Ela, Vincent Mulago, Benezet Bujo, Kwame Bediako and many others, as some of the first Africans to “authentically engage African concerns.”²⁰³ These scholars from mainline churches paved the way for the importance of embracing the African heritage and its contribution to the success of Christianity in Africa.

Whilst I subscribe to responsible syncretism where certain African values and practices may be continued or transformed into Pentecostal Christianity, over-tapping into ATR particularly the occultic in my view is counter-productive because one may end up being neither a Pentecostal Christian nor an African traditional practitioner. Similarly, too much dependence on Euro-American forms of Pentecostalism is equally counter-productive. The so-called prophetic movement, which is fast becoming another brand of Pentecostalism in Africa is allegedly embracing occultism and fake miracles as psychological tactics to create obsession for supernatural manifestations. Some of these so-called prophets are religious entrepreneurs or religious charlatans who have observed that money is not in the sermons but in miracles and demonstration of power. Makhado Ramabulana (a pastor who had defected from AFMSA but was later re-instated) states that he fell into a counterfeit spiritual undercover movement of the occult which operates under the banner of the prophetic in search of powers to make money.²⁰⁴ He says that he was initiated into this secret occultic group in some remote parts of Nigeria through a spiritual bath which is a kind of “juju spell” which would control all his activities.²⁰⁵ For the purposes of respectability and non-disclosure

²⁰³ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Get Up... Take the Child... and Escape to Egypt,” 344.

²⁰⁴ Makhado S. Ramabulana, *Church Mafia, Captured by Secret Powers: An Untold African Narrative* (Makhado Freedom Ramabulana, 2018), 20.

²⁰⁵ Ramabulana, *Church Mafia, Captured by Secret Powers*, 47–48.

of the source of one's powers, papas, mamas, prophets, bishops, apostles or pastors in this community, instead of using charms and spells, they have items like oil, water, rubber bands, candles and instead of real prophecy, they use divination.²⁰⁶ Whilst Ramabulana's grassroots narrative is not academically authoritative, it does shed light on the dangers of an over-syncretized African Pentecostalism.

In sum of this section, the following points reflect the major aspects of the continuity and discontinuity debate in African Pentecostalism:

1. Continuity and discontinuity are a disposition of simultaneously being inside and outside ATR, by tapping into African cosmology while confronting it at the same time, and in the process shaping African Pentecostalism into homegrown Christianity;
2. The re-description and re-imaging of the realm of the African spirit world whose power is acknowledged as that of Satan and his evil spirits, which to some extent is discontinuous with Pentecostalism;
3. Being spirit-possessed in ATR has some coincidental parallels with being Spirit filled in African Pentecostalism, hence the rejuvenation of African primal spirituality;
4. Being spirit-possessed and being Spirit-filled as an induced ecstatic experience through music and dance, characterised by an unconscious experience in ATR as opposed to its conscious nature in African Pentecostalism;
5. ATR and pneumatic Christianity's inclination to metaphysical causality of existential challenges and a common appeal for spiritual intervention, attracts the supernatural in everyday affairs;
6. The inseparability of Africans (Christian or non-Christian) from their belief in the intercommunion between humans and the spirit world has influenced Pentecostal spirituality;

²⁰⁶ Ramabulana, *Church Mafia, Captured by Secret Powers*, 51

7. Reciprocity in the beneficial coexistence between ATR and African Pentecostalism as dialogue partners promotes the continuity debate, for without its angelology and demonology, Pentecostalism will lose its relevance in Africa;
8. Classification of evil spirits using African idioms like marine spirits and use of African exorcising techniques serves to confirm the influence of African cosmology on African Pentecostalism;
9. Thriving on down-to-earth felt needs in addressing African realities of poverty, disease and misfortune also promotes the continuity debate in African Pentecostalism;
10. The ethos of African hospitality and loyalty are valuable in preserving Christianity from the threat of secularisation;
11. The culturalist thesis provides a means for tapping into African culture and the liberation ethic serves as an empowering tool in the marketplace;
12. African Pentecostalism capitalises on its resonance with African cosmology, drinking from the wellspring of primal spirituality, but this affinity for a cultural fit calls for responsible syncretism.

Conclusion

This chapter has unveiled the facets of Shona cosmology with the Supreme Being (God) at the top, followed by benevolent and malevolent spirits in the spirit world and human beings on earth. Such is the contextual spirituality within which the AFMZ operates thereby demonstrating a theology of experience reminiscent with ATR. This worldview makes Shona people to live in fear and need for mediation or protection, hence their life cycle of religious rituals from the womb to the tomb. Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand engage in various life cycle practices as we shall see in chapter four and five to meet the need for protection and countering any evil forces opposed to African people's lives and livelihoods. Traditional

healers serve as key practitioners in the Shona health delivery system and address existential problems of all kinds, both as diagnostic diviners and therapeutic herbalists. A brief comparison of the Shona version of ATR and the supernatural in scripture confirms that the existence of similar perspectives on the existence of benevolent and malevolent spirits could have contributed to the embracing of Pentecostal Christianity by the Shona people. This chapter established that scriptures acknowledge the existence of angels who are deemed to be benevolent in function and Satan and his fallen angels or evil spirits who are functionally malevolent. But Shona Pentecostals of the AFMZ view both the so-called benevolent spirits and malevolent spirits in Shona religion to be all from the demonic spirit world needing to be exorcised. A comparison of the supernatural in the two contexts has shown that there are areas of convergence and divergence, hence the acceptance of Pentecostal Christianity, especially its ability to confront the spirit world through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the continuity and discontinuity debate, it has been noted that Pentecostalism simultaneously functions inside and outside ATR, by tapping into its heritage (though they do not want to acknowledge it or to be associated with ATR because of westernisation and remnants of colonisation) and confronting it through the demonology discourse at the same time. Various scholarly views on this debate, the majority who are Africans have been discussed to clearly establish and show the rationale of the continuity and discontinuity thread in APD. The process of tapping into ATR is a form of syncretism just like other syncretic practices witnessed in other sectors of Christianity, to which the need for responsible syncretism has been proposed. Finally, the interplay between the Shona version of ATR and Pentecostal Christianity is indigenising African Pentecostal Christianity and, in the process, developing the African Pentecostal theology of experience which shall be further explored in chapter four and five.

Chapter 4: Data findings on the theology of experience in the AFMZ

In the previous chapters, a few landmarks have been made as a build-up to this current chapter. Observable pointers have emerged which contribute to our understanding of the theology of experience in the AFMZ. An analysis of social sciences' views on religious experience and that of Pentecostal scholarship in chapter one contributes to the coining of the definition of religious experience from an African Pentecostal Christian view. African Pentecostal Christian experience is defined as, “the direct experiential encounters with the triune God through the manifest localised presence of the Holy Spirit, personally or corporately, with evidential tangibles of glossolalia and other supernatural experiences, reflecting Afro-biblical ambience out of which flows their mission, kerygma and lifestyle.” This will be the working definition of religious experience in my analysis of the theology of experience as a distinctive mark of Pentecostalism with the AFMZ as a case study.

Chapter two traces the theology of experience in some historical antecedents of the Pentecostal movement which have influenced the AFMZ as an African classical Pentecostal church. Such traits like evidence-based spirituality derive from Pietism. These shall be evaluated to see how the AFMZ indigenizes both the foreign elements of Pentecostalism and local ATR traits in its spiritual experiences in the African context. The divine healing component, passed on from the Healing movement with special reference to Alexander Dowie resonates with the African community in need of a supernatural or spiritual healthcare system to replace the ATR healthcare system which is both diagnostic and therapeutic in character. The Holiness movement's emphasis on spiritual warfare shall be analysed in how the AFMZ popularises this trait as they grapple with demonology from the African setting. The missional agenda of the Azusa Street revival which led to the planting of the AFMZ on African soil, shall be analysed in how the African recipients managed to utilise indigenous

strategies for missions which are hinged on perpetuation of experiential spirituality. The planting of the AFM in South Africa and later in Zimbabwe points to the early endeavours to indigenise Pentecostal Christianity.

Chapter three analyses the relationship between African Pentecostalism, scripture and ATR and culture. The key finding being that African people live in fear of the spirit-filled world, hence the need for mediation and protection which African Pentecostalism promises to provide through the greater and superior power of the Holy Spirit. The AFMZ understanding of the supernatural in scripture and its similarity with ATR helps AFMZ adherents to counter evil spirits. The continuity and discontinuity debate which is central to APD shall be grappled with to establish how the AFMZ adopts and adapts certain Shona cultural traits in perpetuating their theology of experience.

This chapter begins with tabulating findings on surveys, followed by findings on interviews and concluding with findings from participant observation.

4.1 Findings on Surveys

For purposes of centralising communication with prospective participants for both surveys and interviews, I created a WhatsApp group of sixty participants, who were later reduced to forty-five, based on the voluntary nature of participation in the research. These participants were drawn from the AFMZ members in diaspora in the United Kingdom, USA, South Africa and the Republic of Ireland as they had better access to internet unlike their Zimbabwe based counterparts. The communication included a summary and purpose of study and accompanying consent forms. The participants on the surveys where I placed the survey links had their responses which were anonymously sent. Two sets of ten survey questions (see Appendix) were made to make each set short and quick to answer. The first set of ten survey

questions received thirty-eight responses anonymously from this WhatsApp group and the second set of ten survey questions received thirty-one responses from the same group. The following headings below are a summation of key findings from the surveys conducted without any order of questions. Those questions which address one main heading are discussed together.

4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences

The first heading and the subsequent heading were created so as to have a narrative flow of my findings. This heading is central to this study as it addresses the strategic role of the church in promoting experiential spirituality through its activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines.

The first survey question (Figure 1) in the Appendix asked the participants to show to what extent being with others at a church service or other church-related activities contributes to their spiritual experiences. The aim was to confirm the centrality of communal gatherings in the promotion of the theology of experience within the AFMZ. On the role of church activities in enhancing spiritual experiences, all the 38 respondents (100%) agreed that being with others at a church service or other church-related activities contributes to their spiritual experiences. This finding will account for the centrality of communal gatherings and how they nurture religious experiences as we shall see in the analysis.

In order to establish the composition of attendees whether it resonates with African cultural influences, the second survey question (Figure 2) in the Appendix asked if the participants have a number of their family members or relatives who are also members of the AFMZ. This aimed to establish the impact of AFMZ on families, thus account for the continuity or discontinuity of communal kinship already existent in African culture. Findings

confirmed that 36 (94.74%) out of the 38 respondents confirmed that a number of their family members or relatives are members of the AFMZ church. This also accounts for the existence of different generations within the same kinship group being members of the AFMZ church. Alternatively two respondents (5.26%) indicated that they were members without family members or relatives in the AFMZ. Analysis will also be made of how such stand-alone members are incorporated into this new communal extended family.

Survey question thirteen (Figure 13) in the Appendix went further to find out how connectedness is perceived in the AFMZ. Respondents had to demonstrate the meaning of connectedness (*ukochekeche*) considering the following options: most AFMZ members are related, most AFMZ members value connectedness in the Lord (*ukama munaShe*), most AFMZ members value African communal relations, most AFMZ members value fellowship of Saints (*kuwadzana kwaVatsvene*), and/or all of the above. The preferred option was “all of the above.” Findings showed that 12 (38.71%) of the 31 respondents opted for “all of the above.” Those who said that most AFMZ members are related were 8 (25.81%) which when added with all of the above at 38.71%, will translate to 64.52%. There was a tie on “most AFMZ members value connectedness in the Lord (*ukama munaShe*)” and “most AFMZ members value fellowship of Saints (*kuwadzana kwaVatsvene*)” with 5 (16.13%) respondents each, add 38.71% from “all of the above,” we get 54.84%. Only 1 (3.23%) respondent opted for “most AFMZ members value African communal relations,” add 38.71% representative of “all of the above” answer and you get 41.94%. This concept of connectedness (*ukochekeche*) shall be central to the making of the Spirit-connected community in my analysis of these findings in the next chapter.

To further expand on connectedness (*ukochekeche*) in the AFMZ, participants were asked to identify where communal experiences of fellowship and togetherness are practically demonstrated. Figure 14 in the Appendix had the following four options: home/cell groups,

weddings and other celebrations, funerals and memorials, and/or all of the above. The preferred answer was all of the above because all the three scenarios for gatherings demonstrate togetherness and communal experience. At all of these gatherings food and non-alcoholic drinks are served free of charge. Findings showed that 28 (90.32%) of the 31 respondents subscribed to “all of the above” option while 3 (9.68%) respondents chose home/cell groups, hence they (home/cell groups) became the most favoured place for communal fellowship and togetherness (100%). The other two options (weddings and other celebrations, as well as funerals and memorials) tied at 90.32%. In light of these findings, an attempt will be made to analyse how communal events add value to religious experience through the theme of Spirit-connected community.

Survey question three (Figure 3) in the Appendix wanted to probe further what key liturgical activities participants deemed to trigger spiritual connectivity with God or religious experience. Such liturgical activities were praise and worship, prayer and intercession, preaching and teaching of the word, and testimonies, which were set as options for respondents to show which aspect of the Pentecostal liturgy makes them feel connected to God. The preferred answer was all the above. 26 (68.42%) respondents opted for all the four options as liturgical activities which connect them with God. Praise and worship featured highly as the main source of connection with God. This confirms why most AFMZ services accommodate this communal liturgical activity which is characterised by singing, dancing and mass prayer. If we add 26 (68.42%) and 8 (21.05%) for praise and worship, this translates that 89.47% opted for praise and worship. Prayer and intercession, and preaching and teaching of the word had a tie totalling 73.68% and testimonies remained at 68.42% as represented by the “all of the above.” These liturgical triggers contribute to religious experience and collaborations.

Considering church-related activities, survey question four (Figure 4) in the Appendix further stream-lined such activities to establish how such person-centred programmes promote church participation at various levels. The aim was to assess which spiritual meetings from cell or home groups, church services and departmental meetings like ladies' union, youth, Sunday school and many others, promoted participation by church members let alone led adherents into religious experience. The preferred answer was "all of the above" in that all of the options do promote the participation of church members in various degrees. Of the 38 respondents, 22 (57.89%) agreed that all the cited spiritual programmes of the church promote participation of members. Cell groups received the highest rating for promoting participation of church members. The options of church services and departmental meetings tied with 4 (10.53%) respondents each. It shall be evaluated why cell groups as samples of communal living are highly rated in promoting participation by church members in the analysis section of this research.

The AFMZ in its infancy stages used to practice public confession of sins and public discipline of its parishioners who would have committed a gross misconduct in their Christian walk. These practices used to be done during Sunday services. Whilst public confession of sins ceased to be practiced, it is the disciplinary aspect which is still being applied in search of instilling holiness in the church. Survey question 16 (Figure 16) in the Appendix sought to establish to what extent the respondents recognise the historical existence of such practices. The question prompted a "yes" or "no" answer with "yes" as the preferred answer. Findings reflected that 30 (96.77%) of the respondents were affirmative and only one (3.23%) respondent said no.

On the backdrop AFMZ's perceived emphasis on holiness as a critical component in the theology of experience, survey question five (Figure 5) in the Appendix wanted to establish the role of church discipline in regulating Christian behaviour suitable to participate

in religious activities. The survey question sought to establish whether church discipline is viewed as an effective tool in regulating Christian behaviour. Out of the 38 respondents, 21 (55.26%) respondents were in favour of church discipline and 17 (44.74%) respondents were opposed to the view. It shall be argued that church discipline is likely to be difficult to implement fairly, due to church growth and other challenges like inter-connectedness of believers, which may cause disciplinary cases to be swept under the carpet. This issue of church discipline was further discussed during interviews to have a wider debate on this enigmatic but important aspect of the AFMZ tenets of faith.

In search of holiness and the need for public confession of sins as practiced by AFMZ in its founding stages, survey question 6 (Figure 6) in the Appendix invited respondents to show whom they would prefer to confess their sins to, whether to God, a close friend, any church leader, a believing family member or to the pastor. Confession of sins is central to the theology of experience, but public confession is no longer the norm, hence the need for workable alternatives. The results showed that 26 (68.42%) of the respondents preferred to confess their sins directly to God. 10 (26.32%) of the respondents opted to confide with their pastor. 1 (2.63%) respondent opted to confess to a close friend, whilst 1 (2.63%) respondent on the other hand opted to confess their sins to any church leader. No one opted to confess their sins to a believing family member. These findings change the whole issue of public confession to which the AFMZ originally subscribed to.

The fact that women constitute the largest group of church members at any AFMZ congregation, survey question seven (Figure 7) in the Appendix aimed to find out whether women have a proclivity to religious experience more than their male counterparts. A question was posed whether women are more prone to spiritual experiences compared to their male counterparts. This question solicited for a “yes” or “no.” Out of the 38 respondents to this question, 33 (86.84%) respondents were on the affirmative, whilst 5 (13.16%) disagreed

with the assertion. The analysis chapter will unearth whether this perspective emanates from ATR, where women tend to receive more respect from men if they are possessed by an ancestral spirit which gives them authority over men in the woman's family.

Whilst most of the AFMZ gatherings are deemed to enhance spirituality, I established that all night prayers, January ten days of prayer and fasting, and early morning prayers are placed on a higher pedestal as demonstrated in the surveys. Survey question eight (Figure 8) in the Appendix wanted to check if the respondents have participated in the above spiritual disciplines in their Christian walk. The aim was to establish the role of AFMZ spiritual disciplines in perpetuating the theology of experience. The preferred answer was "all of the above." From the 38 respondents, 32 (84.21%) of them confirmed having participated in all the three practices. Considering the "all of the above" respondents, add 7.89% all night prayers had 92.1%, thus giving it the highest ranking. In the same vein, the January 10 days fasting had 5.26% which when added to 84.21% translates to 89.47% hence second rank. Early morning prayers had 2.63% add 84.21% it comes to 86.84% which places it third in ranking. An analysis shall be made of the centrality of these spiritual disciplines in promoting religious experience.

The above spiritual disciplines are practiced considering spiritual threats AFMZ Pentecostals encounter in their daily lives. The practice of these spiritual disciplines is necessitated by the impact of the demonological views from Shona cosmology as shown by survey question 9 (Figure 9) in the Appendix, where respondents were asked whether they find demonic attacks or possession, bad luck (*munyama*), witchcraft, soul ties, and evil or ancestral spirits, as a threat to their lives. This question was raised on the backdrop that the world is filled with malevolent spirits which are a threat to human existence, hence warfare prayers (which are part of the theology of experience) to counter such spirits. Interestingly 29 (76.32%) of the 38 respondents said none of the above, that is, mystical causality is no longer

responsible for what happens in their lives. This observation shall be scrutinised in the next chapter to establish if African Pentecostal Christians settled in diaspora settings, are no longer influenced by mystical causation in Shona cosmology. However, 6 (15.79%) of the respondents confirmed that evil or ancestral spirits are a threat to their existence, whilst 3 (7.89%) of the respondents find demonic attacks or possession a threat in their lives.

Survey question ten (Figure 10) in the Appendix, probed the respondents further to locate where they experienced their greatest encounter moment or spiritual experience with God. The options were: ordinary church service, church conference, prayer retreat, personal devotions, or crusades. The aim was to find out whether spiritual encounters with God also happen during personal devotions. The findings were that 20 (52.63%) out of 38 respondents had their greatest spiritual experience during their personal devotions. These were followed by 9 (23.68%) respondents who had their greatest spiritual experience during an ordinary church service. The last three options namely: church conference, prayer retreat and a crusade had 3 (7.89%) respondents each.

4.1.2 The role of slogans, terminologies, worldviews, and adaptations in the theology of experience

This section aims to establish how certain terminologies used within the AFMZ circles contributes to their theology of experience. It further checks the place of the African/Shona worldview, and how the process of adaptation impacts the religious experience of the AFMZ parishioners.

One of the key slogans to register one's arrival at someone's homestead is to shout the shalom or peace salutation (*rugare*). Survey question eleven (Figure 11) in the Appendix, sought to investigate whether parishioners use a particular salutation when visiting other people at their homes. The shalom or peace salutation (*rugare*) was the preferred term. All

the 31 (100%) respondents subscribed to the shalom or peace salutation (*rugare*) with nothing for (*tisvikewo*) a Shona arrival salutation or (*vepano*) an alternative Shona arrival salutation. Its common practise among AFMZ adherents that only those who arrive with a peace greeting will not get into any social conversation before praying. The shalom or peace salutation (*rugare*) must usually get (*ngaruwande*) acknowledgement of abundant peace response which leads the visitor/s and the host/s to sing a song with accompanying mass prayer after which people can then traditionally shake hands and interact. This peace greeting shall be analysed to establish its contribution to religious experience in home settings.

There are common linguistic terms used by AFMZ members when casting out demons and evil spirits in their deliverance sessions which is an aspect of the theology of experience. Casting out of demons and evil spirits is done whenever and wherever such spirits manifest, be it in a church service, home group, departmental gathering, and many others. Respondents to survey question twelve (Figure 12) in the Appendix were expected to identify common terms used when casting out evil spirits, among AFMZ Shona speaking members. The two statements which are used in casting out demons and evil spirits are come out Satan in the name of Jesus (*buda Satani nezita raJesus*) and cry out and go (*chema uende*) as a new religious term which is gaining popularity in its usage. The preferred answer was 'all of the above'. 21 (67.74%) respondents were more at home with come out Satan in the name of Jesus (*buda satani nezita raJesus*) and 1 respondent (3.23%) subscribed to cry out and go (*chema uende*). 9 (29.03%) opted for all the above which culminates with the statement come out Satan in the name of Jesus with 96.77% and cry out and go with 32.26%.

One of the key terminologies which AFMZ members use to explain the process of religious experience is known as entering the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*). This phenomenon is expected to happen when certain hymns or spiritual songs are sung. The biblical equivalent is when prophet Elisha had the assistance of a harpist for the Spirit of the

Lord to come upon him (2 Kings 3:15). As reflected in survey question 15 (Figure 15) in the Appendix, participants were invited to indicate whether they understood the meaning of entering the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*) denoting getting into the presence of God. This is a common AFMZ term denoting encountering God in the spiritual realm dubbed as the theology of experience. The options were: entering a spiritual realm where you feel the presence of God, preparatory worship through songs to create a spiritual atmosphere, a special connection with God by intense prayer, and/or all the above. The preferred answer was all the above, as contributing to our understanding of encountering God through entering the realm of religious experience. Of the 31 respondents, 19 (61.29%) agreed with all the above. 8 (25.81%) respondents chose the first option of entering a spiritual realm whereby you feel the presence of God. The second option (preparatory worship through songs to create a spiritual atmosphere) and the third option (a special connection with God by intense prayer) obtained 2 (6.45%) responses each. Overall, the first option obtained 87.1%, whilst the second and third options garnered 67.74% when the ‘all of the above’ component is added. This entering the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*) statement will be analysed as a commonly used trigger for religious experience.

Survey question 17 (Figure 17) in the Appendix sought to establish whether African background shapes one’s worldview and spirituality. The preferred answer was ‘Yes’, in line with my argument that religious experience is shaped by one’s background and worldview. Findings confirmed that 29 (93.55%) of the respondents affirmed that their African background shapes their worldview and spirituality. Only 2 (6.45%) respondents said no to the assertion. The next chapter shall analyse what aspects of African spirituality shape their Pentecostal Christian experience.

Survey question 18 (Figure 18) in the Appendix was intended to establish whether modern AFMZ parishioners understood the original meaning of all night prayers, to establish

the historical importance and connection of this practice in as far as it contributes to religious experience of the AFMZ parishioners. From the following choices: early morning prayers (*rumuko*), (*masowe*) another term for early morning prayers, or none of the above, and all-night vigils (*pungwe*) was the preferred answer. This term was originally used by Shona people for the purpose of appeasing spirits in their traditional all-night vigils. It was noted that 27 (87.10%) affirmed the term *pungwe*. Early morning prayers (*Rumuko*) had no responses. Another term for early morning prayers done in a bush or mountain (*masowe*) received 2 (6.45%) responses while 2 (6.45%) respondents opted for none of the above.

Prayer rituals for the sick (*kushandirwa*) is a term used by Apostolic type African Initiated Churches (AICs) but is slowly being embraced by the AFMZ members for the same purposes. The statement “In the AFMZ, addressing existential issues such as prayers for the sick is sometimes called *kushandirwa*” for survey question 19 (Figure 19) in the Appendix, aimed to establish whether prayer rituals for the sick (*kushandirwa*) is a term acceptable in the AFMZ. The preferred answer was “No.” 21 (67.74%) of the respondents rejected this term, whilst 10 (32.26%) respondents were on the affirmative. An analysis shall be made to ascertain how the AFMZ borrows certain practices from other African churches.

The reality of adaptation and modernisation to keep up with the times is assumed in most organisations which want to maintain their experiential spirituality to remain relevant. AFMZ is one such example of a church which is slowly adapting and modernising itself. Survey question 20 (Figure 20) in the Appendix aimed to establish whether the respondents agreed with the assertion that AFMZ is a slowly adapting and modernising church. The preferred answer was “Yes.” 30 (96.77%) concurred with the assertion, whilst 1 (3.23%) of the respondents disagreed. Details of findings to this question during interviews sheds light and provides specific examples of such adaptations and modernising agenda.

Based upon the findings from the surveys, it is noted that the theology of experience of the AFMZ is mainly triggered by its emphasis on communal prayers, praise and worship and preaching of the Word as a Spirit-connected community. The need for holiness has also been observed to be a pre-requisite for one to encounter God. Calendared activities like all night prayers, January ten days of prayer and fasting and early morning prayers were singled out as opportune times geared to enhance experiential spirituality. This section further established that entering the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*) demonstrates the AFMZ's understanding of encountering God and that their African spiritual heritage is a well upon which African Pentecostals adapt and adopt those traits which are consistent with Pentecostal Christianity.

4.2 Findings from interviews

The interviews as reflected by the interview questions were designed to get the views of individual members of the AFMZ in diaspora (with a few from Zimbabwe due to the challenge of internet access) according to their rank and file on their perception of the theology of experience and how it has impacted their experiential spirituality. Some of the questions were crafted to get more details to enlarge what the surveys pointed to.

The original intention was to conduct surveys, interviews and participant observation in Zimbabwe, a context in which experiential spirituality takes place within the Shona religio-cultural setting considering the primal enchanted world. The fieldwork in Zimbabwe was hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic as mentioned earlier. The AFMZ diaspora members and leaders became the alternative as they have a clear understanding and appreciation of their AFMZ heritage.

Out of thirty-three interviewees, eight were women. More women could have been ideally interviewed for gender-balance but the AFMZ system of governance is male-dominated, hence most of the interviewees were men. Furthermore, some of the selected women were not forthcoming, probably due to cultural barriers which do not encourage private conversations between married women and other men. I provided reassurances and explained the need for the women's voice to be represented in my research. The women who were interviewed ranged from thirty-five years to sixty-six years and included a pastor, four deaconesses, two ordinary church members, and a Bible college student.

The male participants were selected from some key leaders, pastors, elders, deacons, ordinary members, and Bible college students, ranging from thirty years to seventy-four years of age. Such a wide spectrum of interviewees was intentionally designed to accommodate views across different groups in the AFMZ. Due to differing work schedules, four participants opted to provide audio recordings of their responses to the questions, whilst three respondents opted to make written responses. Although I respected their choice of the mode of participation in my research, I lost the opportunity to probe further on points of interest.

Prior to the interviews, consent forms were completed and signed by the participants and their witnesses. A copy of the purpose of research was also availed to all participants. Eventually only thirty-three of the forty-five prospective participants were interviewed due to time constraints and the eventual saturation point. However, confidentiality was maintained in the reports and findings by giving pseudonyms or code names where their views are going to be quoted.¹

I recorded and transcribed all the interviews, to refresh my memory concerning the research project. During this process, I noted themes which emerged from the questions as listed below. In line with the research topic on the theology of experience as a distinctive

¹ Bremborg, "Interviewing," 320.

mark of African Pentecostalism with AFMZ as a case study and in support of the surveys carried out, semi-structured interviews were conducted. These were to ascertain the centrality of the Holy Spirit in the experiential spirituality of AFMZ Pentecostal believers which encompasses glossolalia and other experiences. The interviewees' understanding of the impact of AFMZ doctrines and practices in their religious experiences were further probed, including whether the AFMZ's adaptation and modernisation agenda is in sync with its theology of experience. The following interview questions were raised as a way of ordering data presentation:

1. Have you ever had an experience of emotional and spiritual intensity? Explain.
2. What are your views on baptism of the Holy Spirit from your personal experience and how does that differ from spirit possession in African Traditional Religion?
3. What are your views on healing, miracles, and demonstration of power and what value does this add to spirituality?
4. What do you consider to be the distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ?
5. What events on the church calendar promotes experiential spirituality?
6. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues?
7. Describe how the AFMZ is slowly adapting and modernising itself.
8. What is the place of church discipline in spiritual growth and are privately confessed sins or failings subject to public discipline?

These thirty-three interviewees were conducted from the 1st of December 2020 to 30th April 2021. Out of the thirty-three respondents, three opted to give written responses and four preferred to make personal audio recordings of their responses to the interview questions as stated earlier. The remaining twenty-six were formally interviewed by telephone, whilst being recorded using the Otter app which also assisted with transcribing. The other four audio recordings were also saved and transcribed on the same Otter app. However, the Otter app

transcribing was very poor, perhaps due to the Zimbabwean accent of the English language. Despite this shortcoming, I was able to understand the interviewees' accent. Question six did not get responses from six participants. Four participants did not answer question seven, whilst eight did not respond to question eight. The participants could have had their own reasons for not answering the said questions, but I had assured them in the participant consent form that they were free not to answer certain questions they were not comfortable to tackle.

4.2.1 Spiritual experiences

This theme wanted to establish whether the respondents had memorable spiritual experiences which are the central focus of this study and invite them to give a brief description of one or two of them. Some of the data derived from the interviews were also quantified. Thirty-two respondents (96.96%) clearly acknowledged the existence of multiple religious experiences and encounters in their lives, which they seemed to treasure and were willing to testify about. It is noted that some of the major experiences the participants had occurred in either their prayer closets, during sleep or while at church gatherings.

Nine participants claimed that they had encounters with God through dreams, visions, angelic visitations, and enveloping epiphanies, as well as airborne experiences. Baptism in the Holy Spirit through laying on of hands with the evidence of speaking in tongues and leading to uncontrollable crying and sobbing was cited as one of the first major encounters to six of the participants interviewed. Nyaradzo Ruzive (not her real name. A lady seminarian) had this to say about her first spiritual encounter, "When I was eighteen years old, I sceptically responded to a Spirit baptism altar call only to be enveloped by the Holy Spirit. I felt like I was being touched by electrical power, and I found myself sobbing uncontrollably

and speaking in tongues.”² Being slain in the Spirit or falling under the power of the Holy Spirit was noted by five respondents as a common experience during church services, especially after an altar call to that effect. Ten participants had their first experiential encounter with God through the powerful preaching of the word which led them to the salvation experience. Pastor Kureva Zvarebwa (a senior pastor. Not his real name) claimed to have had a similar experience like that of the gentiles in Cornelius’ house, who had the double experience of salvation and Spirit baptism at the same time, with baptism in the Spirit preceding water baptism (Acts 10:44-46).³

Miraculous healings and deliverance from sinful habits like smoking and drinking beer were highlighted by five participants, as moments of encounter with God. These came as a response to altar calls, resulting in overwhelming, joyous, and exciting encounters with God. Special religious activities like prayer and fasting, intercession prayers and worship were strongly associated with spiritual encounters by eight of the participants, who found those sessions heart-warming and soothing to the soul. These observations resonate with survey question three (Figure 3) in the Appendix which confirmed liturgical activities like prayer, fasting, intercession as well as praise and worship to be triggers to spiritual connection with God. A major highlight is the experience of Taurai Tinzwe (Male seminarian. Not his real name) who had a feeling of being blown by the Spirit, just like a car passing through a windy area getting blown away.⁴ One of the pastors interviewed testified of his call to Christian service encounter where he experienced a gentle rebuke from God whilst making a bargaining prayer. Whilst another of the respondents, had intense spiritual experiences of God’s anointing while he was preaching at several occasions. Coincidentally, whilst survey question three noted preaching and teaching of the Word as a trigger to the

² Nyaradzo Ruzive, “Spiritual experiences,” interview by Ranganai Chipere. April 10, 2021. Audio, 2:25 Otter.

³ Kureva Zvarebwa, “Spiritual experiences,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. February 16, 2021. Audio, 3:15 Otter.

⁴ Taurai Tinzwe, “Spiritual experiences,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. April 2, 2021. Audio, 1:56 Otter.

religious experience of the congregants, here we note that even the one who is preaching also got an intense experience of God's anointing too.

One of the participants had a feeling of God speaking directly to him, leading him to burst into worship. A prayer of lament by one of the participants culminated in an encounter with God while another participant had a rare experience whereby in a rage of anger, he found himself speaking in tongues. Another rare experience related to John Nyamatanda (An elder. Not his real name) at Rufaro conference, who felt prompted to give a large sum of money to a stranger, only to receive an overwhelming business opportunity thereafter. He had this to say, "During worship, I was praying in the Spirit with my eyes closed but the Spirit told me to open my eyes and I saw this poor old lady in the crowd, and I was prompted to give her some money."⁵ Non-stop prayers and singing in tongues, either in prayer closets or on long journeys by road or by air were chronicled as encounter moments by four participants. One participant had a feeling of a cloud of God's presence, whilst another, encountered God through a word of prophecy which came to confirm a specific need in their life.

4.2.2 Spirit-baptism versus spirit-possession

Participants were invited to explain their understanding of the Holy Spirit and how this differs with spirit-possession in ATR. This question was raised on the backdrop of the existence of parallel experiences to Spirit-baptism in ATR such as spirit-possession. On the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there was consensus among twenty-nine participants that this is a distinct experience which ordinarily happens after the experience of salvation, and this comes with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Thirty-one participants dissociated baptism in the

⁵ John Nyamatanda, "Spiritual experiences," Interview by Ranganai Chipere. March 15, 2021. Audio, 2:26 Otter.

Spirit from spirit-possession in ATR in that Spirit-baptism is a conscious experience where you are in control of your will, whilst spirit-possession is an unconscious experience with no will power. It was noted by five participants that Spirit-baptism is not a one-off event but the beginning of journeying in the Spirit, whereby one is continually filled with the Spirit. These continual spiritual encounters after Spirit baptism were confirmed by survey question 15 (Figure 15) in the Appendix which confirmed that entering the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*) is a distinctive AFMZ way of continually perpetuating the theology of experience. In comparison with spirit-possession in ATR, Spirit-filled life is a present continuous experience where the Spirit in-dwells in the believer, whilst spirit-possession manifests seasonally, meaning that spirits come and go. For spirit-possession to occur, four participants said that meticulous traditional ceremonies must be done, whereas being Spirit-filled only requires prayer and can be experienced individually. In terms of sources, four participants noted that the Holy Spirit is from God and spirits (evil spirits) are from Satan. This resonates with how African Pentecostalism has demonised the African spirit world as observed in chapter three. In Spirit-baptism, twenty participants argued that the spirit of a prophet is under the control of the prophet, but with spirit-possession, the host is totally out of control, hence the bondage of possession. Furthermore, twelve participants pointed out that the Holy Spirit is gentle, orderly, relational and does not impose himself upon the host, whereas evil spirits impose themselves upon their hosts because they desire a human abode.

Nine participants said that the Holy Spirit comes to empower and energise us to serve God and worship him, but evil spirits come to disempower us. Six participants said that there is a feel factor with the Holy Spirit, whereas evil spirits have a controlling and demanding factor. Although both outwardly display ecstatic experiences as observed by one participant, spirit-possession experiences (unconscious) have a violent and uncontrollable disposition, whilst Spirit-baptism is a much more conscious and enjoyable experience. Sixteen

participants noted that with Spirit-baptism, one's mental faculties remain functional, but with spirit-possession your mental faculties are usurped. One participant observed that spirit-possession can be chaotic and harmful to the host who may display abnormal strength whilst possessed but becomes weary when the spirits depart, but Spirit-baptism is a harmless experience, and the host maintains normal strength. Four participants highlighted that the Holy Spirit comes by invitation through prayer, but evil spirits can just raid an individual's life without invitation. Overall, two participants argued that Spirit-baptism does not mean absence of the Holy Spirit in the salvation experience.

4.2.3 The place of healing, miracles, and demonstration of power

Respondents were required to indicate their views on the themes of healing, miracles, and the demonstration of power, and what value these add to religious experience. Thirty-two (96.96%) respondents affirmed the importance of healing, miracles, and demonstration of power, as beneficial to both believers and non-believers. Five of the participants expressed concern that these acts of power through the Holy Spirit have been hijacked by false African prophets (commonly addressed as charlatans) who are over-tapping into the African spirit world. One of the respondents, Kundai Nhamoinesu (An elder. Not his real name) said, "I believe that God is still performing miracles, but some unscrupulous prophets are demonstrating occultic miraculous performances which are difficult to differentiate."⁶ Eight participants observed that central to the desire for miracles and demonstration of power is the need for divine healing, on the backdrop that our bodies deteriorate due to various ailments and aging. Two participants understood healing to be all-encompassing, in that it addresses physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even financial healing. Two more

⁶ Kundai Nhamoinesu, "The place of healing, miracles, and demonstration of power," Interview by Ranganai Chipere. February 18, 2021. Audio 6:34 Otter.

participants took the view that although some people may receive divine healing and others may not, the will of God cannot be questioned. These signs and wonders were observed by sixteen participants to be a continuation of what began on the day of Pentecost, and further confirm that God is still at work in the life of the church.

Healing, miracles, and demonstration of power were viewed by twelve participants to be strong evangelistic tools and advertisements to attract unbelievers to believe in God, a strategy which has been effective in church growth in a community where the healthcare system is not reachable by the middle and lower-class members of society. Six participants noted that miracles and demonstration of power also address life challenges which are beyond our control.

Ten participants observed that signs and wonders, and healing are there to edify and strengthen the believer's faith, thus increase the believer's trust, dependence, and belief in God. They also validate the reality of our connection with God as an integral part of authentic spirituality. Furthermore, believers can see God through what He does through signs and wonders. Without them, our spirituality is dead and good for nothing. Four participants said that demonstration of power brings an atmosphere of God's presence as people get healed and delivered. Signs and wonders are also viewed as accompaniments to confirm the word of God and demonstrate that the kingdom of God is manifesting in the church. Six participants agreed that the power of the Holy Spirit is the engine behind all healings, miracles, and demonstration of power, and that all manifestations of power must be in line with the word of God.

4.2.4 Distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ

This theme aimed to establish what the participants consider to be the distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ. This question was raised on the understanding that the theology

of experience could be enshrined in the doctrines and practices of the AFMZ. Four respondents highlighted various doctrines of the AFMZ as they are tabulated in the AFMZ Constitution of 2001, which is one of the key documents to be analysed in this research. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit, especially baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues was mentioned by twenty-six (78.79%) participants. This pneumatological perspective was shared by eight respondents as an empowering experience which is necessary for someone who is serious about living for God and serving Him, since Spirit-baptism is freely available because every believer is a minister. One respondent rightly noted that the most important qualification to serve God in the AFMZ at any level from lay-workers to those in ordained ministry (five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) is baptism in the Holy Spirit. This requirement for Christian service shall be analysed to establish whether it is still regarded seriously.

Eight respondents noted that the AFMZ considers the Bible to be the inspired and infallible word of God from which the church derives its doctrines and practices. The doctrines of Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology were noted by seventeen respondents, with Jesus Christ as the central figure in salvation, the head of the church and the soon-coming Christ. Respondents based their belief on Jesus Christ's virgin birth, his life and death on the cross, his resurrection on the third day and his ascension to heaven. Nineteen (57.58%) participants confirmed that the sacrament of water baptism by triune immersion is believed to be a representation of the Trinity Godhead, whilst holy communion is administered to born-again and baptised believers (excluding children below the age of twelve years) in remembrance of Christ's salvific role. Such children are dedicated to the Lord at birth but can only be baptised from twelve years of age when they personally choose to follow Christ. Six respondents were clear that the church is a spirit-filled community which is so bonded as a family, where everyone has a sense of belonging. This view was

authenticated in the survey section where question thirteen (Figure 13) in the Appendix established that connectedness (*ukochekoche*) in the AFMZ is made possible through baptism in the Holy Spirit, hence “Spirit-connected community” has turned out to be a major theme for analysis in chapter five. Four respondents pointed out that the AFMZ subscribes to the Presbyterian system of church governance, whereby the church at local, provincial, and national level is administered by a board of elders who are elected by the congregation excluding the pastor who, is invited by the same board to co-shepherd the local assembly with them.

Some of the accompanying practices observed by four respondents were celebration of major events on the Christian calendar like Easter, Pentecost, Christmas, and the birth of AFMSA (25 May 1908). Nine respondents indicated that the AFMZ has a world-negating outlook to life, although this is beginning to change due to the influence of the prosperity gospel which is world-affirming. The desire for holiness is said to drive people into ascetic spirituality, which prohibits sinful habits like smoking and beer drinking. This ascetic perspective to life has led to practices like fasting, praying in mountains and confession of sins. Public confession of sins in search of ascetic spirituality was confirmed by survey question six (Figure 6) in the Appendix which established that although the AFMZ church of long ago used to do public confession of sins, modern members preferred it to be done privately and preferably directly to God or alternatively to the pastor. The same practice was confirmed to be a traditional practice of the AFMZ church in its formative stage in survey question sixteen (Figure 16) in the Appendix.

Another key practice which was highlighted by five respondents, is the giving of tithes and offerings as the main way of supporting the missiological agenda of the church. This practice is viewed as a form of worship with one’s own substance. Four respondents noted the practice of monogamy, which through holy matrimony is the cornerstone of morality, in

an African community which tolerates polygamy. This practice shall be analysed in the next chapter, considering divorce and unfaithfulness among the clergy and parishioners of the AFMZ and how church discipline is attempting to inculcate good behaviour. However, survey question five (Figure 5) in the Appendix has already established that church discipline as a tool in regulating Christian behaviour is a sensitive issue in that 55.26% of the respondents were in favour of this practice, whilst 44.74% of the respondents were opposed to it.

4.2.5 The AFMZ church calendar from local to national.

This theme expected respondents to highlight events on the church calendar which promote experiential spirituality. Thirty-two (96.97%) respondents acknowledged the existence of such events at the local church, regionally/provincially and nationally. One participant was of the view that most AFMZ programmes at any level are tailored to make people encounter God. Of note, two respondents said that Sunday services, Bible study sessions, cell group meetings, prayer sessions and other departmental meetings like the ladies' fellowship, young people's union, children's ministry, men's fellowship and widows and single mothers' meetings are good for maintaining and promoting spirituality. These activities were also noted in survey question four (Figure 4) in the Appendix that they promote church participation at various levels, leading to person-centred religious experience. Twenty-five (75.76%) participants noted that the praise and worship segment of the service liturgy is tailor-made to be an opportunity to encounter God. Although the liturgy may appear to be predictable, one respondent said that room is always given to the operation of spiritual gifts and the move of the Holy Spirit, who may interrupt any planned order of service. This sacred view of spiritual programmes and activities shall be analysed in chapter five of this research.

Twenty-five (75.76%) participants observed that these ordinary services are accompanied by special programmes like all night prayers, prayer retreats, evangelistic crusades, themed services, revivals, big Sundays, and department-led Sunday services. Nine participants pointed out that one key prayer event for all the churches, is the ten days or more of prayer and fasting every year in January. Seven respondents noted that central to most of these programmes, is the preaching or teaching of the word of God, with the precept upon precept approach being deemed to be the best method of word exposition. The word of God is believed to trigger experiential encounters with God, especially where there is an invitation to the altar after preaching. This view was confirmed by survey question three (Figure 3) in the Appendix where 73.68% of the respondents noted that preaching and teaching of the word of God is crucial to triggering authentic religious experiences. Two respondents pointed out that most AFMZ churches follow annual themes which are usually crafted by the local pastor. These themes dictate the spiritual emphasis for each particular year on the backdrop that concepts derived from such themes will be applied beyond that year.

The concept of camping and conferencing was supported by twenty-three (69.70%) respondents who said that such gatherings are done at regional, provincial, and national levels. Survey question ten (Figure 10) in the Appendix substantiated camping and conferencing (7.89%) as one of the social locations for encountering God. One participant testified that these gatherings are extended sessions which are tailored for people to meet God. Of note are the ladies' conferences, youth conferences, general conferences and lately men's conferences which are becoming popularised. National conferences are held at the Rufaro conference centre which according to one respondent, has almost become a place of pilgrimage for AFMZ adherents and a conducive place to camp in the Spirit.

4.2.6 The role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues.

Respondents were invited to show their understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues. This question was raised with the understanding that the experience of the Holy Spirit comes to address other issues which are also experiential like the existential issue of poverty and how mystical causality contributes to this reality. Twenty (60.61%) respondents were in favour of the missional role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was viewed by three participants to be the representative of Christ on earth, whose role is to draw people to Christ and help them grow in Christ. Respondents indicated that the Holy Spirit is the director of missions and empowers believers to boldly fulfil their missional role of soul winning and church planting. This empowerment comes through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and other God-given talents. Seventeen (51.52%) respondents noted that the Holy Spirit is the one who calls people and assigns them to various roles in God's vineyard. He (the Holy Spirit) also opens the doors for missions like Paul's Macedonian call and anoints them to preach the gospel to the lost world, and to nurture believers with the whole counsel of God. Furthermore, nine respondents highlighted that the Holy Spirit directs the affairs of the church including selection of leaders by ballot or by appointment. Everything which happens to the church in the natural is worked out by the Holy Spirit in the supernatural. One respondent noted that the Holy Spirit protects his servants on their tour of duty to preach the gospel to all nations.

Seventeen (51.52%) respondents acknowledged that the Holy Spirit also plays a key role in addressing existential needs of the believer spiritually and physically. Healing and deliverance were highlighted by four respondents. The Holy Spirit was noted by fourteen (42.42%) respondents to be interested in addressing issues to do with the believer's livelihoods like getting a job, provision of material needs, choosing a life partner, prompting

us to help others, family life, wedding issues, educational plans, professional dreams, and many others. One participant testified of miraculous provisions and interventions concerning the above. Four respondents noted that the Holy Spirit protects us from physical and spiritual harm, as well as helping us to discover mysteries and unexplained happenings in our lives. Hebron Zivende (A senior pastor. Not his real name) said, “African life can be a sum of misfortunes if you have no hedge of protection. For us Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is a superior power and a hedge in our homesteads.”⁷

On another angle, three participants pointed out that the Holy Spirit teaches us how to relate with others in the Christian community and outside as we live the Christ-like lifestyle of holiness. The Holy Spirit’s role in the fostering of good relationships in the AFMZ Christian community was confirmed by survey question fourteen (Figure 14) in the Appendix which showed that togetherness is practically demonstrated through home/cell groups, weddings and other celebrations, and funerals and memorials. The Holy Spirit warns, rebukes, corrects, convicts, illumines, controls, instructs, informs, directs, guides, and equips believers. Four respondents also noted that the Holy Spirit helps believers to discern spirits so that they are not misled or exploited by charlatans who manipulate parishioners in the name of addressing their needs when they will be enriching themselves.

4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

This theme required participants to illustrate how the AFMZ is adapting and modernising itself to demonstrate that the AFMZ moves with the times in its search for experiential spirituality. Survey question twenty (Figure 20) in the Appendix affirmed the assertion that the AFMZ is a slowly adapting and modernising church as supported by 96.77% of the

⁷ Hebron Zivende, “The role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. February 9, 2021. Audio, 35:06 Otter.

respondents. Twenty-nine (87.88%) participants who answered this question concurred that the AFMZ is slowly adapting and modernising itself but highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of such developments. Anthony Mudyiwa made this observation, “The AFM church has not necessarily been strategic in its modernising agenda. There has not been a clear strategic and formalised agenda for change, but we have been adapting by default, hence the danger of sometimes copying models which have failed in other churches.”⁸ It was noted by two participants that while the AFMZ has adapted a lot of other things, it has not revisited questionable doctrines such as the triune baptism borrowed from Alexander Dowie’s Zionist movement. One respondent rightly acknowledged that the process of adaptation and modernisation tends to differ from assembly to assembly and from one community to another, which phenomenon has attracted criticism from for instance church members in rural areas, who question the compromised Pentecostal Christianity among urban dwellers. Even in the urban setting, the urban poor view the Christian lifestyle of the urban elite to be watered down. Two respondents expressed that failure to adapt and modernise serves the interests of the older generation and risks losing the younger generation who are the future of the church.

The gains of adaptation and modernisation were acknowledged. Sixteen (48.48%) respondents noted the use of musical instruments and public address systems as something which boosts worship and reaches out to larger crowds. Four participants further argued that the use of music instruments has led to the development of multi-faceted genres of gospel music within the AFMZ. However, four participants noted that musical instruments were originally viewed as tools of the devil and could not be used in the house of God. Furthermore, three participants applauded the move towards praise and worship, which incorporates contemporary choruses as opposed to traditional hymns. It can be argued from

⁸ Anthony Mudyiwa, “Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. April 19, 2021. Audio 13:01 Otter.

the findings of survey question three (Figure 3) in the Appendix that praise, and worship has been singled out as a key liturgical activity which triggers experiential spirituality due to the use musical instruments.

Other participants noted that some adaptations have also taken place, like propagating the gospel through technology-based platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Zoom and many others which were also initially associated with the devil. One participant noted that the AFMZ has become more branded due to the introduction of AFMZ regalia, which was strongly discouraged during its formative years, due to the proliferation of white garmented churches and Zionist churches which embrace different types of regalia according to rank and file. Another great stride which was noted by one participant, is the establishment of Bible colleges which facilitate the training of pastors who propagate a precept upon precept Bible-based preaching, thus trigger the astronomical growth of the AFMZ. It is this biblical based preaching approach which has maintained the respectability of the AFMZ as a Pentecostal church. However, some circles in the AFMZ have continually questioned the need for theological education on the backdrop that all believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve in the church. Arnold Zengeya (A senior pastor. Not his real name) noted that the AFMZ is becoming more structured in its programmes, by employing transferrable skills from secular society, such as doing things in time and good record keeping, as opposed to ascribing disorder and disorganisation to the so-called guidance of the Spirit.⁹ As noted by three participants, public confession of sins at the start of the service to ensure holiness unto God has been discontinued as it severed and strained marital and other community relationships. Moreover, survey question six (Figure 6) in the Appendix showed that public

⁹ Arnold Zengeya, "Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ," Interview by Ranganai Chipere. March 29, 2021. Audio 21:04 Otter.

confession is no longer the norm as 68.42% of the respondents preferred to confess their sins directly to God, whilst 26.32% opted to confide with their pastor.

Three respondents observed that medical healthcare is now being accepted, unlike in prior years when the AFMZ was anti-hospital and anti-medicine. The same applies to the Levitical approach to holiness which discouraged the consumption of pork. This according to five participants is no longer an important issue, although one participant was adamant about abstaining from pork. Liturgy including preaching, was extemporaneous and spontaneous as noted by four respondents, although these days there is a clear, predictable order of service. Two other respondents perceived this predictability as a clear indication of side-lining the Holy Spirit.

On gender-related issues, eleven respondents noted that women and girls were previously not allowed to wear trousers, mini-skirts, mini-dresses, earrings, necklaces, bangles, sleeveless blouses, or to plait their hair, do make-up, manicure, and pedicure. Above all these regulations, they were required to put on headgear without which they were perceived to dishonour God and would risk being denied prayers administered through the laying on of hands. These views have since been overtaken by changing times, although a few die-hard believers like one of the respondents, maintain that such practices should remain. The above sentiment is further supported by survey question twenty (Figure 20) in the Appendix which confirms that the AFMZ is continually adapting and modernising itself. Four respondents noted that previously the highest position a woman could hold was that of a senior deaconess, but women are now allowed to serve as ordained pastors. However, Martha Munyoro (A senior deaconess. Not her real name) raised this concern, “The AFM church is too slow to recognise or allow women in key positions of leadership because of patriarchal

dominance, yet women outnumber men at all our assemblies. This slowness to adapt is a serious cause of concern needing the men in authority to humbly address the issue.”¹⁰

On the negative side, six respondents observed that the AFMZ was previously strict on the disciplinary measures imposed on those who fail to meet the Biblical standards of morality, such as abstaining from beer drinking, smoking, committing adultery or fornication, divorce, and the like. Today, pastors are said to turn a blind eye on such immoral practices or sweep them under the carpet for fear of losing members to other churches or AFMZ congregations. Survey question five (Figure 5) in the Appendix also confirmed the complex nature of church discipline as a tool to regulate Christian behaviour. The same respondents expressed that the current approach has created room for iniquity in the house of God. Coupled with this, four respondents lamented that the recruitment of leaders at various levels, especially pastors, is no longer rigorous. This has weakened the integrity of the AFMZ as some of these leaders (some now pastors) are known to have divorced their wives whilst they were already members of the church and not been disciplined. Four respondents noted that the governance system of the AFMZ has become more political than spiritual, as people can now canvass for positions while others have become self-proclaimed kingmakers who can influence the electorate towards a favoured candidate. Six respondents noted that there is now less focus on pursuing spiritual disciplines like prayer and fasting because of work demands and complacency. Of further concern is the observation by Hebron Zivende (A senior pastor. Not his real name) who said, “The rise of secular election culture which values charisms rather than character of a leader, has resulted in the loss of respect for and marginalisation of seasoned leaders vis-à-vis the younger charismatic and energetic generation.”¹¹

¹⁰ Martha Munyoro, “Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. March 16, 2021. Audio 19:54 Otter.

¹¹ Hebron Zivende, “Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. February 9, 2021. Audio 39:02 Otter.

4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

This theme prompted respondents to rate the importance of church discipline in instilling spiritual growth and whether privately confessed failings should be subject to church discipline. This question was raised on the backdrop of the centrality of the doctrine of holiness to the theology of experience. Twenty-five (75.76%) respondents confirmed the importance of church discipline to inculcate spiritual growth but differed on the issue of whether privately confessed sins were liable for public discipline. Two respondents noted that modern believers are now grasshoppers, who move from one church to another to avoid discipline. Sixteen (48.48%) respondents noted that church discipline is pivotal to spiritual growth because the world expects a better example from those who profess to be Christians. The same respondents expressed that public discipline is beneficial to spiritual growth as it sets boundaries of behaviour and conduct for believers while acting as a deterrent to others. They further noted that discipline is viewed as a necessary component to safeguarding the doctrines and values of the AFMZ, testing obedience and accountability as well as correcting error. They pointed out that any family, organisation, company, church, or society worth its salt must have standing rules which ensure organisational order and any breach of which must attract disciplinary measures. Five respondents insisted that public discipline should be stricter for those in positions of leadership, because to whom much is given, much is expected.

Some advantages of public discipline noted by five respondents are that it is a humbling and learning curve, whereby a believer has an opportunity to reflect and reconcile himself with God without the distractions of active service in the church. One respondent said that if taken positively, church discipline makes the believer better rather than bitter. By nature, discipline was noted by seven respondents to be correctional, in that it instils moral values and standards in the believer. Nyaradzo Ruzive (A lady seminarian. Not her real

name) said, “A disciplinary period should be an opportunity for the pastor to suffer along with the congregant under discipline by checking on his or her well-being socially and spiritually, thus demonstrate that discipline is a healthy restorative process.”¹² Three respondents indicated that shunning the wrongdoer at such a time can cause someone to backslide and leave the church. One respondent raised the sentiment that discipline should solely be the prerogative of God, who has an unbiased capacity to administer it in love while the church’s role is to provide counselling to the wrongdoer. This view resonates with survey question six (Figure 6) in the Appendix where 68.42% of the participants preferred to confess their sins directly to God. The same respondent went further to state that any human hand in discipline can only worsen someone’s behaviour. Another respondent pointed out that church members need to be taught about the place of church discipline in spiritual life and why it is administered. Yet another respondent argued that methods of implementing discipline must be reviewed.

Concerns about church discipline were raised especially in the way it is implemented as cited above. Five respondents reiterated the point that church discipline should not be used to settle scores, fix, or tarnish someone, or technically bar someone from contesting elections, as this may cause divisions in the church. To avert this, eight respondents argued that there is need for wisdom, sobriety, and maturity for those who are tasked to handle disciplinary matters. They further stated that discipline should be just, fair, consistent, and be accompanied by restorative strategies. For instance, the practice of directing someone who is under discipline to sit at the back of the church hall, was viewed by two respondents to be tantamount to treating a fellow Christian as an outcast and sending negative vibes to onlookers. One respondent pointed out that public discipline should be implemented without

¹² Nyaradzo Ruzive, “The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. April 10, 2021. Audio 32:11 Otter.

publicly exposing the wrongdoer, by giving detailed report of the wrong done. Another respondent recommended the need for discretion on which case may be publicly disciplined and which case may be disciplined privately. The challenge of closely knit families and relations in the local congregation was observed by three respondents to make it difficult to implement discipline in the church, because the process may hurt other people. Isaac Swedera (A senior elder. Not his real name) lamented this about rich donors in the church, “Pastors have succumbed to the temptation of being close to rich people who have capacity to give more than the rest of us. Such are the untouchables even when they commit a gross misconduct. Pastors fear to lose such financial pillars.”¹³ An important point raised by Jonathan Pondombiri (A pastor. Not his real name) was that discipline was easier to implement when congregations were smaller but with the rise of mega-church congregations however, it is virtually impossible for the pastor to implement discipline because in many cases he may not know all the congregants personally.¹⁴ The other complaints or concerns is on the period or timeframe of the discipline. The verdicts differ from one assembly to another on the time to be observed when one is under discipline. There are no regulations to guide that.

Respondents presented various views about what can be done to privately confessed failings. Three respondents acknowledged that confessing sins privately shows that such a person is sensitive to the Spirit, can be instructed to step down from a position of responsibility if need be and has the capacity to be restored. Seven respondents stated that an act remains wrong especially gross misconduct like adultery, even if it is privately confessed, hence the need for public discipline. One respondent recommended the need to use one’s discretion and follow a case-by-case approach in dealing with privately confessed sins,

¹³ Isaac Swedera, “The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. February 16, 2021. Audio 36:23 Otter.

¹⁴ Jonathan Pondombiri, “The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth,” Interview by Ranganai Chipere. February 17, 2021. Audio 31:30 Otter.

considering the potential damage which such sin may cause publicly. This proposal was made on the backdrop that privately confessed failings may eventually spill over into the public arena. Two respondents noted the need to seek consent, thus avoid breach of confidentiality unless there are agreed rules of shared confidentiality in the organisation. Four respondents pointed out that broadcasting or publicly disciplining someone who has privately confessed their sin is like crucifying someone for confessing and this will eventually discourage others from that practice. Two respondents warned of the danger of litigation if issues of confidentiality were breached.

In the ensuing conversation about data findings from interviews, respondents confirmed having had multiple spiritual experiences with Spirit baptism as a major experiential encounter with God. Respondents dissociated Spirit baptism from spirit-possession in ATR arguing that Spirit baptism is a conscious experience whilst the latter is an unconscious experience. Healing, miracles, and demonstration of power were acknowledged as necessary accompaniments to strengthen believers and in fulfilling the missional agenda to make unbelievers to believe in God. Much of the standard key beliefs like Christology, Ecclesiology, Soteriology, Eschatology etc., were noted but Pneumatology featured highly with the emphasis of glossolalia as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism and that the Holy Spirit is central in addressing missional and existential issues of the believers. Church calendared events such as conferences, prayer retreats, all night prayers, evangelistic crusades, revivals, and many others were noted to play a crucial role in the theology of experience of the AFMZ. Findings also confirmed that the AFMZ is a church which is slowly and cautiously adapting to the changing times thus maintain a fresh expression of its theology of experience. The subject of church discipline was generally accepted as a method of maintaining order in the church but there were concerns on how it was being applied. These findings shall be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

4.3 Findings from participant observation

Participant observation could not be done both in Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom due to the restrictions and risks surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. However, to bridge the gap, I extracted ten sermons of AFMZ services which were delivered prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. These were published on Facebook and YouTube. Unfortunately, some of the videos were heavily edited, hence the exclusion of some parts of the service in favour of the main sermon and altar call.

The selected videos served as an alternative to participant observation, in that I could observe how religious experience is expressed in different settings of key gatherings of the AFMZ. In the AFMZ, sermons are the medium through which the theology of experience is propagated by addressing real life issues in line with the African concept of mystical causality. The sermons presented were evaluated to see how they promote and trigger religious experiences of the participants in those services as already observed in surveys and interview questions. How listeners reacted to the sermons was also noted and observed, a thing which can only be accounted for through participant observation. Two videos covered provincial conferences in Midlands South and Chitungwiza East. Another video was for the Harare North provincial conference for ladies. A further two videos related to Church crusades, of which one of them was conducted in a rural area. Four videos were for national events such as the national youth conference, the general conference, centenary celebrations, and ordination service. The last video was a Holy Ghost session at an assembly in Masvingo province. This video helps us to understand what happens in an actual service where there is an emphasis on experiencing the Holy Spirit. All the above observed videos assist in understanding the distinctive character of the AFMZ as a church whose emphasis is on

experiential spirituality. Such recorded videos served as real life settings where African Pentecostal Christian experience is demonstrated.

4.3.1 Midlands South Provincial Conference

The video contained coverage of a Sunday School child delivering a poem on the names of God, one of which is Jehovah Rapha or The Lord our Healer which demonstrates the importance of healing as a key aspect of the theology of experience in the AFMZ and this was confirmed by thirty-two respondents in the interviews. Pastor Augustine Bura an invited speaker from another AFMZ province preached from Ezekiel 37:1-14 with the message entitled; “The power of a prophetic word.” The preacher highlighted that the prophet Ezekiel was instructed to speak to a situation of dry bones. His prophetic word brought life to a lifeless situation just as God created things in a setting where the earth was void and without form in Genesis 1. Since God spoke what he wanted to be, our focus should be on what we want to be rather than addressing demons. When one prophesies, the prophecy is the mind of God which migrates through the mind of man. This prophetic ability includes foretelling the future and forth-telling things into existence. According to Pastor Bura, prophecy edifies or changes an individual’s life. The purpose of the preacher’s exposition was to empower congregants to forth-tell or pronounce good things over their own lives, which practice resonates with how the theology of experience addresses existential issues which in the case of Ezekiel was dry bones representing the nation of Israel. During the interviews, seventeen respondents subscribed to the view that the Holy Spirit plays a key role in addressing existential issues like livelihoods. The desire for spiritual gifts especially prophesying like Saul, was also posited as a necessary experience in a believer. As a diagnostic and therapeutic practitioner (as highlighted in chapter three as the key functions of the traditional healer), Pastor Bura pointed out that one can deal with his/her ailments by simply challenging them

with the spoken word. The preacher thereby functioned as a diagnostic practitioner, by identifying the African realities of sickness, poverty, misfortunes, and many others. The first altar call was therapeutic in that the preacher allowed each person present to address what they desire through the power of prophetic word. Thereafter, the pastors present laid on hands on all attendees as therapeutic practitioners, a common practice which triggers spiritual encounters among AFMZ adherents, as witnessed by some attendees who fell under the power of the Holy Spirit.

4.3.2 Chitungwiza East Provincial Conference 2017

Pastor Chitsvare the guest preacher from another AFMZ province preached from the same text of Ezekiel 37:1-10. He emphasised that he was standing in the shoes of the prophet Ezekiel to prophesy or speak to challenges facing believers today, such as failed marriages, suicide, poverty, barrenness, sickness, and many others. This scenario depicts pastors as diagnostic and therapeutic practitioners upon whom parishioners must depend on to experience deliverance. This theology of experience taps into the role of the traditional healer in ATR as shown in chapter three and the role of the prophet in the Old Testament. Pastor Chitsvare highlighted that God is a God of levels and has this time around sent His angels with answers. This resonates with nine respondents who during interviews, claimed that they had encounters with God which were characterised by angelic visitations and enveloping epiphanies. This claim of angelic presence shall be analysed to establish how it creates an atmosphere of expectation, in line with the theology of experience. The preacher indicated that the power of God was present to heal and deliver, an aspect which is highly emphasised in the AFMZ's *modus operandi*. Then there was demonstration of power with those touched by the Holy Spirit being carried by ushers to the altar. For those who were demon possessed, the demons were directly instructed to cry out and go (*chema uende*) as confirmed by survey

question 12 (Figure 12) in the Appendix as one of the upcoming terminologies when exorcising demons. The roles of the altar as the sacred place of spiritual connection with God and use of ushers to bring and manage people at the altar shall be evaluated in the scheme of religious experiences.

4.3.3 Harare North Ladies' Conference 2018

This was a conference for ladies at which Mrs Kwaramba (a pastor's wife) preached, hence an indication of the inclusion of women in the pulpit ministry. This inclusive approach to ministry was affirmed by survey question 20 (Figure 20) in the Appendix where 96.77% of the respondents agreed that the AFMZ is indeed an adapting and modernising church.

Furthermore, twenty-nine respondents in the interviews concurred with the same and four respondents said that one of the key gains of adaptation and modernisation was the inclusion of women on pulpit ministry especially the ordination of women as pastors. The conference was convened in a large tent. The theme was titled: "Even now." Mrs Kwaramba first gave a testimony of how God saved her life from an accident which left her hospitalised for three months. The concept of testimony which is part of the AFMZ liturgical activities as confirmed by Figure 3 in the Appendix as a trigger to religious experience serves to motivate other parishioners to embrace the theology of experience in their personal circumstances.

Regrettably, she highlighted that two of her brother's children perished in the accident which left their car a write-off. She ascribed her healing and recovery to God, despite the efforts of medical personnel to her recovery. AFMZ parishioners ascribe their healing to God amid hospitalisation and the taking of prescribed medicines because to them, it is the hand of God which guides doctors to do medical procedures. Mrs Kwaramba referred to the stories of the prophet's widow (2Kings 4:1) and the widow of Zarephath (1Kings 17:8) to consolidate the concept of the "Even now" God who works in miraculous ways as was done in her life. The

God who works in the now resonates with the role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues as discussed in the interviews. The Biblical prophet's widow had miracle oil which she sold to pay her debts and the widow of Zarephath had a miraculous supply of oil and flour throughout the three and half years of drought. In both cases, God's miracles were connected to what each woman had in her house and that both represent situations where the Holy Spirit addresses their existential needs of basic livelihoods. African realities of poverty and suffering shall be analysed to establish what drives Africans to seek God and how evidential tangibles of provision serve to confirm experience of God.

4.3.4 Chachacha Crusade 2018

The speaker was Pastor Phiri (an AFMZ ordained lady pastor) as reflected in the interviews that the AFMZ is now ordaining women in their process of adaptation and modernising agenda. She was both evangelistic and entertaining in the way she presented the gospel to both Christians and non-Christians present at this evangelistic outreach. Gospel outreach activities are some of the methods the AFMZ uses to get new converts. Crusades were noted by three respondents in survey question ten (Figure 10) in the Appendix that their initial and greatest encounter moment occurred during this event. This goes to confirm that the theology of experience is introduced to new believers during the Christian initiation process.

She had a firm grip on her hearers who actively responded with "amens," standing ovations and ululations. Such responses are part of the religious experience which preaching triggers as confirmed by survey question three (Figure 3) in the Appendix in which twenty-six respondents affirmed that preaching and teaching of the word accounts for triggering spiritual connection with God. Her text came from the story of the promotion of Esther to become the queen of Persia (Esther 2:17). The main emphasis of the sermon was to illustrate that the same favour which located Esther in a foreign land could also locate these rural folks.

This demonstrates that experiencing God has no geographical location. Hers was a precept upon precept type of preaching as noted by one interviewee who indicated that amid adaptation, the AFMZ type of preaching has remained Bible-based where biblical precepts are central to their kerygma. Such preaching was coupled with musical interludes of both secular songs and gospel songs to illustrate certain points as well as to maintain the attention and response of the hearers. She further illustrated how we are living in the second half season or last days (which is an element of the five-fold Pentecostal gospel which believes in the soon coming Lord) as in a football match, whereby a losing team can easily turn the tables by catching up and overtaking their opponents in the second half. She emphasised that people should not focus on the appearance of defeat in the first half because the second half is coming when we will catch up and overtake the opponent. The ability to succeed in life was illustrated with agrarian language like reaping a great harvest, and goats and cattle producing more offspring. Those who had become destitute because their children have disappeared in foreign lands like South Africa, would be remembered. This sermon shall be analysed in how it addresses existential issues in a rural context and how additives of both secular and Christian songs enhance the theology of experience.

4.3.5 Rufaro General Conference 2018

This is an annual conference open to all AFMZ members country-wide and usually attracts thousands of adherents. Conferences have been noted in survey question one (Figure 1) in the Appendix to be the climax of communal gatherings and where religious experiences are nurtured in the AFMZ. Survey question ten (Figure 10) in the Appendix highlighted that 7.89% of encounter moments with God happen during conferences.

Before the preaching, a notice was given by the General Secretary Pastor Amon Madawo concerning health requirements to avoid typhoid disease which seems to have been

rampant country-wide during the time of this conference. This confirms that AFMZ members take hygiene procedures as components to good health. The theme was: Seeking peace with all men (Hebrews 12:14). The speaker Rev Dr Nathan Nhira introduced his sermon by appealing to the concept of being human (*ubuntu*). He used the well-known African statement, “I am because we are,” meaning that one’s identity is determined by being part of a community and that such an understanding leaves everyone with the burden of love. This statement is supported by the survey findings (Figures 13 and 14) in the Appendix where respondents confirmed the importance of connectedness, which is inspired by their African background, hence the theme of Spirit-connected ecclesiology which shall be further addressed and analysed in chapter five. He went on to assert that where love is, peace will prevail. He called for peace in Zimbabwe, peace in the church and peace in families.

4.3.6 Crusade sermon by the late Evangelist P.D. Chiweshe

Although this sermon was published in 2020, it represents one of the old-time religion crusades at which one of the late prominent AFMZ evangelists preached. The Evangelist Chiweshe preached from Proverbs 14:34 which says, “righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.” The preacher’s emphasis was on the scourge and disgrace of sin in humanity and in individual life. This view emanates from the first aspect of the five-fold Pentecostal gospel which claims that Jesus saves, hence religious experience begins with salvation. His purpose was to make sinners make right with God, as no one can be righteous outside Christ. He pointed out that self-righteousness is as filthy rags before God. This sermon clearly demonstrates the need for holiness in search of religious experience as enshrined in the second aspect of the five-fold Pentecostal gospel which says Jesus sanctifies. It has also been established in the surveys (Figure 5) in the Appendix that the AFMZ applies church discipline on its errant clergy and parishioners to regulate Christian behaviour which

is conducive to encounter God. The next chapter will discuss further the belief that Christ is central to the Pentecostal gospel and that holiness is key to the theology of experience.

4.3.7 AFMZ Centenary celebrations 2015

This sermon was preached during the celebration of one hundred years of the existence of the AFMZ on Zimbabwean soil. It is one of the leading Pentecostal denominations in southern Africa known for its emphasis on the theology of experience. I flew to Zimbabwe and attended this centenary celebration which coincided with the AFM International conference which takes place every three years and is open for any member country to volunteer to host the event. The AFMZ Vice President Rev Dr Titus Murefu preached on the conference theme: Established on a solid foundation, Christ (1Corinthians 3:11). This theme confirms the centrality of Jesus Christ to the five-fold Pentecostal gospel to which the AFMZ subscribes. The preacher's focus was the fact that the Church has remained intact for one hundred years is testimony that it is established on a solid foundation. The preacher illustrated his sermon with the story of Adam and Eve who started off living by faith but ended living by fate when they moved from the foundation which God had set for them. After they sinned, Adam and Eve discovered their nakedness and attempted to cover themselves with leaves. To cover their nakedness, an innocent lamb was killed, symbolising the coming redemption of Christ. Two aspects of the five-fold gospel were addressed namely, Jesus saves (Redeemer), and Jesus sanctifies. Sin is a topical subject in AFMZ proclamation of the gospel of salvation. The preacher made use of musical interludes which emphasised salvation through Christ, during the sermon. Use of music was noted in surveys (Figure 15) in the Appendix that it contributes to the process of entering the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*). Reference to African realities like poverty, which Christ is ready to deal with, were also made and this kind of preaching was confirmed by the respondents during interviews, who pointed

out that the role of the Holy Spirit is to address both missional and existential issues. The preacher concluded by emphasising that Jesus Christ is the solid foundation upon which the church or members of the Body of Christ are established. The centrality of Christ to the theology of experience shall be analysed in the next chapter.

4.3.8 The AFMZ National Youth Conference 2014

This is another national conference which attracts thousands of young people from all over Zimbabwe. At one point in my youth days, I once served as a national youth secretary of the national youth department. This event is also held annually at the Rufaro conference centre. The theme of this conference was: Powered by the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 12:29). This theme reflects the centrality of pneumatology in the AFMZ doctrines as reflected by question four on the interviews where respondents had to outline the distinctive doctrines of the AFMZ. Twenty-six respondents showed that the Holy Spirit is one of the key doctrines, especially that baptism in the Holy Spirit must have the evidence of speaking in tongues.

In line with the theme, Pastor Tendai Munemo the preacher of this session viewed God as a consuming fire, who comes to consume challenges like molesting goblins and evil spirits which hinder progress in life. This demonological worldview is clearly informed by our African background as reflected by survey question seventeen (Figure 17) in the Appendix where 93.55% of the respondents agreed that ATR shapes their worldview. He emphasised that God specialises in nominating the forgotten individuals like David, whom He anoints for a greater mission. Statements such as, “you cannot continue to be a slave to tablets,” were uttered during the sermon and their significance shall be analysed considering AFMZ’s belief in divine healing. The altar call was made to initiate the power of the Holy Spirit by shouting “Holy Spirit” three times. The altar was confirmed by six interviewees to be central to key spiritual experiences like Spirit baptism. Thereafter some congregants fell

under the power of the Spirit and emphasis was also made that the Holy Spirit comes to meet their needs so that they do not resort elsewhere for help. This needs-based gospel is hinged on the belief that the key role of the Holy Spirit is to address missional and existential issues. Such teachings at youth conferences show how the AFMZ perpetuates the theology of experience to the younger generation as we shall further demonstrate in the analysis section.

4.3.9 AFMZ Ordination ceremony 2018

Pastors who would have completed their probationary period, which is usually one year, are ordained during any one of the national conferences. There were one hundred and fifty-four candidates out of which seventeen were women. The President of the AFMZ Rev Dr Aspher Madziyire presided over this ceremony as part of his delegated duties together with the executive committee and Overseers of provinces. The President made a short presentation from 1 Timothy 3:1-13 where he highlighted that the new pastors were entering a noble job, with fourteen requirements mainly focused on their character and the main prerequisite being the ability to teach. The emphasis on character reflects the importance of holiness as one key aspect of the five-fold Pentecostal gospel on those who are key leaders in the AFMZ. He pointed out to the aspiring pastors that their character will determine their success or failure. He insinuated that several pastors who are dismissed by church boards from assemblies have a character problem. He also noted that the reason why pastors are ordained together with their wives is that the wife should support and sometimes privately correct her husband in ministry. This again witnesses the importance of women (pastors' wives) as recognised co-workers with their spouses. The President hesitantly ordained a few single male pastors and warned them not to betray the church but rather eventually enter holy matrimony. Such a statement serves to confirm lack of trust on the capability of single pastors to live a holy lifestyle. The issue of hesitancy to ordain single pastors is an issue I also faced having been

disqualified in 1985 but was later ordained as a single pastor in 1986 at the change of mind by President Langton Kupara. Thereafter, the candidates made an oath of allegiance to the AFMZ confession of faith and constitution which postulates the theology of experience. Overseers were instructed to encircle the kneeling candidates at the altar and join hands with the nearest candidate whilst a prayer of ordination was given by a senior pastor Dr Constantine Murefu. His prayer pleaded for the same fire at Azusa in Los Angeles, and at Doornfontein in South Africa, and that the same fire which was upon predecessors like John Lake, Langton Kupara (First Black AFMZ President) and many others be upon them. Such a prayer shows the value which is given to the role church fathers (as they are known in AFMZ), played in perpetuating the theology of experience from one generation to another. This desire for the perpetuation of the theology of experience and its history shall be analysed in chapter five.

4.3.10 AFMZ Mucheke Assembly, Masvingo Province empowerment summit 2019

This event happened at Mucheke assembly in the Masvingo province. This was an empowerment summit which culminated with a Holy Ghost session, which is typically the theology of experience in action. The guest preacher Apostle Tavonga Vutabwashe was originally raised in this AFMZ community of the city of Masvingo. The session was more demonstrational with special emphasis on worship as the entry point to spiritual experiences as confirmed by surveys (Figure 3) in the Appendix which put praise and worship as a key liturgical activity which triggers connection with God. The preacher pointed out that God was releasing spiritual gifts of healing, prophecy, and discernment and that the realm of the Holy Ghost is the level one should endeavour to get in and stay in. This confirms the centrality given to the Holy Spirit as a distinctive doctrine by AFMZ adherents during interviews where they had to list the key doctrines of the AFMZ. He said that speaking in tongues attracts

blessings in form of tangibles like properties. The church was cautioned against grieving the Holy Spirit through petty fights and smear campaigns against other believers, especially pastors. He warned that Jesus is coming back again, and that people should never make the mistake of going to hell via the church. As observed in chapter two, the second coming of Jesus Christ as part of the five-fold Pentecostal gospel is embraced by AFMZ members. There was much laying on of hands and/or the preacher blowing his breath on people who then fell under the power of the Holy Spirit. Laying on of hands upon people to address various needs especially illnesses were understood to be standard practice in the surveys (Figure 19) in the Appendix.

In sum, findings on participant observation have shown that preaching of the Word is central to creating the atmosphere of experiential spirituality in the AFMZ and preachers of the AFMZ brand are like diagnostic and therapeutic practitioners who diagnose African challenges like sickness and poverty because of mystical causality emanating from the African worldview, and thereafter offer therapy through the power of the Holy Spirit. The subject matter of sermons covers salvation, sanctification, spiritual encounters, healing, deliverance, second coming of Christ and many other doctrinal issues pertaining to the theology of experience. It has also been observed that women are now actively involved in ministry because of adaptation.

Conclusion

Survey findings have demonstrated that church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines contribute to the theology of experience of the AFMZ. Findings from interviews showed that most of the respondents have had multiple spiritual experiences of a miraculous nature with baptism in the Holy Spirit with glossolalia as the central experience.

Respondents further showed that the Holy Spirit is responsible for addressing missional and existential issues. The doctrines and practices of AFMZ and the accompanying church calendar have been established to contain or emphasise the theology of experience.

Interviews also showed that the AFMZ embraces church discipline as a tool for spiritual growth and that AFMZ continues to adapt itself to change. Participant observation noted how sermons and worship are used to trigger religious experience which includes crying, being slain in the Spirit and exorcism of demons. Two major themes which came out of the fieldwork findings are, Spirit-connected community and African holistic pneumatology.

These shall serve as the backbone of my analysis of the theology of experience in the AFMZ.

Chapter 5: Analysis of the theology of experience in the AFMZ

In this chapter I analyse the theology of experience based on data findings with special focus on two major theological themes namely: Spirit-connected community and African holistic pneumatology. These major themes and their accompanying sub-themes as shown below, are derived from data findings in chapter four. Under Spirit-connected community, I will discuss the following practices or rituals as sub-themes namely: All night communal prayers, Early morning communal prayers, January ten days communal prayers, Praise and worship, order of service, Communal spiritual retreats, camps, and conferences, Life cycles and other rituals. Accompanying sub-themes for African holistic pneumatology are Pentecostal proclamation and expansion, Pentecostal governance, constitution, and church discipline, and Pentecostal holistic healthcare system. This is an attempt on self-description by using first-order experientials testified by AFMZ adherents. I shall extrapolate how African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand engage the theology of experience by adopting and adapting the Pentecostal Christian faith within the enchanted African milieu of the global south. This is in line with my definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience which embraces African ambience as stipulated in chapter one.¹ Spirit-connected community, which data suggests being a certain kind of ecclesiology, is viewed as a product of re-interpreting, reconfiguring, reconstructing, and re-constituting the connectedness (*ukochekeche*) of African communal life and other African cultural traits into a fresh expression of an African Pentecostal Christian community within which African Pentecostal Christian experience is expressed. Similarly, African Holistic pneumatology, being another kind of pneumatology is viewed as an upgrade from the so-called protective role of benevolent spirits, whereby African Pentecostals invoke

¹ 1.5 Definition of African Pentecostal Christian experience.

the Holy Spirit to deal with missional and existential issues in a context where mystical causality is the lens through which reality is interpreted. These themes i.e., Spirit-connected community and African holistic pneumatology are presented as the foundation to the theology of experience as depicted in the AFMZ.

Considering data findings, this qualitative study analyses how AFMZ adherents' lived experience is enacted individually and corporately to ascertain how they view, express, perpetuate, adapt, and modernise their Christian experiences through their communal gatherings, practices, preaching and doctrines. The narrative inquiry attempts to interpret the experiential accounts of AFMZ adherents as demonstrated in data findings such as Spirit baptism accompanied by glossolalia, ecstatic experiences, and spiritual gifts such as prophecy, healing, and power to exorcise evil spirits. The result is a Spirit connected community.

In this chapter, I analyse the theology of experience exhibited in the major themes of Spirit-connected community and African holistic pneumatology which addresses missional and existential issues.

5.1 Spirit-connected community

The idea of Spirit-connected community in the AFMZ derives from the concept of relational connectedness in the Shona concept of relatedness (*ukama*) and one's relative (*hama*) as was signposted in the concepts surrounding Shona cosmology (Chapter 3).² Life is lived communally within this Shona cultural setting which includes the living dead or ancestors. The AFMZ views itself as a Spirit-connected community where kinship or relatedness is a product of a common salvific experience, and the theology of experience is enacted within

² 3.1 Overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture

this communal Christian setting. Christian life is lived within this communal setting where regular gatherings of Saints is central to religious experience. AFMZ members adopt and adapt this connectedness to suit their new Pentecostal Christian faith. Central to this connectedness is the Holy Spirit, who replaces the role of the living dead (ancestors) who are perceived to protect the life and livelihoods of their living progeny. This connectedness is confirmed by 70.97% of the respondents who understand connectedness as being related in the Lord (Figure 13) Furthermore, the importance of communal gatherings in the promotion of the theology of experience had 100% support from respondents in the surveys (Figure 1).

Instead of being identified by totemic and ancestral connections, the AFMZ members perceive the Holy Spirit to be the ecclesial thread which connects them in their new setting as a Christian community or Church, but bearing in mind that the Spirit's function goes beyond their particular community. It is within this Spirit-connected community that the first order religious experientials take the centre stage³ to demonstrate the essence of Spirit-connectedness. Those who convert to Christianity through the AFMZ find themselves connected to a new Pentecostal community which is characterised by the same lived experience of the Spirit. This Spirit-connected community is accommodative of every believer whereby each member feels a sense of belonging, thus creating a desire for further attachment and/or connection with God.⁴ The AFMZ community from grassroots to national becomes the breeding ground for what Straus calls socialised religious experience⁵ i.e., the AFMZ mode of African Pentecostal Christian experience is shaped or socialised by the place and role of the Spirit-connected community. Whilst AFMZ adherents recognise that their religious practitioners are the key protagonists to the theology of experience, they consider themselves to be equals when it comes to the democracy of the Spirit.⁶

³ 1.3 The influence of Schleiermacher on the theology of experience.

⁴ 1.2 Social Scientists' views on religious experience.

⁵ 1.2 Social Scientists' views on religious experience.

⁶ 4.2.4 Distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ.

Spirit-connected community is better understood when one analyses its rituals or practices where the theology of experience is imbedded. Data findings on rituals and practices such as all night prayers, early morning prayers, January ten days of fasting and prayer, praise and worship and many others resonate with Beit-Hallahmi's argument that most people have their religious experiences through the mediation of communal rituals.⁷ Ritual activities such as all night communal prayers (*pungwe*), early morning communal prayers (*rumuko/masowe*), January 10 days of communal prayer and fasting, praise and worship, communal spiritual retreats, and life cycle rituals like birth, marriage and death have been further analysed to demonstrate the centrality of prayer, need for protection in a context of mystical causality, and communality in the theology of experience of the AFMZ. These particular rituals were selected because they are highly rated among AFMZ adherents as shown by my data findings, and I have ordered them in light of their historical importance in the growth and development of the AFMZ church.

5.1.1 All night communal prayers (*pungwe*)

What both the settler government authorities and the AFMR missionaries failed to understand was that the African preachers, although untrained in Western epistemes, were attempting to adopt and adapt their Pentecostal Christian experience in line with their enchanted African context where spiritual, material and health problems needed to be addressed among their followers. The AFMR White missionaries either blindly danced to the tune of the settler government to put African preachers of the AFMR on leash in search of legitimisation of the Pentecostal gospel, or they were complicit to the Colonial discourse of othering others

⁷ 1.2 Social Sciences' views on religious experience.

(Africans).⁸ This is due to the fact that they were attempting to ban all night prayers which had become the backbone of African Pentecostal Christian spirituality and witness.

All night vigils play a central role to African spirituality especially when dealing with their own African spiritual struggles and challenges. As a result, the early AFMR African preachers transformed the old African traditional all night vigils to appease ancestral spirits (as if nothing has been changed) and adapted them with the Pentecostal faith and its emphasis on aggressive prayer sessions/vigils geared on countering evil forces (so as to ensure that they are still safe from evil in the new faith).⁹ Whilst all night prayers were originally held on mountains, the trend has of late changed as these are now being held in churches. Homes and prayer retreat centres as well and emphasis is no longer just on countering evil spirits only but to also encounter God leading to a special connection with God. The importance of such prayers is supported by 92.1% of the respondents who confirm having participated in them (Figure 8). It is this participatory aspect of Pentecostal Christianity which has made many AFMZ adherents to embrace this prayer-based experiential spirituality and the new Spirit-connected community.

Re-sacralisation of mountains and hills which were deemed to be the abode of spirits in ATR is a common practice among AFMZ adherents as indicated in chapter 3 and confirmed by data findings that AFMZ members still regularly go to mountains for prayer vigils.¹⁰ Such an exercise demonstrates the spiritual value associated with encountering God in mountainous settings. This connects with Abraham Maslow's views as already indicated, who argues that the peak or mystic experiences can be triggered by being in natural places like forests, river banks and mountains.¹¹ Hills, mountains and forests are considered to be serene places to encounter God. The environmental serenity of these places has led the Shona

⁸ Ruzivo, "A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe," 99.

⁹ 3.3 The Continuity and Discontinuity Debate in African Pentecostal Discourse.

¹⁰ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

¹¹ 1.2 Social Sciences' views on religious experience.

people of Zimbabwe to accord sacredness to these places. One such mountain is *Mabweadziva* which is located on the Matopo hills.¹² The Shona people believe that these hills are sacred as they are the abode of *Mwari* (Shona name for God). I noted that sacredness is determined by the sanctity given to a place by adherents, as observed by MacMurray and supported by Anne Taves, who says that specialness given to something is a result of sacralised discourse (Chapter 1).¹³ AFMZ adherents go to pray on mountains, hills and in forests as part of spiritual experience which arguably derives from the sacralised discourse gleaned from their African background, as shown in the survey section of research findings in chapter five.¹⁴ Biblical narratives as understood by AFMZ adherents also depict great Bible characters like Moses encountering God at sacralised spaces like Mount Sinai/Horeb (Exodus 3:1-5) which is characterised as the mountain of God. AFMZ adherents cite Jesus Christ withdrawing from the community to pray on mountains or the wilderness (Luke 5:16, 6:12) as biblical justification of continuity. This phenomenon of sacralisation drives AFMZ adherents to glamorize praying on mountains and hills as testified by two interviewees, who claim that their greatest spiritual experiences occurred at mountains, during communal all night prayers.¹⁵ The continued group retreats to the so-called prayer mountains depicts the value of these sacred places to the theology of experience in the AFMZ. Besides mountains playing an important role, AFMZ members also value early morning communal prayers.

5.1.2 Early morning communal prayers (*masowe/rumuko*)

Early morning prayers or group devotional prayers were originally called *masowe* (wilderness as a place of prayer Luke 5:16) because they were held in nearby forests as

¹² Daneel, *The God of the Matopo Hills*, 16.

¹³ 1.2 Social Sciences' views on religious experience.

¹⁴ 4.1.2 The role of slogans, terminologies, worldviews, and adaptations in the theology of experience.

¹⁵ 4.2.1 Spiritual experiences.

signposted in chapter 2.¹⁶ However, due to the missionary project of maintaining respectability of the AFMR in light of the colonial settler government, adaptations were made whereby early morning prayers as well as all night prayers began to be convened in church buildings as opposed to the forests and mountains. Nevertheless, trips to mountains and forests are still considered as occasional spiritual mores which enhance Christian religious experience. These prayers are also known as *rumuko* meaning to wake up early in the morning. But AFMZ adherents interchangeably use both *masowe* and *rumuko* to denote early morning communal prayers. 86.84% of the respondents (Figure 8) indicate that they participate in these early morning prayers, a setting in which prayer has been popularised as central to the theology of experience of the AFMZ. Such a high percentage of participants demonstrates the importance of these prayers in enhancing religious experiences. The time frame for such prayers ranges from 3.00am to 5.00am, with the earliest being the most favourable in-keeping with ascetic spiritual discipline where one has to deprive himself/herself of sleeping time in search of experiential spirituality.

The AFMZ has world-negating tendencies as noted by nine participants during interviews who observe prohibitions like smoking or drinking beer.¹⁷ Both all night prayers and early morning prayers are geared to deal with evil forces which are believed to operate at night based on the African view that spirits rest during the day and are mainly active at night as mentioned earlier on the neutrality of syncretic processes.¹⁸ Prayers to counter evil spirits must therefore target night times, when we are most vulnerable to spiritual attacks. The argument goes further to claim that even most cases of illness are at their peak at night, hence healing sessions are a key component of most AFMZ gatherings including both all night and early morning prayers as testified by 96.97% of interviewees.¹⁹ It may be argued that such

¹⁶ 2.5 The planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

¹⁷ 4.2.4 Distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ.

¹⁸ 3.3 The Continuity and Discontinuity Debate in African Pentecostalism.

¹⁹ 4.2.3 The place of healing, miracles, and demonstration of power.

times of night which are characterised by the prevalence of darkness (*rima*) and dominated by evil spirits also known as spirits of darkness (*mweya yerima*), have now been dominated by the theology of experience of the AFMZ which brings the encounter of the Holy Spirit on the centre stage. It is the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit which causes spirits of darkness to be exorcised during these night times of prayer, thus make exorcism a redemptive act whereby people are delivered from the control of evil spirits. In the AFMZ the Holy Spirit is allowed to enter into the believer as the initial spiritual encounter which will empower adherents to counter evil spirits, whilst evil spirits are casted out. However, there is a tendency among African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand to focus more on countering the enchanted world of evil forces rather than encountering God.

Those struggling with life challenges like sickness which are perceived to have their origins in mystical causality, the majority who are women usually attend these prayer sessions, where they are assured of deliverance. This may be due not only to the fact that they represent the largest demographics of any AFMZ congregation but that their religious temperament and the challenges they face in life are greater than their male counterparts due to patriarchical dominance. Their proclivity to spiritual experiences are shown in the surveys where 86.84% of the respondents affirmed this assertion (Figure 7).²⁰ The patriarchal nature of the Shona community suppresses women to take key roles in society hence their subjugation in all areas of life. Although Shona communal life is patriarchal, women who get possessed by ancestral spirits within their extended family often wield authority over males, because the male spirits possessing them is respected and obeyed by everyone. As a result the possessed woman wields authority and power to run the spiritual affairs of the entire family.²¹ Similarly, women who are actively involved in spiritual roles like leading

²⁰ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

²¹ 3.1 An Overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

intercessions, preaching, praying for the sick etc. tend to also wield charismatic authority in the AFMZ church. One such case is the late senior deaconess Kerina Murape of Domboshawa who ended up being such a prominent woman of prayer (sometimes addressed as Prophetess) to the point that many people including high profile pastors and business people would go to her rural home for prayer. It is clear that some of the people who come to attend these prayers, do so in search of healing and deliverance from various spiritual challenges leading them to encounter Christ through healing. Such opportunities for women to lead prayers, praying for the sick and preaching is slowly leading to gender balance in the leadership of the AFMZ as a Spirit-connected community which is key to the shape of the theology of experience in the AFMZ. As a result, prayer then plays an important role in the pentecostal theology of experience, for example, the January ten days of prayer and fasting.

5.1.3 January ten-days communal prayer and fasting

The origin of the January ten days of communal prayer and fasting is claimed to be an attempt of what happened at the Azusa street revival where William Seymour and his followers dedicated some time to prayer before the great revival took place as indicated in chapter two.²² The practice of prayer and fasting at the beginning of every year has become a ritual in the AFMZ. Prior to this great revival, Seymour and his followers dedicated some time to pray and fast for revival, especially the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of glossolalia which makes the AFMZ to believe in prayer and fasting as a secret to revival.²³ Glossolalia becomes an important output of all AFMZ members in light of the theology of experience. All AFMZ members are expected to pray and fast for ten days or more at the beginning of each year so as to ensure a good start to their annual spiritual

²² 2.4 The Azusa Street Revival.

²³ 2.4 The Azusa Street Revival.

journey on a clean slate, per holiness standards which are cited in chapter six as crucial to encountering God.²⁴ The centrality of these days of praying and fasting in enhancing the theology of experience are shown in the surveys where 89.47% of the respondents confirm participation and appreciation of the benefits of this practice (Figure 8).²⁵ Parishioners are expected to make their personal resolutions for the year, whilst pastors introduce parishioners to the spiritual theme for the year. As shown in chapter 3, traditional African Shona people, call upon ancestors at the annual remembrance ceremony (*bira*) in search of guidance in the journey of life.²⁶ African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand adopt and adapt this practice as they set aside the first ten days of the year annually to call upon God to guide them and give them provisions for the journey. Such communal events on the AFMZ spiritual calendar are highly rated as shown by 100% of the respondents in the surveys (Figure 8) and that they are a special opportunity to enter the Spirit realm (*kupinda muMweya*). One notes a traceable pattern of the socialised communal culture of prayer (all night prayers, early morning prayers and January ten days of fasting and praying) out of which religious experiences occur. The observance of fasting instils the culture of ascetic spirituality where desire focuses on spiritual things to which Jesus Christ subscribed to (Matthew 4:1-4). These ten days of prayer and fasting are also characterised by revival preaching being a key and necessary accompaniment for most AFMZ calendared events to equip and motivate believers to embrace the new year with expectation.²⁷ The ten days of prayer and fasting in January are also linked to praying for the different AFMZ departments such as the Praise and Worship. Order of service is believed to only take place when banked in prayer and fasting.

²⁴ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

²⁵ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

²⁶ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

²⁷ 4.2.5 The AFMZ church calendar from local to national.

5.1.4 Praise and worship, and order of service

The original order of service in the AFMZ began with public confession of sins followed by singing hymns and kneeling in prayer (Figure 15 and 16). Testimonies and extemporaneous preaching of the Word would follow, and then came the altar call to pray for new converts and for the sick (Figure 3). This early AFMZ liturgy emphasised holiness as a key component of the theology of experience. In the AFMZ, the subject of holiness and its importance to religious experience is a topical issue in their Pentecostal proclamation as testified during virtual participant observation.²⁸ However, public confession of sins is no longer the preferred norm. Surveys show that respondents prefer to confess their sins directly to God or alternatively opt to confide with their pastor (Figure 6).²⁹ This demonstrates a clear move towards private confession of sins although room is still given to those who may want to confess their failings to someone as a way of clearing one's conscience. Such opportunities are availed to members to privately confess their sins to God in the context of the liturgical process. This is a constructive approach to religious experience which respects someone's privacy as opposed to public confession as observed by three interviewees that in most cases, public confession strains marital and community relationships.³⁰

As mentioned earlier, praise and worship in the AFMZ was originally done through singing hymns with the accompaniment of clapping hands, ululating, dancing, and mass prayer. Before the 1970s there were no musical instruments in the AFMR (except the accordion which could still be afforded by a few urban congregations) as they were associated with worldly musical bands and the devil.³¹ The introduction of musical instruments revamped participation in worship. This participatory approach to worship made

²⁸ 4.3.6 Crusade sermon by the late Evangelist P.D. Chiweshe.

²⁹ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

³⁰ 4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

³¹ 4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

room for everyone to have a taste of religious experience. In the participant observation, it was noted that parishioners use the time for worship to dance their problems away, hence some of the AFMZ pastors use music interludes even during preaching to meet this need.³²

The latter acceptance of musical instruments and singing of contemporary choruses alongside traditional hymns as witnessed by sixteen interviewees, served to enhance the rise of praise and worship as one of the most sought after liturgical segments.³³ Survey results (Figure 3) show that respondents embrace praise and worship as the key liturgical communal activity which enhances and triggers spiritual encounters with God.³⁴ The importance of praise and worship could be connected to the power of ritual repetitiveness which according to John Manoussakis, leads to sacred addictions which causes AFMZ parishioners to have an addictive desire to repeat or relive the Pentecostal Christian experience.³⁵ This sentiment is also supported by Rudolf Otto who as already observed, posits that one encounter with the Holy creates a yearning for more of that experience.³⁶ I note that praise and worship is central to creating the atmosphere of African Pentecostal Christian experience in the AFMZ due to its inclusive nature where everyone is free to participate. The point of ritual repetitiveness avails more opportunities for AFMZ parishioners to soak themselves in this communal experience. Unlike ATR where possession with spirits is for the chosen few, in the AFMZ democracy of the Spirit accords everyone to indulge in spiritual ecstatic experiences.

Due to the centrality and importance attached to music; a number of local and international musicians have come out of the AFMZ. The AFMZ has not only produced worship leaders, but gospel musicians like the Gospel Trumpet, Mahendere brothers, Pastor Charles and Olivia Charamba's Fishers of men, Sabastian Magacha, Mathias Mhere,

³² 4.3.4 Chachacha Crusade, 2018.

³³ 4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

³⁴ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

³⁵ 1.2 Social Sciences' views on religious experience.

³⁶ 1.2 Social Sciences' views on religious experience.

Zimpraise led by Joseph Madziyire and many others. These gospel musicians and other worship leaders have added Afro music genres, thus placed the AFMZ on a high pedestal worldwide. Even AFMZ hymns have been recycled into more dancable songs through instrumentation. The whole idea of adopting the African genres is to connect African Pentecostal worshippers with their African heritage, hence the manifestation of African traits in religious experience. The role of music in African spirituality is now clearly manifesting itself in the new context of Pentecostalism. Whilst music and dance were used by traditional people to facilitate spirit possession and ecstatic experiences (Chapter 3),³⁷ African Pentecostals enter the realm of the Holy Spirit through dancable gospel music. The continuous use of hymns is there to accommodate the older generation of the AFMZ, whilst contemporary songs (both in Shona and English) accommodates the younger generation to be part of this Spirit-connected community.

Modern praise and worship within the AFMZ has three major segments beginning with personal confession of sins as the service starts to maintain a holy atmosphere, followed by praise songs which allow people to dance and celebrate in line with jubilant Africanity, culminating with worship songs which create the mood for worship. As already noted holiness remains a critical aspect of African Pentecostal spirituality, which was derived from the Holiness Movement as reiterated earlier (Chapter 2).³⁸ Although the introduction of African music genres has led to more danceable praise songs and various African dance styles being incorporated during the praise segment, thus make worship services more vibrant and celebratory, two respondents during interviews lamented the way worldly music and dances have infiltrated the church leading to what they allege to be the side-lining of the Holy Spirit in the church.³⁹ Sometimes these worship segments can be prolonged, as the Spirit is

³⁷ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

³⁸ 2.3 Holiness Movement.

³⁹ 4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

believed to have taken over the liturgy and those with prophetic messages are allowed to utter them, having been authorised by the presiding pastor so as to maintain spiritual order.

However, there is need of balance between modern order-based Pentecostal liturgy and the historical spontaneity of the move of the Spirit and its accompanying extemporaneous prophetic utterances and interpretation of tongues existent in the AFMR in its formative years. Music and dance does wholesomely define the AFMZ theology of experience.

5.1.5 Communal spiritual retreats, camps, and conferences

Spiritual life in the AFMZ is characterised by a high dosage of retreats, camps and conferences from the assembly, provincial and national levels as shown by the majority of the interviewees.⁴⁰ These events allow believers to indulge in Manoussakis' already mentioned sacred addictions,⁴¹ and which AFMZ adherents proudly regard as being intoxicated by the Holy Spirit (*kudhakwa noMweya Mutsvene*) according to the AFMZ understanding of Ephesians 5:18. The most common events over and above normal activities at assembly level are revivals and crusades. Revivals focus on reviving church members as these gatherings focus on encountering God and crusades are tailor-made to reach out for non-believers in the community, hence such crusades are done at selected places with a potential to plant a new assembly. It is usually prayer retreats done on mountains or hired retreat centres where assembly members go outside their area of jurisdiction. Such retreats may be inclusive of everyone or may be organised by a department like the Ladies' union, Young people's union or the men's union. Both provincial and national conferences serve as extended sessions to consolidate experiential spirituality as shown by the interviewees.⁴²

⁴⁰ 4.2.5 The AFMZ church calendar from local to national.

⁴¹ 1.2 Social Sciences' views on religious experience.

⁴² 4.2.5 The AFMZ church calendar from local to national.

Calendared activities at national level shown by the majority of the interviewees requiring special mention are the Youth conference, Ladies' conference, Widows and single mothers' conference, Pastors' retreat and the General spiritual conference.⁴³ These conferences (with the exception of the Pastors' retreat which is done midweek) start on Thursday night and end mid-day on Sunday. They are held at the Rufaro conference centre in Chartsworth in the Masvingo (Southern part) province of Zimbabwe. Findings demonstrate that conferences are tailored to address the missional and existential needs of AFMZ members at different levels like the younger generation, women and all other adult members.⁴⁴ The focus is usually on members encountering God. One notes here that the AFMZ is strategic in addressing different needs of its Spirit-connected community like pastors, all members, young people, persons with disabilities, sexuality issues, women in general and widows and single mothers in particular. It is this needs-based approach to conferencing which addresses real felt existential needs.

The Rufaro conference centre is located on a farm owned by the Church. It has capacity to accommodate more than twenty-thirty thousand delegates and houses an AFMZ run Rufaro High School on the other side of the farm. The main conference centre itself is nicknamed *Gotekwa* (Shade) because it is made of basic industrial site type of pillars and roofing which has been continually extended but to date has never managed to keep up with the growing numbers. Although this conference centre is of humble quality, it is the sacrality attached to it which has made it to be a place of pilgrimage for AFMZ adherents who want to receive a higher dosage of spiritual experience.

The concept of *Gotekwa* in Shona culture originated from a simple structure which served as a shade for those who long ago guarded fields against wild animals, but later

⁴³ 4.2.5 The AFMZ church calendar from local to national.

⁴⁴ 4.2.6 The role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues.

became a place of recuperation for those working in the fields where they could also eat food during break time. This structure was strategically placed at the highest point in the fields so that the watchmen had full view of all the fields to see any marauding animals. For the AFMZ members, the *Gotekwa* is a place to camp in the Spirit as observed during interview sessions⁴⁵ and also a place of recuperation where family issues are solved.⁴⁶ Even marauding spirits which want to destroy the livelihoods of believers are also exorcised here. Furthermore, just being part of the thousands who converge at the Rufaro conference centre is reassuring in that one realises that he/she belongs to a very large Spirit-connected community where everyone is treated as family.

One interviewee (John Nyamatanda. Not his real name) testified how he had travelled from the United Kingdom to attend the Rufaro general conference, where he had a powerful encounter with God and was led to give a large sum of money to a certain elderly woman.⁴⁷ This woman later testified how she was about to lose five herd of cattle because of a debt left by her late husband and miraculously the amount she received was enough to redeem her five cattle. This is an example of the many miracles that occur at the *Gotekwa* besides healing and deliverance.

At Rufaro there are three major places of spiritual significance in the way they demonstrate Spirit-connected community. The first one is the *Gotekwa* itself where members are free to come and pray, from the time after the service around ten o'clock in the evening until the next morning. A few pastors will be there to monitor and stop any strange activities. It is common to have large numbers of congregants praying throughout the night as shown by the data findings in the surveys and interviews which point to prayer as central to religious

⁴⁵ 4.2.5 The AFMZ church calendar from local to national.

⁴⁶ 4.2.6 The role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues.

⁴⁷ 4.2.1 Spiritual experiences.

experience.⁴⁸ These extra prayer sessions empower parishioners to also address their issues as individuals in the company of others. There is also a small mountain nearby Rufaro conference within the AFMZ farm where others prefer to go and pray which resonates with the sacredness attached to mountains by AFMZ adherents as discussed earlier. Mountains remain the preferred places to encounter God as well as countering evil spirits especially the mountain at Rufaro which is highly sacralised.

The last spiritual facility is the healing room, where the sick are either treated medically by the doctors or nurses on duty or are prayed for by some pastors who are assigned for this role during the conference. These doctors and nurses are members of the AFMZ church who take such voluntary roles during conferences. In some cases the sick person can be given both the medical and spiritual treatment depending on the nature of the ailment. Pastors seconded to pray for the sick usually look forward to the sick experiencing the divine. There have been cases of demons being exorcised by pastors in this healing room. This practice of engaging both medical healthcare and spiritual healthcare is a product of adaptation as shown by interviewees, who say that the anti-hospital and anti-medicine sentiments are waning out in the AFMZ.⁴⁹ In other words, the informed younger generation of African Pentecostals know which ailments need medical healing and which ones need spiritual healing. Where healing does not take place, it is the peace that one has as she/he lives with a disease which is also defined as healing. This view resonates with the case of Paul's thorn in the flesh, being a possible ailment God did not heal but Paul moved on with life well-knowing that God's grace is sufficient (2Corinthians 12:9). However, those of the old school AFMZ continue to cast aspersions on how the church is compromising its faith by accommodating medical healing especially at the Rufaro conference centre which is deemed

⁴⁸ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences and 4.2.1 Spiritual experiences.

⁴⁹ 4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

to be a sacred place. The existence of the healing room at Rufaro demonstrates how the AFMZ is a caring Spirit-connected community which addresses health issues holistically.

The key purpose of having conferences both at provincial and national level in my view is to inculcate standard spiritual practices which are order-based, thus give respectability to the AFMZ as a Spirit-connected community which accomodates both rural and urban dwellers to maintain its Pentecostal distinctives. However, the process of adaptation continues to differ from assembly to assembly, and community to community as noted during the interviews.⁵⁰ This is due to the differing contextual realities which religious practitioners in the AFMZ must respect when they try new ideas they glean at conferences. Adaptation is also influenced by the life cycle rituals which are associated with the theology of experience.

5.1.6 Life cycles and other rituals

African life is a sum total of rituals from the womb to the tomb where one's health and welfare falls under the jurisdiction of the spirits.⁵¹ Rituals are enacted in order to bring to life what is abstract, i.e., a world filled with spirits both benevolent and malevolent. The experience of ritual actions being done gives assurance to African people of the needed protection. The main rituals of the Shona people of Zimbabwe start from birth (sometimes pre-birth), puberty, marriage and death. The rituals focus much on communarianism where the community play a role. But in-between there are many other rituals which are done when the need arises. These Shona life cycle rituals are adopted and adapted by the AFMZ adherents in line with their Pentecostal Christian faith which is informed by the Bible as my findings show. Whilst all the other AFMZ practices as discussed above are strictly for those

⁵⁰ 4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

⁵¹ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

who are committed members of the church, the AFMZ engages the participation of the church member's relatives on birth, marriage and death rituals. This undoubtedly creates the opportunity for ATR to rub shoulders with African Pentecostal Christianity. Surveys show that 41.94% of the respondents value African communal relations (Figure 13),⁵² hence there exists a continued co-operation between the church and family that builds a Spirit-connected community within thereby being accommodative of the African context. Such fieldwork findings contributes to the continuity/discontinuity discourse as the AFMZ engages the involvement of non-Christian relatives at their church member's essential landmarks of birth, marriage and death rituals in the journey of life. This creates a reciprocal relationship between AFMZ and ATR where cultural exchange is unavoidable, hence the need for responsible syncretism. Such an accommodative approach has brought respectability to Pentecostal Christianity in Africa. Figure 14 further shows that 90.32% of the respondents subscribe to weddings, funerals and other celebrations as settings which enhance communal experiences of fellowship and community building.⁵³ However, AFMZ pastors are at liberty to choose to excuse themselves from certain family rituals which they may deem to contradict their Pentecostal Christian values. The AFMZ by so doing gives discretion to its religious practitioners to select what can be continued or discontinued in the Spirit-connected community.

Among the Shona people, when a baby is born, ritual life begins with cutting the umbilical cord and burying it within the homestead, to establish connection as a son or daughter of the soil.⁵⁴ This is followed by a period of isolation, as the child is deemed not to be strong enough to be given charms which counter evil spirits outside the homestead dubbed

⁵² 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

⁵³ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

⁵⁴ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religions and Culture.

airborne spirits (*mhepo/mamhepo*). Surveys show that 93.55% of the respondents agree that their African background shapes their worldview and spirituality including the need for protection at every important stage in life (Figure 17).⁵⁵ The African child can only be taken out of the house after the child has been given protective charms.⁵⁶ In the case of AFMZ members these charms are replaced by a prayer of protection during baby dedication which is believed to wield greater power to counter evil spirits in the air than the charms and makes the baby a member of the Spirit-connected community whose protection comes from the hedge (*ruzhowa*) of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷ This concept comes from the understanding that a homestead must have a natural hedge as protection but it is the hedge of ancestral spirits among the Shona people which protects them from malevolent spirits. For AFMZ members, prayer forms that hedge hence a replacement of ancestral spirits. Such children are given dedication certificates which are beneficial when parents want to send their children to the AFMZ schools and other church-related schools run by different denominations.

The second major ritual in the life of an AFMZ member is related to marriage. The AFMZ maintains and recognises monogamous marriages as a condition for membership and leadership in the church⁵⁸ in a cultural context where polygamy is a normal practice. Whilst for practical reasons the AFMZ does not instruct a new convert with several wives to get rid of them and remain with the first wife. Interestingly, such a new member is not given a position of leadership in the church. However, there remains a strong debate on the subject of polygamy with the rise of a new form of secretive polygamy commonly known as “small houses,” whereby a married man can have a relationship and sometimes even children with his secret lover. Some of such extra-marital relationships are a guarded secret which often come to light at the death of the husband in question.

⁵⁵ 4.1.2 The role of slogans, terminologies, worldviews, and adaptations in the theology of experience.

⁵⁶ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religions and Culture.

⁵⁷ 4.2.4 Distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ.

⁵⁸ AFMZ constitution 2001, 20.

In the Shona culture, a person is considered to be married if the transaction of dowry (*roora*), a customary token which a prospective husband pays to the parents of the prospective wife, is settled.⁵⁹ This is paid in form of cash and cattle and the charges differ from family to family and community to community. This token is perceived to facilitate relatedness (*ukama*) through marriage. If a prospective husband impregnates his wife-to-be before paying dowry (*roora*), the girl in question is expected to elope (*kutiza mukumbo*) to her boyfriend's home. The prospective husband's parents have to send a go-between negotiator (*munyayi*) to notify the girl's parents of the anomaly or committed offense by paying a small discretionary amount of money known as confirmation of custody (*tsvakirai kuno*) to avoid misfortunes associated with lack of parental blessing.⁶⁰ If such co-habitation happens to AFMZ youth members, the couple are placed on church discipline⁶¹ until such a time they can right their wrong by paying the dowry and tying the knot in holy matrimony thereafter. This practice is in line with the theology of experience of the AFMZ which values holiness as a prerequisite for encountering God.

What is also important here is that the AFMZ recognises the importance of family blessing through dowry, and God's blessing through holy matrimony. Here we also see how the AFMZ respects the blessing associated to payment of dowry after which parents of the prospective bride (whether they are AFMZ members or not) can bestow blessings upon their daughter. It is believed by Shona people (inclusive of AFMZ members) that co-habitation (*kuchaya mapoto*) before payment of dowry attracts misfortunes (*minyama*) which will thwart one's progress in life. People who cohabit are regarded as not eligible or not possible to experience the divine. It is the prayer of blessing and protection of the newly-wedded couple by the Pastor or Church which encapsulates the needed covering or protection

⁵⁹ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

⁶⁰ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

⁶¹ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 17.

in an environment of mystical causality. Surveys demonstrate that 90.32% of the respondents concur with the importance of this life event (Figure 14).⁶² Interviews show that weddings are not limited to celebrating life, but are also an evangelistic tool which promotes the missional agenda in building a Spirit-connected community.⁶³

The third and final stage of life where rituals take place is the time of death and in some cases post-death. The AFMZ as a Spirit-connected community, participates in the burial of its members. In the Pentecostal proclamation, parishioners are expected to build their own houses in the rural areas or in the urban areas. The stumbling block to progress is often diagnosed as poverty or other marauding spirits as observed in Pentecostal preaching.⁶⁴ This is done on the backdrop that an urban house or rural homestead (in the name of the deceased) is very important in the event of death, because that is where your body sleeps overnight before burial the next day in continuity with Shona culture (Chapter 3).⁶⁵ If someone was lodging at someone's house, it is taboo for a landlord to allow a sleep over for the deceased person's body because it is believed that it invites roaming spirits into his house.⁶⁶ On the other hand, failure to allow the deceased to have a sleep over before burial is deemed shaming of the deceased even if they did not own any house. The AFMZ leadership always encourages members to own houses thereby empowering its members to acquire such needed livelihoods like shelter. Such shelter is highly valued by both Shona and the AFMZ members as it brings dignity to the deceased in death as the burial liturgy includes the sleepover of the deceased in her/his house. Such a dignified send off is believed to contribute to journey mercies as the spirit of the deceased transitions into the spirit world.

⁶² 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

⁶³ 4.2.6 The role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues.

⁶⁴ 4.3.2 Chitungwiza East Provincial Conference, 2017 and 4.3.8 AFMZ National Youth Conference, 2014.

⁶⁵ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

⁶⁶ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

When arranging a funeral for a deceased AFMZ member, the pastor usually alerts the family to privately settle any rituals which may affect the proceedings on the burial day in order to avoid any interruptions on the burial day. This again demonstrates how the AFMZ tacitly embraces certain African rituals due to the influence of their African background, beliefs, practices and worldview which surveys show concurrence by 93.55% of the respondents (Figure 17).⁶⁷ The process of burial begins with an overnight community Church service during which the coffin lies in state at the deceased's house or homestead in line with Shona tradition. In this context, whilst the AFMZ purports to have nothing to do with African rituals, they are ironically involved through tacit approval of the practices as long as they offer the AFMZ church an opportunity to fulfil its missional agenda. It is a negotiated approach to the appropriation of African rituals without compromising the Pentecostal Christian faith. By so doing, the AFMZ has always tried to maintain responsible syncretism proposed by Allan Anderson and Walter Hollenwegger in the continuity/discontinuity debate of African Pentecostal discourse.⁶⁸

The funeral service comprises a consoling sermon, singing and testimonies about the deceased. The AFMZ practitioners who have audience analysis skills address the experience of grief by emphasising the role of the Holy Spirit as the one who comforts the brokenhearted. The focus of funeral sermons is to bring emotional healing to the grieved. Thereafter people converge at the burial site which is the final place of separation after which the focus of the AFMZ shifts to the surviving members of the family who need consolation (*nyaradzo*). Whilst some families may organise a post-burial consolation event (*nyaradzo*), the AFMZ position is that consolation of the family during the grieving period is not a one-off event, but something pastoral teams and the AFMZ members must continually support.

⁶⁷ 4.1.2 The role of slogans, terminologies, worldviews, and adaptations in the theology of experience.

⁶⁸ 3.3 The Continuity and Discontinuity Debate in African Pentecostalism.

The theology of experience is therefore not limited to spiritual aspects, but extends to cases whereby one has to grieve with the grieving.

In the Shona tradition, the home-bringing ceremony (*kurova guva*) is observed after one year as a post-burial ritual through which the spirit of the deceased is purportedly brought back home, to take its role as one of the ancestors.⁶⁹ The AFMZ, due to the respectability project of the missionaries and their biblical view that all spirits are manifestations of demons or evil spirits, does not formally approve the practice of post-burial rituals other than that a family may have a memorial event in the form of tombstone unveiling. Whilst unveiling of tombstones is a Western practice which the AFMZ does not outrightly condemn, this has led critics to take AFMZ as sympathetic to Western practices than African practices especially burial rituals hence the continuity/discontinuity discourse. But instead they take tombstone unveiling as a family event which tactically avoids any semblance of the traditional home-bringing ceremony. In this context a pastor can discretionally assist with officiating at such an event. It is noted however, that such memorials are done exactly after one year just as in the Shona tradition, thereby demonstrating the appearance of being both Christian and traditional. Therefore, consolation (*nyaradzo*) as a distinct event is not deemed important in the AFMZ regulations and procedures. However, members are left to make their informed decision as to whether to carry on or avoid it. Although officially the AFMZ does not run any post-burial rituals other than addressing post-burial grief through supporting consolation gatherings (*nyaradzo*), the continuity of post-burial rituals as forms of remembrance are noticeable through memorial postings in various social media platforms by individual AFMZ members where they remember their deceased loved ones. The aspect of community is highly valued by the Shona people let alone AFMZ as a Church. The continuity is quite clear.

⁶⁹ 3.1 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

Ancetral spirits' role in the life of the living have been replaced by the role played by the Holy Spirit.

5.2 African holistic pneumatology: addressing missional and existential issues

In the previous section, I dealt with Spirit-connected community which puts the Holy Spirit at the centre, as the context in which the theology of experience takes place. This Spirit-connected community is characterised by ritual practices such as all night prayers, early morning prayers, January Ten days of prayer and fasting, praise and worship, spiritual retreats i.e. camps and conferences, and life cycles. African pneumatology from the AFMZ point of view posits the active role of the Holy Spirit as that of empowering the Church in its missional role as well as empowering the Saints to address existential issues especially countering evil spirits. Central to addressing missional and existential issues as gleaned from the data findings are the following sub-themes, Pentecostal proclamation and expansion, Pentecostal governance, constitution and church discipline, and Pentecostal holistic healthcare system.

Data shows that 87.9% of the interviewees believe in baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues as a post-conversion empowering experience.⁷⁰ This view resonates with Frank Macchia who asserts that baptism of the Holy Spirit with accompanying glossolalia is the heart of Pentecostal experience.⁷¹ The AFMZ constitution further consolidates this position when it states, “we believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit with initial evidence of speaking in tongues as promised to all believers.”⁷² The glossolalia experience remains a central and continuing aspect of the theology of experience of the

⁷⁰ 4.2.2 Spirit-baptism versus spirit-possession.

⁷¹ 1.4 Pentecostal views on religious experience.

⁷² AFMZ Constitution 2001, 2.

AFMZ which every believer is entitled to, and encouraged to partake. The AFMZ constitution further refers to the belief in the manifestation of the gifts and fruit of the Spirit, as important accompaniments to equip believers for missions and holy lifestyle.⁷³ Even the church name AFMZ contains “Mission,” being the heart of its existence. Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues was viewed by the early AFMR adherents in its formative years as the initiation ritual into experiential spirituality and was also viewed as a stamp of authority to preach the gospel with signs and wonders following.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the centrality of pneumatology in the AFMZ doctrines is demonstrated in the conference theme: “Powered by the Holy Ghost, Hebrews 12:29” during the National youth conference of 2014 which I observed virtually.⁷⁵ Pastor Tendai Munemo equated the Holy Spirit to a consuming fire which comes to consume challenges like molesting goblins and evil spirits, in line with mystical causality which encompasses the African enchanted world.⁷⁶ ATR is not missional as it is a religion geared at protecting its own in a spirit-infested world. However, African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand proclaim the gospel which promises protection (in continuity with African belief) against the onslaught of malevolent spirits in their missional endeavours. In a way, empowerment by the Holy Spirit is perceived as power to counter evil spirits. Similarly, the virtually observed Holy Ghost session at the AFMZ Mucheke Assembly during the participant observation serves to show how Spirit-baptism is valued in the AFMZ as such sessions are created to facilitate continuity of this experience in enhancing experiential spirituality.⁷⁷

AFMZ members are convinced that such an experience is superior to, and has no similarity with spirit-possession in ATR as shown by 93.94% of the respondents during

⁷³ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 2.

⁷⁴ 2.5 The Planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

⁷⁵ 4.3.8 The AFMZ National Youth Conference, 2014.

⁷⁶ 4.3.8 The AFMZ National Youth Conference, 2014.

⁷⁷ 4.3.10 AFMZ Mucheke assembly Empowerment Summit, 2019.

interviews, who categorically dissociate baptism in the Spirit from spirit-possession in ATR.⁷⁸ In this context, baptism in the Holy Spirit is not viewed as a continuation of spirit-possession, which is an unconscious experience by the host and such spirits are believed to be from Satan and must therefore be exorcised. The outward display of ecstatic experiences by both African Pentecostals and ATR practitioners has made some Western scholars and observers to perceive the experience as a product of uncensored syncretism in African Pentecostalism. However, AFMZ adherents do not view themselves as a replica of what takes place in ATR but rather as people who have had a Pentecostal Christian experience of the Spirit which empowers them to counter and confront the demonic world around them.

The purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit in the AFMZ as already noted above is to empower believers to address missional and existential issues which are interconnected, hence African holistic pneumatology. The missional role is about proclaiming the five-fold Pentecostal gospel that Jesus saves, Jesus sanctifies, Jesus heals, Jesus baptises in the Spirit and that Jesus is the coming King (Chapter 2).⁷⁹ Interviews, show that 60.61% of the respondents embrace the missional role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers to do soul winning, church planting and nurturing of new believers in the faith.⁸⁰ A further 51.5% of the respondents interviewed acknowledge that the Holy Spirit empowers believers to address their existential needs like healing, deliverance, protection against evil spirits, life plans, dreams, and provision of livelihoods as we shall see below.⁸¹ It is this holistic role of the Holy Spirit who addresses missional and existential issues which makes African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand to embrace the Holy Spirit as a greater and superior power to spirits in ATR. What AFMZ members want is assurance of protection against any evil spirits which forms the Pentecostal proclamation and expansion.

⁷⁸ 4.2.2 Spirit-baptism versus spirit-possession.

⁷⁹ 2.4 Azusa Street Revival.

⁸⁰ 4.2.6 The role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues.

⁸¹ 4.2.6 The role of the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues.

5.2.1 Pentecostal proclamation and expansion

Pentecostal proclamation in the AFMZ is viewed pneumatologically in that the Holy Spirit gives AFMZ members power to proclaim the gospel (Acts 1:8) with the demonstration of power which manifests through signs and wonders. For AFMZ members, it is unthinkable to preach the gospel without the unction of the Holy Spirit to a community full of opposing powers of evil. Speaking in tongues becomes central and an evident sign of the unctioning of the Holy Spirit hence the theology of experience. Although historically, every piece of legislation was used by the British settler government to frustrate and restrict their preaching but to no avail as the AFMR continued to grow due to its Spirit-powered Pentecostal proclamation.⁸² The AFMZ was able to resiliently weather through the setbacks leading it to become one of the Pentecostal giants in Zimbabwe.

Church growth in the AFMZ is connected to both proclamation of the good news through preaching and teaching of the Word, and testimonies. Due to the development of ministry departments, children and young people can now preach on children and youth Sundays. 100% of the respondents in surveys show that cell groups are the primary setting where Pentecostal proclamation of the gospel through preaching and testimony takes place (Figure 14).⁸³ It is observed that the cell group which is perceived to be a new African extended family by Wariboko⁸⁴ is a small setting where the Holy Spirit is at work in the raising of future preachers of the Word in larger settings.

The AFMZ brand of Pentecostal proclamation views Jesus Christ as the content of the five-fold gospel as shown by the AFMZ confession of faith and demonstrated by a conference theme during virtual participant observation, “Established on a solid foundation,

⁸² Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 117,123.

⁸³ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

⁸⁴ 3.3 The Continuity and Discontinuity debate in African Pentecostal Discourse.

Christ 1 Corinthians 3:11.”⁸⁵ The first and key qualification to proclaim the gospel of Christ is baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues as already observed by Marius Nel and the AFMZ constitution.⁸⁶ This criterion makes every believer a minister of the gospel but on the other hand recognising the chief role of the trained pastor and the church board as the major drivers of the missional agenda at each local congregation.⁸⁷ The democratic role and the upper hand of the Holy Spirit in calling and empowering believers, has prompted some circles in the AFMZ to downplay theological training. However, the rise in trained clergy has raised the importance of the pastor’s office as a key player in Pentecostal proclamation in the AFMZ. The virtually observed ordination ceremony of 2018, during which one hundred and fifty-four candidates were ordained shows the importance of such full-time workers.⁸⁸ Interestingly seventeen of the candidates were women, which demonstrates in a small way that the AFMZ is adapting to gender balance in the slow inclusion of women in ordained ministry considering the history of AFMZ and its hesitancy to ordain women. Even where male candidates were ordained, the ordination included their wives as helpmates in ministry. Each assembly pastor is viewed as both the visionary and father/shepherd of the flock, and Chairperson of the Church board.⁸⁹ The trained pastor serves as an empowering figure who trains and ensures that congregants are baptised with the Holy Spirit before they engage in Pentecostal proclamation.

The AFMZ pastor holds both a professional and father role. It is rare among Shona people to see a woman leading in ancestral spiritual affairs unless she is a host (*homwe*) who is possessed by an ancestral spirit as noted in chapter 3.⁹⁰ However, such an aunt cannot wield such authority in a family where she is married as she is considered to be a foreigner

⁸⁵ 4.3.7 AFMZ Centenary Celebrations 2015, AFM in Zimbabwe Constitution 2001, 2.

⁸⁶ 1.4 Pentecostal views on religious experience, AFM in Zimbabwe Constitution 2001, 2.

⁸⁷ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 4.

⁸⁸ 4.3.9 AFMZ Ordination Ceremony, 2018.

⁸⁹ Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe Church Governance Policy, 3, 39.

⁹⁰ 3.1 An Overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

(*mutorwa*) pertaining to the ancestral spiritual issues. This hesitancy to involve women in leading ATR issues could have influenced the slow acceptance of women in ordained ministry within the AFMZ.

The pastor in the AFMZ is perceived as guided by the Holy Spirit in the way he/she administers the local church. The fatherhood model however, is weakened where the pastor is a young man or the pastor is a woman. How does the young pastor or the lady pastor wield the authority of a father among male elders who are older? Therefore, the fatherhood model is bound to fail as it discriminates on the basis of both age and gender. Interestingly, elders in the AFMZ still address the young pastor as father/pastor (*Baba Mufundisi*) by virtue of representing the spiritual office he holds and they address the pastor's wife as mother/pastor (*Mai* or *Mai Mufundisi*). However, there is no suitable term to address the female pastor as the mother/pastor is already designated to the pastor's wife. Furthermore, the biggest challenge with this model is that the pastor as a father, may override the authority of the church board since his role is simply of a chairman responsible for ensuring that group decisions are made according to the Presbyterian system of governance. Group accountability is compromised if the pastor resorts to the fatherhood model to arrive at a final decision. I have observed in various boards and councils of the AFMZ that the final say of the chairman is highly respected which depicts the final say of a father figure in his family. It is naturally accepted that no one can raise any further objections as that is perceived to undermine the authority of the father/chairman.

Ordinarily every sermon, by virtue of the unction of the Holy Spirit serves to address different audiences because every gathering from an AFMZ perspective is an opportunity to win souls be it at crusades, funerals, weddings, conferences, home/cell groups, church services, baby dedication services etc. The AFMZ approach to its Pentecostal proclamation is needs-based meaning that as existential needs are addressed, new converts are won to the

Lord. There is a perception among Africans/Shonas which gravitates towards those preachers who address their existential needs especially protection and provision thus take over the role of traditional healers as kingpins of society as signposted in chapter 3.⁹¹ Furthermore, preaching is classified as one of the rituals that leads or triggers religious experience as testified by 73.68% of the respondents (Figure 3).⁹² The AFMZ trained pastors who are products of the missionary agenda of Pentecostal respectability have been known to be competent preachers of the Word as witnessed by the exponential growth of the church from the time of the establishment of the AFMR pastoral training school in 1974.⁹³ Coupled with this, the work of the AFMZ was handed over to the Africans by missionaries in 1983 and such autonomy further enhanced the work of the AFMZ as an indigenous African Pentecostal church.

Preaching at crusades and revivals are central to church growth as the Word is preached and demonstrated through the power of the Holy Spirit as noted by 30.3% of the respondents during interviews who claim that their first spiritual experience came through the exposition of the Word of God, leading to their salvation experience.⁹⁴ The Chachacha Crusade in the virtual participant observation, is testimony to how the AFMZ values reaching out to remote areas with the gospel.⁹⁵ Such revivals and crusades introduces the theology of experience to new converts. Preaching in the AFMZ in general and at such events in particular, is characterised by active responses like amens, ululations, clapping of hands, whistling and standing ovations, being other forms or signs associated with religious experience which are specifically triggered by preaching through the power of the Holy

⁹¹ 3.1 An Overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

⁹² 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

⁹³ 2.5 The planting of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

⁹⁴ 4.2.1 Spiritual experiences.

⁹⁵ 4.3.4 Chachacha Crusade 2018, 4.3.6 Crusade sermon by the late Evangelist P.D. Chiweshe.

Spirit. Such responses further demonstrate the continuity of African traits of jubilation in Pentecostalism.

Virtually observed gatherings like the Chachacha crusade also serves as a good example of how existential issues are addressed in a rural context, where the Holy Spirit is perceived to participate in agrarian issues such as giving a bumper crop harvest or increasing the number of one's cattle and goats as demonstrated by Lady Pastor Phiri.⁹⁶ One notes how AFMZ preachers contextualise the prosperity gospel to suit agrarian settings. What is interesting is that, religious claims of experience cannot be put in a laboratory to prove it. Similar sentiments of the Holy Spirit are assumed as addressing existential issues affecting Africans through Pentecostal proclamation were virtually observed when Rev Chitsvare claimed that he under the anointing of the Holy Spirit stood in the shoes of prophet Ezekiel in the Valley of dry bones, referring to the challenges which people face in the African enchanted world, such as failed marriages, suicide, poverty, barrenness, sickness and many other ailments.⁹⁷ What I found clear is that, AFMZ pastors tap into the Shona tradition as well as the biblical tradition, where both the *n'anga* and the prophet take the role of a diagnostic and therapeutic practitioner.⁹⁸ In the AFMZ context, the Pastor demonstrates these characteristics through diagnostic and therapeutic preaching or claims which are perceived to takeover and supercede the diagnostic and therapeutic role of a traditional healer in Shona religion and culture. The Holy Spirit is presented as replacing and superceding the role of ancestral spirits in providing evidential tangibles of handfuls of livelihoods, and He (the Holy Spirit) continues to be sought after by African/Zimbabwean Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand.

The altar is the central place of religious experience when the Holy Spirit is viewed as taking centre stage as shown in my interaction with interviewees, to which people ordinarily

⁹⁶ 4.3.4 Chachacha Crusade, 2018.

⁹⁷ 4.3.2 Chitungwiza East Provincial Conference, 2017.

⁹⁸ 4.3.2 Chitungwiza East Provincial Conference, 2017.

respond in great numbers when called. As noted earlier Pentecostal proclamation, Spirit baptism laying on of hands on the sick, exorcism of demons, the sinner's prayer of salvation take place on the altar. All Pentecostal proclamation is deemed not complete if it does not culminate with people going to the altar and the key altar call being the call for sinners to salvation, which is the starting point in the theology of experience of the AFMZ. All other altar calls like healing, deliverance, Spirit-baptism etc. will follow, depending on the nature of the sermon which has been delivered. By nature, the altar is considered to be a sacred place where God can be encountered and evil spirits countered, as shown by Rev Chitsvare through whom the power of God made congregants to fall, while ushers were instructed to carry such people to the altar for further spiritual encounters.⁹⁹ Ushers do not only manage sitting arrangements in church, but they are key players in the management of the experiential activities which take place at the altar. This includes maintaining order at the altar as well as covering women who may have fallen under the power of the Holy Spirit to protect them from unintentional indecent exposure. Similarly, when exorcisms of demons is taking place, women also need to be covered from unintentional indecent exposure as well.

African Pentecostals carry the perception of sacrality of the altar from ATR, where altars at traditional shrines are places for religious rituals.¹⁰⁰ Powerful preaching in African Pentecostalism of the AFMZ brand is perceived to administer the content of faith as a precursor to what happens when an altar call is proclaimed by the preacher. This is usually the time to demonstrate the power of God, as people become healed and are delivered from different kinds of bondage. The main therapeutic approach to healing, deliverance or being prayed for any reason in the AFMZ, is the laying on of hands. This practice was observed virtually at the Midlands South Province where pastors lay hands on those who came to the

⁹⁹ 4.3.2 Chitungwiza East Provincial Conference, 2017.

¹⁰⁰ 3.2 An overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

altar, some of whom fell under the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰¹ The laying on of hands is perceived by AFMZ adherents to be a point of connection with the one who is anointed to pray for them. In the absence of charms which are demonised in the AFMZ, that pair of hands transmits the power of the Holy Spirit from the one anointed to heal to the sick.

All Pentecostal proclamation by the power of the Holy Spirit culminates with church growth, hence the AFMZ policy of church growth insists on establishing a congregation where there are fifty committed adult members although this number is easily surpassed in urban areas, where congregants average between one hundred members to one thousand five hundred. The AFMZ constitution states that the number of bona fide members per local assembly should be at least fifty mature, committed adults from whom capable board members shall be elected.¹⁰² The larger AFMZ congregations have managed to build large church buildings, contrary to the AFMZ ethos which is anti-cathedrals and prefers to split any assembly which has experienced astronomical growth.¹⁰³

The concept of splitting (*kugura*) a congregation to create a new assembly or weaning (*kurumura*) and settlement support (*kutegesa*) of a sub-assembly under a mother assembly in order to make it a fully-fledged assembly is interesting to analyse. These concepts tacitly emanate from how new homesteads and new villages are created in the traditional or rural Shona communities. At the local assembly, the presiding pastor together with the church board are responsible for splitting cell groups into more cell groups, as well as weaning their sub-assembly to a fully-fledged assembly.¹⁰⁴ However, such a sub-assembly must meet the minimum requirements of fifty committed adult members and accompanying financial support.¹⁰⁵ The Provincial Overseer and his committee are responsible for splitting large

¹⁰¹ 4.3.1 Midlands South Provincial Conference.

¹⁰² AFMZ Constitution, 2001, 19.

¹⁰³ AFMZ Constitution, 2001, 19.

¹⁰⁴ AFMZ Constitution, 2001, 19,21.

¹⁰⁵ AFMZ Constitution, 2001, 19.

assemblies in order to create new assemblies while the National President of the AFMZ and his executive preside over the splitting of provinces to create new provinces in line with church growth.¹⁰⁶ Serious concerns have however been raised against some Overseers who strategically and rather unfairly split other pastors' assemblies, but do not apply the same rule to their own large congregations. Similarly, certain congregants have refused to join the new split assembly where they reside and continued to attend church services at the mother church. Such believers are euphemistically referred to as border jumpers, although their actions may simply confirm the value which they attribute to the communal connections which would have been established in the mother assembly in continuity with Shona culture.

Among Shona people, the concept of splitting a village to create another one was based on the growing population of both people and livestock and in some cases, to resolve conflicts. Both scenarios seem to be the case with the splitting of AFMZ congregations. Statements like “you cannot keep many bulls in one cattle kraal” is common in the AFMZ circles which denotes that if there are too many elders in one congregation, it is a recipe for strife, hence the split. Whilst the growth of the congregation is the most ideal scenario for splitting an assembly, sometimes positions-driven conflicts have caused splits and in the process, subtly contributed to church growth. In this context, it is the end which justifies the means. However, there is a common understanding among AFMZ leaders that although splits due to conflicts may lead to church growth, it is an agreed position that such occurrences are inconsistent with the AFMZ constitution, hence such groups are regularised with hesitation and caution.

In Shona culture, a baby is weaned (*kurumurwa*) from breastfeeding if it is deemed mature enough to consume solid foods. Similarly, the maturity of the sub-assembly before it is weaned, is measured by factors such as the ability to be self-supporting, self-governing

¹⁰⁶ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 26.

and self-propagating. Among rural Shonas, if a young man paid dowry or the wife eloped, he would bring his wife into his parents' homestead for a season, before the parents, especially the mother-in-law, would assist the newly marrieds to establish their own, separate homestead. By analogy and in the AFMZ, the process of weaning (*kurumura*) and settlement support (*kutegesa*) is done by the mother assembly, to assist the sub-assembly to upgrade itself to its new status. A special event is convened at which the mother assembly officially gives settlement support to and hands over the new assembly to the Overseer and the Provincial committee. In this case, we find Shona cultural practices being adopted to promote church growth. However, church growth language in the AFMZ seems to prefer the motherly approach to weaning (*kurumura*) and settlement support (*kutegesa*) when creating new assemblies. This motherly approach to church growth (as opposed to splitting) has yielded better results in fostering the Spirit-connected community.

The engine behind the Pentecostal proclamation in the AFMZ is how its missiological agenda is funded as enshrined in its constitution, where the lines or streams of income are tithes, offerings and building funds as testified by five respondents during interviews concerning practices of the AFMZ.¹⁰⁷ The constitution empowers the local assembly to be a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating community which “shall receive and administer tithes, offerings and other funds.”¹⁰⁸ This concept of the importance of the local church as central to Pentecostal proclamation emanates from the Holiness movement and was popularised by the Pentecostal movement.¹⁰⁹ The same perspective is dominant amongst the Shona. The AFMZ is tapping both from the Shona and Pentecostal traditions.

¹⁰⁷ 4.2.4 Distinctive doctrines and practices of the AFMZ.

¹⁰⁸ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 23.

¹⁰⁹ 2.3 The Holiness Movement.

5.2.2 Pentecostal governance, constitution, and church discipline

The AFMZ as an institutional entity believes that its governance system as enshrined in its constitution and regulations are an interpretation of the will of Christ the governor of the Church as derived from Scriptures and the working of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰ There is a pneumatological understanding that the AFMZ governance, constitution and Church discipline are Spirit-led. The AFMR in its formative years started with no special emphasis on titles, as everyone was addressed just as a brother or sister in the Lord, including the founding missionaries like John Graham Lake and Thomas Hezmelhalch.¹¹¹ Ruzivo notes that the founding missionaries were not administrators, but charismatic preachers who did not initially insist on institutional structures and doctrinal astuteness.¹¹² Due to the pressure of the need for organisational structures to manage the growth of the church, the AFM resorted to the Presbyterian ecclesiastical polity or system of church governance as taught by the then AFM International President Rev Frank Chikane.¹¹³ The Presbyterian system assigns governance of the local church to the board of elders (known as church board in the AFMZ) where consensus and group accountability is central to decision making and ensuring that rules of living together as a Christian community are adhered to.¹¹⁴ The AFMZ considers its governance system to originate from the democratised synagogue system with appointed elders, and the introduction of deacons in Acts 6 as well as the emergence of the Council of Acts 15.¹¹⁵ The democratised governance system allows for democratised spirituality where both clergy and laity drink from the same Holy Spirit and participate in the experientials which emanate from the gifts of the Spirit. But there also exists a traditional court of elders

¹¹⁰ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 1.

¹¹¹ Frank Chikane, "Church Governance in the AFM," (A seminar paper presented at the AFM (UK) pastors' seminar, Doncaster, 2 August 2018), 17.

¹¹² Ruzivo, "A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe," 128.

¹¹³ Chikane, "Church Governance in the AFM," 2.

¹¹⁴ Chikane, "Church Governance in the AFM," 7.

¹¹⁵ Chikane, "Church Governance in the AFM," 11.

(*dare remusha*) in the Shona village which deals with conflicts among village members as signposted in chapter four.¹¹⁶ This understanding makes disciplinary committees in the AFMZ find acceptance as the practice resonates with the Shona tradition where judgement of a case is both disciplinary and restorative.

The elected church board in the AFMZ works with the pastor who is the chairperson of the board, to run the affairs of the assembly according to the AFMZ constitution and regulations.¹¹⁷ The pastor's leadership role as the teaching elder is that of a leader among equals, with the role of a teaching elder among ruling elders who are perceived to be servants of the people they lead according to the AFMZ's understanding of Matthew 20:25-28.¹¹⁸ The separation in terms of roles and value only differ on constitutional governance where the pastor stands out as the centre. According to the AFMZ's old constitution and as mentioned earlier (6.2.1), the pastor is the spiritual leader, visionary and father of the local congregation, whilst the Overseer wields a similar role at provincial level, and the President at national level. The church board and the pastor are accountable to the Provincial committee, the Provincial workers' council, and the local assembly through annual general meetings (AGM) where progress of the work at the assembly is reported.¹¹⁹ The Overseer and the provincial committee are accountable to the provincial workers' council as well as to the President, the executive committee and the National workers' council.¹²⁰ The President and his executive and council of Overseers (Apostolic council) are accountable to the National workers' council which is the supreme governing body of the entire AFMZ.¹²¹ It is noted here that such a robust accountability system brings credibility and respectability of the AFMZ as an African Pentecostal Christian brand. Although the AFMZ considers itself to be a living

¹¹⁶ 3.1 An Overview of African Traditional Religion and Culture.

¹¹⁷ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 4.

¹¹⁸ Chikane, "Church Governance in the AFM," 16.

¹¹⁹ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 6,7.

¹²⁰ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 7.

¹²¹ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 9.

organism where free expression of spiritual experiences are embraced, it also views itself as an organisation where issues of spirituality are done decently and in order (1Corinthians 14:40).

The main governing document of the AFMZ is the constitution and its accompanying regulations and policy documents. I used the old constitution of the AFMZ and avoided the new or amended constitution of 2018 (which was crafted and implemented in the midst of this research) so as not to lose focus on the various changes that transpired on their governance system. The most significant section is the statement of faith in which the theology of experience is embedded. It begins by stating that the AFMZ i.e., the Church believes that it (the Church) is the revelation of the Church of Christ and is governed by Him (Christ) as the Head as witnessed by Scripture, and the working of the Holy Spirit.¹²² It goes further to state that it prays that its constitution will always be an interpretation of the will of Christ, so that good order may be maintained and extended in the church.¹²³ As shown above the AFMZ clearly affirms that it is Jesus Christ who is the Head of the church and He is the one who governs it through the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon those who are tasked to serve in the church. However, some Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand struggle with fully adhering to the constitutional requirements because they sometimes view it as a human document which may contribute to quenching the Spirit in the church, hence the need to regularly amend it to suit the changing times.

Article 6 on AFMZ key beliefs contains some aspects of African holistic pneumatology where the AFMZ church clearly states its belief in the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of glossolalia.¹²⁴ 78.8% of the interviewees see Spirit-baptism as one of the key AFMZ doctrines.¹²⁵ This remains a spiritual experience every believer in the AFMZ

¹²² AFMZ Constitution 2001, 1.

¹²³ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 1.

¹²⁴ AFMZ constitution 2001, 2.

¹²⁵ 4.2.4 Distinctive Doctrines and Practices of the AFMZ.

community is encouraged to have in order to be a fully-protected from evil forces and equipped for ministry.

51.5% of the interviewees show that the key doctrines of the AFMZ are Trinity, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, Pneumatology and Eschatology with Christ being central to all these doctrines.¹²⁶ The AFMZ derives its doctrines and practices from the Bible as shown by 24.2% of the interviewees.¹²⁷ 57.6% of the interviewees show that the AFMZ embraces triune baptism by immersion as representative of the trinity.¹²⁸ Besides the acknowledged AFMZ doctrines which are also contained in the AFMZ constitution, the Holy Spirit is perceived to be the governor of the AFMZ church who is there to guide it through its constitution, regulations and policies. The element of fluidity is observed between the role of Christ as governor of the church vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit. Sometimes Christology is swallowed by pneumatology.

The Church members and full-time workers' discipline and appeals procedure policy in the AFMZ constitution clearly states that the purpose of discipline (*shamhu*) is to maintain the glory of God and to promote the integrity of the church.¹²⁹ *Shamhu* in Shona tradition is metaphorically understood to be a rod of correction. The aim of discipline is to stop or remove the corruption of sin from the ranks of the church and to help/restore the transgressor to a right relationship with God and the church.¹³⁰ The above reflects that the AFMZ upholds holiness as a biblical standard to be adhered to through the help of the Holy Spirit and that the AFMZ church will practically endeavour to uproot corrosive sin from its ranks, whilst simultaneously assisting the transgressor to restore his/her relationship with God. All the above measures are done on the backdrop that holiness is essential to the theology of

¹²⁶ 4.2.4 Distinctive Doctrines and Practices of the AFMZ.

¹²⁷ 4.2.4 Distinctive Doctrines and Practices of the AFMZ.

¹²⁸ 4.2.4 Distinctive Doctrines and Practices of the AFMZ.

¹²⁹ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 15.

¹³⁰ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 15.

experience of the AFMZ. However, this process is easier said than done as I shall elaborate later.

The following are considered to be acts of gross misconduct: adultery, rape, sexual assault, fornication, divorce, consumption of alcohol, taking drugs or smoking, domestic violence, murder, robbery, fraud, theft, corruption, not paying debts, not paying tithes, fighting, assaults, attempted assault, gross insubordination, conflict of interest (secular employment, political or ministerial engagement outside the AFMZ without permission), damage to church property, use of charms and traditional medicines, consulting traditional healers, and all similar cases.¹³¹ These acts of misconduct are deliberately named to show how such behaviours are detrimental to African Pentecostal Christian experience and they are the opposite of what African holistic pneumatology can do in a believer. Although the constitution clearly names key cases of gross misconduct, it glaringly omits polygamy and yet historically an African preacher by the name Zacharia Mugodhi (founder of Apostolic Faith Church or AFC) was dismissed from preaching on the grounds of polygamy.¹³² It may be argued that the prohibition of polygamy is included in the statement “and all similar cases.” The constitution also provides that if a church member is convicted in a secular court of law for gross misconduct done outside the church, the wrongdoer shall also be subjected to internal disciplinary measures.¹³³ Every case shall be investigated, and adjudicated in a church-related court hearing before judgment is passed, with room for appeals at provincial and national levels. Inclusion of misconducts outside the church as deserving discipline shows the extent to which holiness is valued in the AFMZ. Discipline becomes part of the role of the Holy Spirit to ensure holiness being the route to experiential spirituality.

¹³¹ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 37.

¹³² Lovemore Togarasei, “Historicising Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe,” *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 42, no. 1 (2016): 5.

¹³³ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 38.

The AFMZ constitution states that if a member or a leader is found guilty of a gross misconduct, he/she shall be put under discipline, being a time of censorship ranging from three months to twenty-four months during which the transgressor cannot serve in the church other than take the role similar to a non-member.¹³⁴ The timeframe is not clear in terms of which disciplinary issues falls under which months or years. The disciplinary period is left to the whims of the disciplining committee. The constitution further states that such a disciplinary measure shall be publicly announced during a Sunday service and that persons placed under discipline may not be accepted in another AFMZ assembly before their matters have been resolved.¹³⁵ This measure is necessary to prevent the action of another assembly from helping a transgressor to circumvent the discipline. Elders, deacons and deaconesses placed on discipline can only be re-instated into the church board the following election year. A pastor placed on discipline cannot continue as a pastor at the assembly he was leading at the time of being placed on discipline, because his/her integrity would have been compromised. The above measures contribute to good governance of the AFMZ church as shown by how African holistic pneumatology embraces the role of discipline to ensure compliance of the Spirit-connected community to the tenets of holiness. Lack of discipline on the part of the believers is taken to negatively work against the believers' experience of the divine.

There are a lot of factors surrounding the AFMZ system and structures which apparently undermine the implementation of discipline among its ranks, especially when it involves the “untouchable” high profile leaders and laity, and well-to-do generous donors of the church as lamented by one respondent.¹³⁶ The negative side of the Spirit-connected community is that if a congregation has a large representation of closely knit extended family members, and the

¹³⁴ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 37.

¹³⁵ AFMZ Constitution 2001, 38.

¹³⁶ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

alleged transgressor belongs to that group, placing him/her on discipline is as good as shaming his whole clan. This will trigger negative vibes against the pastor who would have implemented the discipline. Whilst 96.77% of the respondents in the surveys confirm that church discipline is perceived to instil holiness in the church,¹³⁷ 18.2% of the interviewees see serious conflicts surrounding the application of church discipline in search of experiential spirituality.¹³⁸ These interviewees observe that the AFMZ of yesteryear was strict with publicly implementing disciplinary measures on wrongdoers but these days some pastors prefer to turn a blind eye on such transgressions or sweep them under the carpet for fear of losing members to other churches or nearby AFMZ congregations.¹³⁹ The issues raised above are a wake up call for the AFMZ to redefine its purpose of existence as a Pentecostal Christian community which aims to remain relevant whilst maintaining its Pentecostal distinctives which are practically demonstrated by implementing disciplinary measures among its ranks.

Regarding the place of public church discipline in spiritual growth, 75.8% of the interviewees agree that church discipline does inculcate spiritual values necessary for experiential spirituality but there are concerns on the modus operandi of implementing such disciplinary measures.¹⁴⁰ Two interviewees note that it is now common knowledge that because of the embarrassing nature of public discipline, modern believers opt to avoid discipline by moving to another church or another AFMZ congregation.¹⁴¹ The AFMZ as shown by 48.5% of interviewees, subscribes to public discipline as a tool to correct error as well as a deterrent to others and that it further serves to safeguard the doctrines and values of

¹³⁷ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

¹³⁸ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

¹³⁹ 4.2.7 Processes of adaptation and modernisation in the AFMZ.

¹⁴⁰ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

¹⁴¹ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

the church as a community where every member is accountable to others.¹⁴² The bottom line of the matter is that, whilst public church discipline is for organisational order as enshrined in the AFMZ constitution, the reality on the ground is that AFMZ congregations are now too large to easily implement church discipline. The mobility of believers (as reiterated earlier) as they avoid discipline is also perpetuated by other churches and even other AFMZ congregations, who receive new members without scrutiny. In other words, the religious market has become a jungle where survival is for the fittest, hence the scramble for new converts/members without background checks.

The greatest challenge to church discipline lies with those who are expected to be the custodians of the constitution and implementors of church discipline especially the pastorate and lay leaders in the AFMZ church who are expected to lead by example. Whilst implementation of disciplinary measures on clergy and parishioners is perceived to be a noble spiritual activity, it is one of the most painful exercises as it can make or break the person being placed on discipline if it is not implemented restorationally. A section of the AFMZ as shown by five interviewees, lament that church discipline is losing acceptance because it is only implemented to settle scores, fix, or tarnish someone, or technically bar someone from contesting church elections.¹⁴³ One can be unfairly treated or tarnished if he/she is suspended without first establishing whether the evidence presented during the preliminary processes clearly points to a gross misconduct having been committed. Although the transgressor may eventually be exonerated, irreparable damage may have occurred through character assassination.

Historically, Ruzivo observes that disciplinary measures were crafted by AFMR missionaries to keep AFMR African preachers on leash and satisfy the demands of the British

¹⁴² 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

¹⁴³ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline to spiritual growth.

settler government.¹⁴⁴ Isaac Kachade Chiumbu nicknamed Kachembere, a senior African preacher of Malawian origin was put on discipline by a junior missionary District Superintendent (DS) for Gatooma (now Kadoma) known as Teichert for “disorderly behaviour” and this disciplinary measure was communicated to the Native Commissioner in government.¹⁴⁵ After fruitless appeals to the Native Commissioner, Chiumbu ended up starting the African Apostolic Faith Mission (AAFM) in 1943.¹⁴⁶ It is noted with regret that the respectability project applied through discipline had its negative side to which Chiumbu and many other AFMR African preachers were dismissed on political grounds rather than being restored, as should be the case if the disciplinary measures were genuinely spiritual. It is noted with regret also that disciplinary measures by missionaries within AFMR had to be communicated to outsiders without having exhausted the appeal system within the church.

The above observations and historical incidences during the missionary era contradict the main aim of church discipline, which is to restore the transgressor to a good relationship with God and administer it (discipline) in a just manner. Although a congregant or another leader in the church may have erred, a vindictive approach may be counter-productive and reflect inability to respect the dignity of the wrongdoer, and undermine the desire for holiness in search of experiential spirituality. Moreover, implementors of discipline must do so with wisdom, sobriety, fear of God and maturity, demonstrating justice, fairness and consistency while incorporating any restorative measures, as argued by eight interviewees.¹⁴⁷ In all this the Holy Spirit continues to play the disciplinary and restorative role in the believer. Discipline must be based on the understanding that a Church is a voluntary organisation which must seek to build love, sobriety and respect amongst the general congregants.

¹⁴⁴ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 198–99.

¹⁴⁵ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 199.

¹⁴⁶ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 201.

¹⁴⁷ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline to spiritual growth.

Figure 16 shows that 96.77% of the respondents know the importance of public discipline in the AFMZ church, but it is the issue of privately confessed sins or failings which raises various observations and concerns.¹⁴⁸ There is no clear consensus from the data findings pertaining whether privately confessed sins to the pastor or elder should be liable for public discipline. Three respondents think that the courage to confess private failings is a positive indicator that the transgressor is sensitive to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and that such individuals are not difficult to restore and/or if such a person is a leader, it will be easy to encourage him/her to step down from a position of responsibility for a season.¹⁴⁹ But the fact that someone has confessed their failings does not necessarily mean that they will automatically opt to relinquish their position at another's prompting. Seven respondents show that an act like adultery remains wrong and deserves public discipline even if someone confesses such a sin to the pastor or any other leader in the church.¹⁵⁰ This view may be perceived as too radical and deters potential confessors from doing so. One respondent notes that leaders are entrusted with confidential issues and therefore should have the discretion to handle issues on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the potential damage the personal failing may have to the church and community if the case is publicised.¹⁵¹ Four respondents show a concern that publicly disciplining someone who has confided in you is like crucifying someone for confessing, whilst two respondents observe that such a practice is a breach of confidentiality, which may invite unnecessary litigations against the church.¹⁵² However, the concept of maintaining holiness in search of the theology of experience is arguably noble, but going to the extent of applying public discipline on privately confessed sins may be counter-productive. This is because such a practice is not enshrined in the AFMZ

¹⁴⁸ 4.1.1 The role of church activities, attachments, Christian behaviour, and spiritual disciplines to spiritual experiences.

¹⁴⁹ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

¹⁵⁰ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

¹⁵¹ 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

¹⁵² 4.2.8 The place of public church discipline in spiritual growth.

constitution and it desacralises the sanctity of personal confession and the the sacral duty of pastors to restore believers who need support in the restorative process.

5.2.3 Divine Healing and Pentecostal View of Bio-Medical system

This section seeks to demonstrate that African holistic pneumatology which addresses existential issues like sickness is practically observable when one analyses the Pentecostal holistic healthcare system in the eyes of the AFMZ. Divine healing is a key component of the theology of experience of the AFMZ as demonstrated by altar calls geared to invite the sick to be prayed for through laying on of hands mainly at the altar. In the AFMZ any place one stands to proclaim the gospel and invites people for healing or salvation automatically becomes sacralised as an altar.

The AFMZ operates in a political, economic, cultural and religious setting where the traditional healer was the kingpin of the Shona traditional healthcare system as signposted in chapter 3.¹⁵³ In the Shona community, most health problems are believed to have mystical causality or spiritual origins, hence the traditional healer is the most handy person to consult as he/she has powers and skills as both a diagnostic and therapeutic practitioner.¹⁵⁴ In their traditional surgeries, traditional healers are said to wield powers to exorcise evil spirits and disable evil charms on one hand, and on the other hand dispense traditional medicines in order to cure basic ailments with no spiritual origin.

The AFMZ considers the Shona traditional healthcare system as demonic and discontinuous with Pentecostal Christianity, and replaces it with divine healing through the power of the Holy Spirit in line with the continuity and discontinuity debate where certain

¹⁵³ 3.1 An overview of African traditional religion and culture.

¹⁵⁴ 3.1 An overview of African traditional religion and culture.

practices are adopted and adapted, and others outrightly rejected to suit the new setting.¹⁵⁵ Ruzivo notes that the AFMR missionaries and their African preachers appeared to initially sing from the same hymn sheet pertaining to divine healing, on the backdrop that both Western medicines and African traditional medicines had failed to address “plagues of beasts and man” which affected humans and animals, one of which was the influenza pandemic of 1918.¹⁵⁶ The Pentecostal healthcare system of divine healing thrived during these times as African preachers did not only pray for people to be healed but their livestock as well.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, the Pentecostal holistic healthcare system was extended to protecting one’s source of livelihood, hence the role of the Holy Spirit in addressing existential issues. Despite this emphasis, some AFMR adherents died during the influenza pandemic including the American missionary Rev Goldie who was based at Gobatema mission in the Gwanda district.¹⁵⁸ This became one of the key reasons the AFMR went under censorship, which forced the AFMR missionaries to tone down this particular aspect of their theology of experience, thus embrace the Western healthcare system. African preachers were adamant on divine healing as the only credible healthcare system although reality demanded that they embrace preventive Western healthcare models like vaccination of children from various ailments. These views slowly started to die a natural death, although there remains a few die-hard elements who sometimes die of curable ailments if one used Western medicines. Interestingly there is still a section of the radical AFMZ members who still shun both African and Western healthcare models.

Current perspectives in the AFMZ due to the adaptation and modernising agenda are that there is now general consensus on the importance of Western medical healthcare together with divine healing. Although acceptance of Western medical healthcare is a welcome

¹⁵⁵ 3.3 The continuity and discontinuity debate in African Pentecostalism.

¹⁵⁶ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 110–11.

¹⁵⁷ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 111.

¹⁵⁸ Ruzivo, “A History of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe,” 108.

development, it has come when such a system has become unreachable to the poor due to the emergence of expensive private hospitals and the collapse of government hospitals which are meant to cater for the marginalised of society. Virtually observed services like the Midlands South provincial conference where Pastor Bura instructed congregants to confront their challenges like ill health through prayer show that divine healing remains a common theology of experience in AFMZ gatherings where pastors are the key diagnostic and therapeutic practitioners.¹⁵⁹ Pastors go further with pneumatological empowerment whereby AFMZ adherents are empowered to dispense healing upon themselves through prayer.

The AFMZ has another perspective to medical healing as virtually observed at the Harare North Ladies' Conference where Mrs Kwaramba (a pastor's wife) testifies that God is the ultimate healer as shown in her case where she had a fatal accident, which left her hospitalised for three months.¹⁶⁰ Although much of the recovery process was administered medically, she ascribes her healing experience to God. To current AFMZ adherents who have a holistic perspective to healing which embraces both medical and divine healing, it is divine healing which remains central because medical practitioners are believed to derive their wisdom from God. It is the prayers of the believers in Pentecostal spirituality which moves God to direct the procedures doctors and nurses do to our bodies. In this vein, the Holy Spirit addresses health issues by directing procedures done by nurses, doctors and other health practitioners. Furthermore, the AFMZ now co-operates with the Ministry of Health in taking hygienic procedures seriously as shown by virtual observation of the conference notification at Rufaro that hygienic measures must be observed to avoid the spread of typhoid disease.¹⁶¹ Such health awareness practices have been further inculcated by the Covid-19 pandemic which has affected the entire world.

¹⁵⁹ 4.3.1 Midlands South Provincial Conference.

¹⁶⁰ 4.3.3 Harare North Ladies' Conference, 2018.

¹⁶¹ 4.3.5 Rufaro General Conference, 2018.

But the Shona traditional healthcare system is still strongly opposed by most AFMZ members and this is enshrined in the AFMZ constitution which views consulting traditional healers and taking traditional medicines as a gross misconduct liable for discipline.¹⁶² The irony of it is that while it is now alright to embrace Western medical healthcare, one may ask whether there anything wrong with taking traditional herbs like lippia javanica (*zumbani*) if it clears someone's breathing system if one has flu? Does someone deserve to be censored or be put on discipline for taking herbs with food as additives to healthy eating? Does someone deserve to be disciplined for growing his/her own herbal plants in his/her own garden? Surely this perspective is influenced by western colonial perspectives thereby needs to be re-viewed to establish whether use of herbs as part of healing and healthy eating contradicts our Pentecostal faith. What criterion is used to make western medicines Christian whilst African medicines are perceived to be anti-Christian or heathen? Could it be that the missionary othering discourse was successful in demonising the traditional healthcare system as evil and demonic without sifting its positive aspects and the neutrality of medicines whether Western or African? The missionaries did not understand that there were common herbs based on indigenous knowledge systems to heal wounds, coughs and other ailments which ordinary people could pick from the bush without consulting a traditional healer hence the neutrality argument. The only difference is that Western medicines are better packaged and properly processed, a thing which modern African scientists can also do now.

The AFMZ healing practices are against imitating African charms and other protective gadgets because they believe that protection from evil comes from the Holy Spirit who helps them to counter evil spirits in their theology of experience. To keep people comfortable with their spirit-filled environment, the AFMZ adherents revert to the Bible which has the world of spirits and tells them what to do with spirits i.e., cast them out. The AFMZ indirectly

¹⁶² AFMZ Constitution 2001, 37.

acknowledges the continuity debate in terms of continuously confronting this spirit-filled world by casting them out as opposed to celebrating or appeasing them (Chapter 4).¹⁶³ In the AFMZ theology of experience, one notes that confronting the enchanted world is more pronounced whilst tapping into the same world is less pronounced except the neutral cultural traits and christianisation of some African practices to suit the new Pentecostal Christian faith. Most altar calls as reiterated earlier are connected to healing and deliverance as a regular practice of divine healing, hence African holistic pneumatology which addresses existential issues.

Conclusion

What has emerged clearly is that African Pentecostals of the AFMZ brand do exhibit continuity in terms of African Pentecostal Christian experience through adopting and adapting Shona cultural traits which are continuous with their Pentecostal Christian faith, whilst confronting those aspects which are discontinuous with Pentecostal values. The continuity comes in on how they view the Spirit-connected community exhibited as a form of ecclesiology where communal connectedness (*ukochekeche*) and relatedness (*ukama*) is perceived to be joined together by the Holy Spirit. The AFMZ has been demonstrated to be the ecclesiological context where religious experience is socialised and mediated through its Pentecostal communal practices or rituals. Practices such as all-night prayers and early morning prayers have shown why they target what is perceived in Shona religious beliefs to be prime time during which evil spirits operate i.e., night, or dark times. Data has also shown continuity in that prayer is the central ritual AFMZ adherents use to address issues surrounding the African enchanted world and why mountains remain a popular spot for

¹⁶³ 3.3 The Continuity/Discontinuity Debate in African Pentecostalism.

spiritual retreats due to the sacredness ascribed to them by both ATR and the Bible. The need for protection to counter mystical causality has been demonstrated through prayers of protection at major rituals such as birth, marriage, and death. In African holistic pneumatology, Spirit-baptism with the evidence of glossolalia was noted to be the central initiation experience which ushers AFMZ adherents into experiential spirituality and such an ecstatic experience supersedes what the African enchanted world offered through spirit-possession. African holistic pneumatology embraces the belief that the Holy Spirit addresses missional and existential issues through the following sub-themes; Pentecostal proclamation and expansion of the church by continually applying Shona traditional practices of splitting a congregation (*kugura*), weaning a congregation (*kurumura*), and settlement support for a weaned congregation (*kutegesa*). Pentecostal governance, constitution, and church discipline have been seen as the work of the Holy Spirit to ensure that the church exists and operates in holiness and order. Pentecostal holistic healthcare in the AFMZ has been observed to encompass divine healing (which includes deliverance and protection) and Western medical healing but at the same time totally demonises Shona traditional healing due to the othering discourse propounded by missionary Pentecostalism. Analysis of data shows that the AFMZ is indeed an indigenous Pentecostal church whose theology of experience resonates with some aspects of African/Shona spirituality. Their religious experience (AFMZ) deserves to be called African Pentecostal Christian experience in that it depicts Afro-Biblical ambience. The AFMZ theology of experience continues to adopt and adapt in line with changing times to maintain contextual relevance. Conclusively, inculturation of Spirit-connected community as a special kind of ecclesiology and African holistic pneumatology as a type of liberationist pneumatology has been demonstrated.

CONCLUSION

This research has analysed the theology of experience as the major distinctive mark of Pentecostalism in the AFMZ. My departure point was that the theology of experience underpins or lies at the heart of the AFMZ brand of African Pentecostalism. Experiential spirituality could be retrieved if one engages the continuity and discontinuity debate in African Pentecostal discourse on the backdrop of the Shona religio-cultural context within which the AFMZ exists. Based on the above hypothesis, this thesis established how this theology of experience has been embraced, utilised, adapted, and implemented in the AFMZ. The main contribution of this thesis was to provide deeper understanding and categories on the theology of experience from an African Pentecostal Christian context of the AFMZ in which Shona culture is the host. The key points of focus in fieldwork were to explore 1. How religious experience can be incorporated into Pentecostal theological analysis and reflection. 2. How the theology of experience has operated and witnessed in the Pentecostal movement focusing on AFMZ? 3. How this theology has contributed to the growth of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa. 4. How the theology of experience contributed to the shaping and formulation of doctrines, practices, rituals, and hymnody of the AFMZ? 5. Can the AFMZ maintain its identity outside the theology of experience? 6. To what extent does Shona cosmology contribute to the religious experience and identity of AFMZ?

Linkages of the theology of experience in hypothetical data and Fieldwork findings

The incorporation and operation of the theology of experience was addressed by looking at the historical antecedences (see chapter 2) which influences the AFMZ. It was observed that the antecedent of Pietism in general and Methodist spirituality shaped the AFMZ spirituality

especially the concept of quarterly meetings for worship and council meetings. It was also noted that John Graham Lake being a former Methodist preacher arguably brought Methodist traits into the Apostolic Faith Mission which he co-founded together with other missionary team members.

Key features of Pietist spirituality which resonate with the AFMZ are noted as evidence-based experiential and heartfelt spirituality, holy and rigorous Christian lifestyle characterised by praying, fasting, music, dance regulated dressing and democracy of the Spirit which makes every believer a minister. The democratic approach to ministry based on the Priesthood of all believers is an aggressive approach to proclamation of the Word aiming for individual regeneration, emphasis on spiritual warfare praying and divine healing, vibrant, enthusiastic, and energetic worship, and ecstatic spiritual experiences such as being slain in the Spirit. Findings from fieldwork showed that the AFMZ depicts some of these Pietist traits like ecstatic spirituality, aggressive proclamation of the Word and spiritual warfare type of prayers. However, these traits manifest themselves in the African enchanted world of mystical causality where AFMZ adherents must grapple with African realities of poverty, misfortune and diseases which are believed to be caused by malevolent spirits. These African Pentecostals as shown by fieldwork findings, believe that they can easily counter these evil forces through the greater power of the Holy Spirit.

The incorporation and operation of healing in the theology of experience was generally existent in the history of the church but the Healing movement popularised it. This movement passed on the conviction within the AFMZ that all kinds of ailments are associated with the devil or evil spirits hence can be cured by God through the power of the Holy Spirit usually by laying on of hands as in Bible times. Misfortunes and ailments are ascribed to mystical causality with evil spirits as the protagonists in Shona religion and culture. Findings showed that the AFMZ has a healthcare system which addresses the above

by promoting divine healing through the laying on of hands and is now embracing Western medical healthcare on the understanding that it is God who directs doctors and nurses in administering medical healing but the ultimate healer being God. What is ironical is that the Church does not have a policy on the building of hospitals and clinics and that traditional herbs remain demonised.

The main contribution of the Holiness movement to the theology of experience was the blessing of sanctification and its accompanying temperaments like emotional fervency, literal-minded Biblicism, application of puritanical mores and negative perception of ecclesiasticism. The best model of church is the local congregation hence the decentralised system which gives autonomy to the local congregation as demonstrated by data findings. The AFMZ's emphasis on holiness as foundational to experiential spirituality was shown by the fieldwork findings. Although the AFMZ has progressed in modernising itself, findings showed that confession of sins which used to be done in public is still being emphasised publicly pertaining to corporate confession of corporate sins, but individuals are encouraged to confess their sins privately. Findings further noted that church disciplinary measures are a tool to regulate acceptable behaviour commensurate with holiness to keep their theology of experience aligned to the Biblical standards. However, the advent of large congregations due to church growth and the interconnected nature of AFMZ congregational membership is making it difficult to implement discipline.

The Azusa Street revival of 1906 which is generally considered to be the cradle of modern Pentecostalism has been established to have a bearing on the AFMZ through John Graham Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch who both experienced Spirit-baptism through agents from Azusa and later maintained their connection with William Seymour at Azusa Street. This movement's main contribution to the AFMZ theology of experience was noted as the belief in Spirit-baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues, the practice of deliverance

as an additive to the salvific experience, the importance of the five-fold gospel as a summary of Pentecostal experiences, and a passion for missions which requires basic training.

Fieldwork findings showed that the AFMZ's tenets of faith enshrined in the constitution (as quoted and supported by respondents) has a section where it claims that glossolalia is the initial evidence of Spirit baptism and its major experiences hinge on the five-fold Pentecostal gospel of salvation, sanctification, healing, Spirit-baptism and the second coming of Christ which drives their Pentecostal proclamation. Theological education of key workers i.e., pastors has contributed to the astronomical growth of the AFMZ although anti-theology sentiments also persist among some old school adherents.

It is at the planting of the AFM in South Africa and later in Zimbabwe where the incorporation and operation of the theology of experience was historically and contextually observed. It was noted that the AFMSA was established as a product of revivalism starting from the Doornfontein revival in Johannesburg and its sporadic spread to other parts of Africa by African agents and a cluster of missionaries. It was not just the preaching by Lake and Hezmalhalch which attracted Africans, but the signs and wonders especially miraculous healings which resonated with the African enchanted worldview and responded to African realities through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The study showed that the initial planting of the AFM in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was a result of the efforts of African migrant workers of Zimbabwean and Malawian origins. But due to the persistent failure to toe the line of the British settler government whereby African preachers were required to desist from conducting all night prayers characterised by ecstatic experiences and exorcisms of demons, the AFMZ suffered setbacks pertaining its registration and recognition. The church struggled to gain full recognition for some time. Some of these early practices of all night prayers in mountains and early morning prayers in forests were investigated and analysed, findings of which show that the AFMZ even in its early planting

stage reflected attempts at adapting and adopting certain elements of African/Shona spirituality consistent with Pentecostal Christianity.

The AFMZ theology of experience is based upon their understanding of the supernatural in Scripture and how this engages with Shona cosmology. An overview of ATR of the Shona brand and the supernatural in selected Scriptures demonstrated that the AFMZ's view of Satan and his evil spirits or demons influenced how they demonise both benevolent and malevolent spirits in Shona religion as emanating from Satan. Such a perception makes African/Shona Pentecostals of the AFMZ to engage in countering evil spirits as the powers behind mystical causality as shown by fieldwork findings where sermons and demonstrations of power focus on addressing such African realities.

The continuity and discontinuity debate in African Pentecostal discourse was confirmed by data findings that the AFMZ practises responsible syncretism in shaping their theology of experience on the backdrop of how the term syncretism has been impugned as an adulterated word loaded with impurities. This adoption and adaptation process in the AFMZ has led to the dismissal of the view that Pentecostalism came as a full package from the United States of America. In its theology of experience, the AFMZ cautiously adopts and adapts some Shona religio-cultural aspects which contribute to the success of Pentecostalism on African soil in line with the continuity/discontinuity debate.

As a qualitative researcher my aim was to analyse how the AFMZ adherents construct and enact their theology of experience within the ambience of Shona African traditional religion and culture and Scripture as reflected by their interpretive matrix. Analysis of data findings which demonstrate the theology of experience of the AFMZ were divided into two major themes as obtained from the data findings. Such major theological themes are Spirit-connected community and African holistic pneumatology. These two major theological

themes underpin what the AFMZ contributes to global Pentecostalism in general and the global south.

Data findings showed that the idea of Spirit-connected community is gleaned from the Shona concept of relational connectedness (*ukama*) where people live communally as clusters of people who are related to each other through the bloodline or by marriage (a union which culminates in a new bloodline also). In this vein the thesis revealed that the AFMZ adherents view themselves as a people with a special kind of kinship through the blood of Jesus Christ and where the theology of experience is enacted within this communal Christian setting. Unlike the Shona extended family which is connected by ancestors perceived to be the living dead who protect the living, the AFMZ members do not believe in the ancestral role of the living dead, but they adopt and adapt the concept by embracing the Holy Spirit as the one who takes the protective role on the Spirit-connected community. The Holy Spirit also replaces ancestral connection as He (the Holy Spirit) becomes the ecclesial thread who brings connectedness among African Pentecostal Christians of the AFMZ brand. It was further noted that it is within this Spirit-connected community manifested in the AFMZ structures from grassroots to national where religious experience takes centre stage with pastors as the key protagonists of their theology of experience.

Data findings showed that AFMZ's theology of experience as a Spirit-connected community is mediated by its communal rituals or practices such as all-night prayers (*pungwe*), early morning prayers (*rumuko/masowe*), January 10 days of prayer and fasting, praise and worship, spiritual retreats, and life cycles. In all these practices, a traceable pattern of the socialised communal culture of prayer and its character of ritual repetitiveness were observed to be the main triggers of religious experience. It is also within these communal rituals where God is continually encountered through the power of the Holy Spirit. By so doing the AFMZ adherents get the power to counter evil spirits. Research findings have

shown that the AFMZ kind of Pentecostal theology of experience is a theology of encounter where God is encountered for the purpose of empowering believers to counter evil spirits which are the source of misfortunes and ailments within the African enchanted world. Countering evil spirits is perceived to be a missiological agenda as it brings deliverance to those under the bondage of demons.

African holistic pneumatology focused on how the AFMZ practically engages the Holy Spirit in addressing missional and existential issues. The research noted the following sub-themes from data findings such as Pentecostal proclamation and expansion which is key to missions. This theme shows how the Holy Spirit empowers believers to do missions. Therefore, baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues remains the key experiential qualification to proclaim the gospel. Such proclamation at crusades, revivals or at any other gathering has been key to the continuing growth of the AFMZ. The same Pentecostal proclamation is used to address existential issues like healing, exorcism of demons, protection from evil spirits and provision of needs. Pastors as key ministers of the word function as both diagnostic and therapeutic practitioners, thus replace the role of the traditional healer in Shona culture. The theme of Pentecostal governance, constitution, and church discipline is key to order, accountability, and respectability of the AFMZ. The theology of experience is therefore domesticated, whilst church discipline is there to perpetuate holiness as an environment conducive to experiential spirituality. Pentecostal holistic healthcare as a theme, demonstrates the AFMZ's reliance on divine healing as a method of winning souls through meeting existential needs of good health in a spirit filled world and crumbling Western healthcare system.

Unresolved issues for future research

Future research is challenged to revisit the grey areas of Pentecostal healthcare system where African herbs have been demonised. This will help African Pentecostal Christians to consider having their own herbal gardens as these may assist in maintaining a healthy body, thus address existential issues holistically. Addressing existential issues could also mean that African Pentecostals must make tough conversations with African governments some of which are notorious dictatorships. If African Pentecostals can counter evil, in the same spirit, they should also counter political and economic systems which impoverish people. A well-constructed Pentecostal political theology (which is not currently existent) becomes the tool for the Pentecostal community to be a watchdog of democracy out of which emanates meaningful livelihoods and perpetuation of experiential spirituality in a peaceful environment. As reflective thinkers, African Pentecostals are also challenged to reflect how countering evil i.e., warfare against the demonological world can overshadow the primary need of encountering God. The role of tradition and institutionalisation may also need further research to ascertain its contribution to religious experience. Researchers are also challenged to analyse how African Pentecostal Christianity is impacting global Pentecostalism and ecumenism.

In sum, this study has established that the theology of experience is the trademark of Pentecostalism as depicted by the AFMZ as a case study where this theology has been effectively adopted, adapted, and propagated. It has also been observed that the theology of experience has operated in the Pentecostal movement historically and contextually and that religious experience has been incorporated into theological analysis and reflection as derived from the doctrines and practices of the AFMZ. This has led to the understanding of the theology of experience which adopts and adapts insights from Shona religion and culture which are continuous with Pentecostal Christianity, whilst confronting those aspects which

are discontinuous with Pentecostal Christian values considering the continuity/discontinuity debate in African Pentecostal discourse. Data findings have produced two key themes which underpin this study which are Spirit-connected community on one hand being a form of ecclesiology and the context in which God is encountered. African holistic pneumatology on another hand being a form of liberative pneumatology addresses missional and existential issues by countering the spirit-filled world. This makes the Pentecostal theology of experience of the AFMZ to be characterised as both a theology of encountering God and countering evil.

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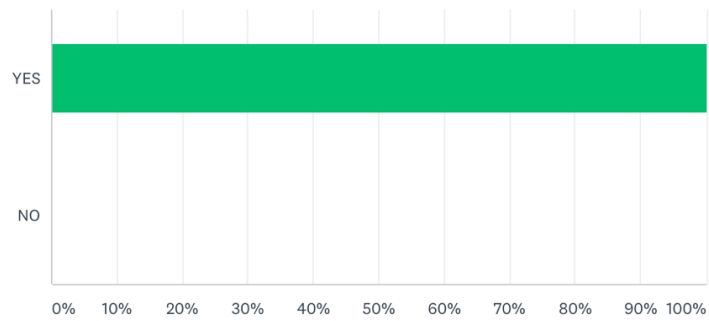
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Appendix

Figure 1

Being with others at a Church service or other church-related activities contributes to my spiritual experiences

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



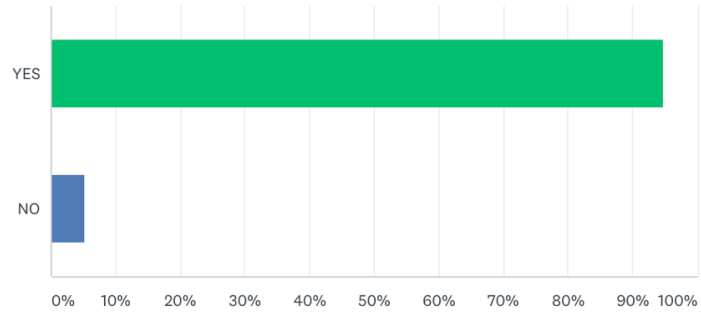
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ YES	100.00%	38
▼ NO	0.00%	0
TOTAL		38



Figure 2

A number of my family members or relatives are members of the AFM

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

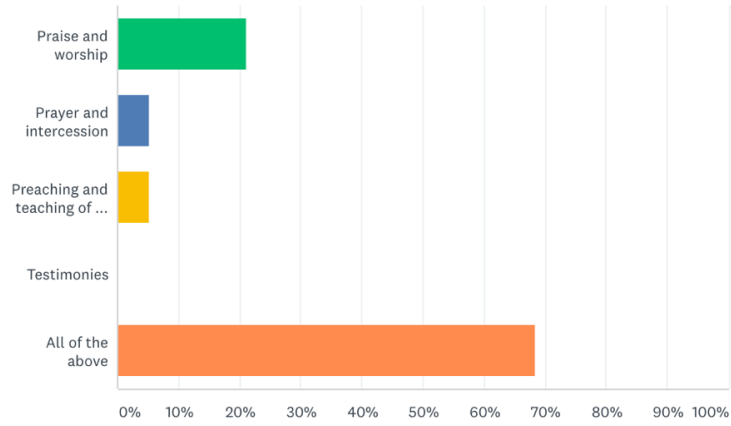


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ YES	94.74%	36
▼ NO	5.26%	2
TOTAL		38

Figure 3

When you are at Church, what makes you feel connected to God?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

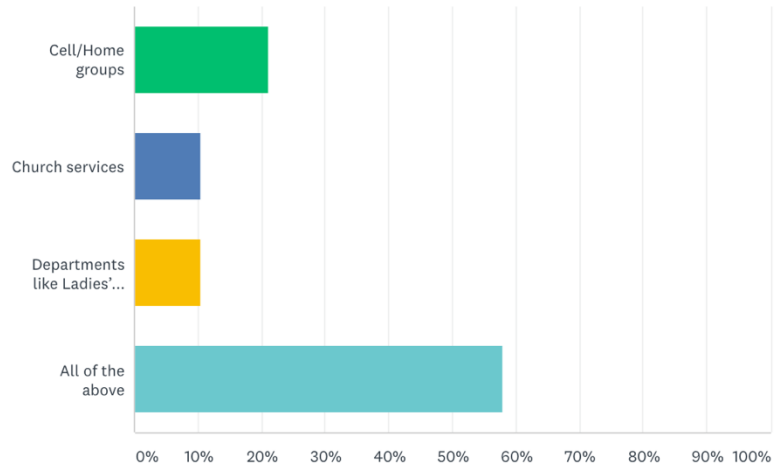


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Praise and worship	21.05% 8
▼ Prayer and intercession	5.26% 2
▼ Preaching and teaching of the word	5.26% 2
▼ Testimonies	0.00% 0
▼ All of the above	68.42% 26
TOTAL	38

Figure 4

In your view, where is participation of church members promoted?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

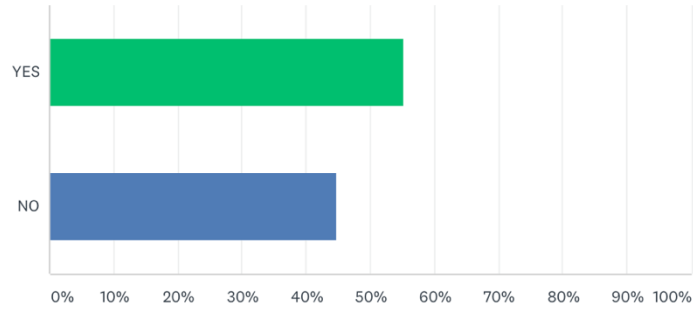


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Cell/Home groups	21.05% 8
Church services	10.53% 4
Departments like Ladies' Union, Youth and Sunday School etc	10.53% 4
All of the above	57.89% 22
TOTAL	38

Figure 5

Is church discipline an effective tool to regulate Christian behaviour?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

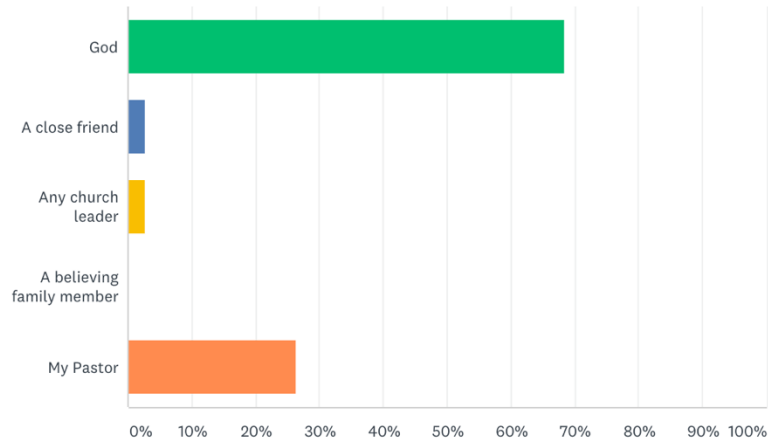


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ YES	55.26%	21
▼ NO	44.74%	17
TOTAL		38

Figure 6

When I have committed a sin which affects the integrity of my church, I am likely to confess my failures to?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

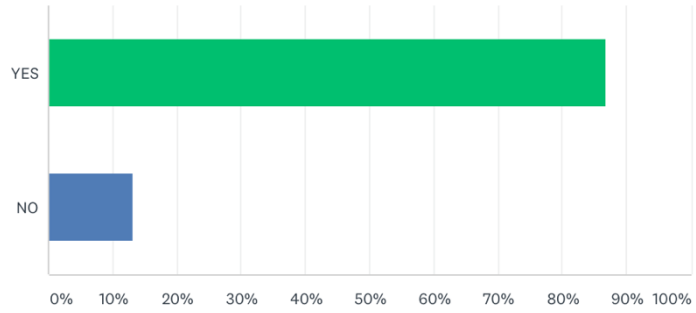


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ God	68.42% 26
▼ A close friend	2.63% 1
▼ Any church leader	2.63% 1
▼ A believing family member	0.00% 0
▼ My Pastor	26.32% 10
TOTAL	38

Figure 7

Are women more open to spiritual experiences than men?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

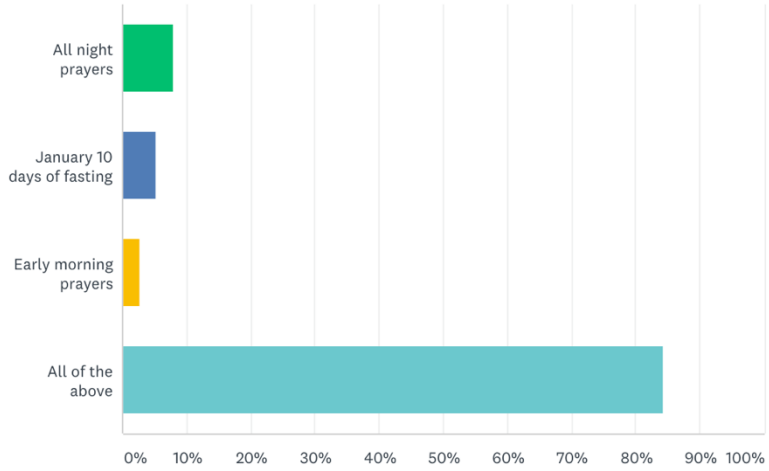


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ YES	86.84%	33
▼ NO	13.16%	5
TOTAL		38

Figure 8

In your Christian walk, which AFM spiritual disciplines have you participated in?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

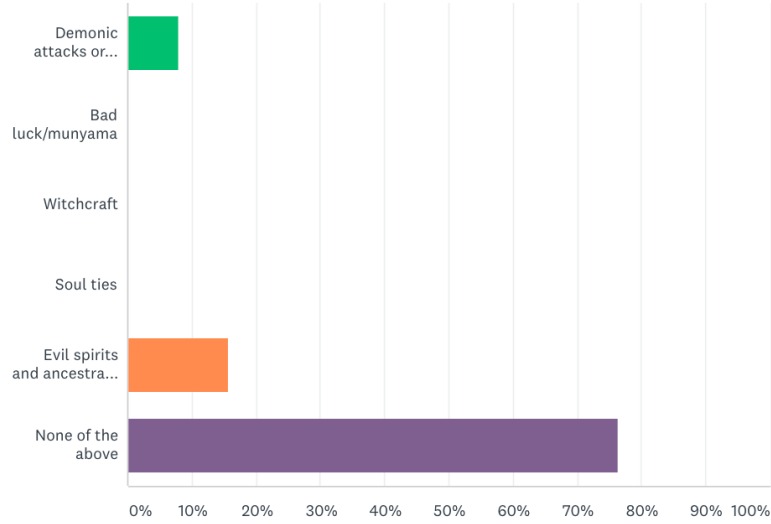


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ All night prayers	7.89% 3
▼ January 10 days of fasting	5.26% 2
▼ Early morning prayers	2.63% 1
▼ All of the above	84.21% 32
TOTAL	38

Figure 9

Do you find any of the things below a threat to your life?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0

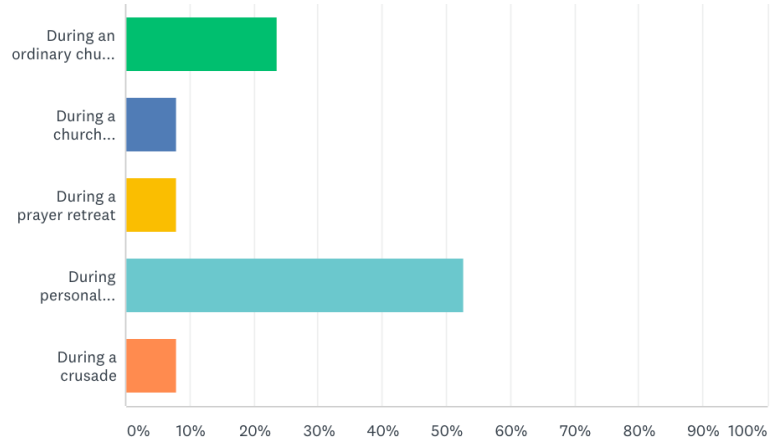


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Demonic attacks or possession	7.89% 3
▼ Bad luck/munyama	0.00% 0
▼ Witchcraft	0.00% 0
▼ Soul ties	0.00% 0
▼ Evil spirits and ancestral spirits	15.79% 6
▼ None of the above	76.32% 29
TOTAL	38

Figure 10

Your greatest spiritual experience or encounter with God happened

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ During an ordinary church service	23.68% 9
▼ During a church conference	7.89% 3
▼ During a prayer retreat	7.89% 3
▼ During personal devotions	52.63% 20
▼ During a crusade	7.89% 3
TOTAL	38

Figure 11

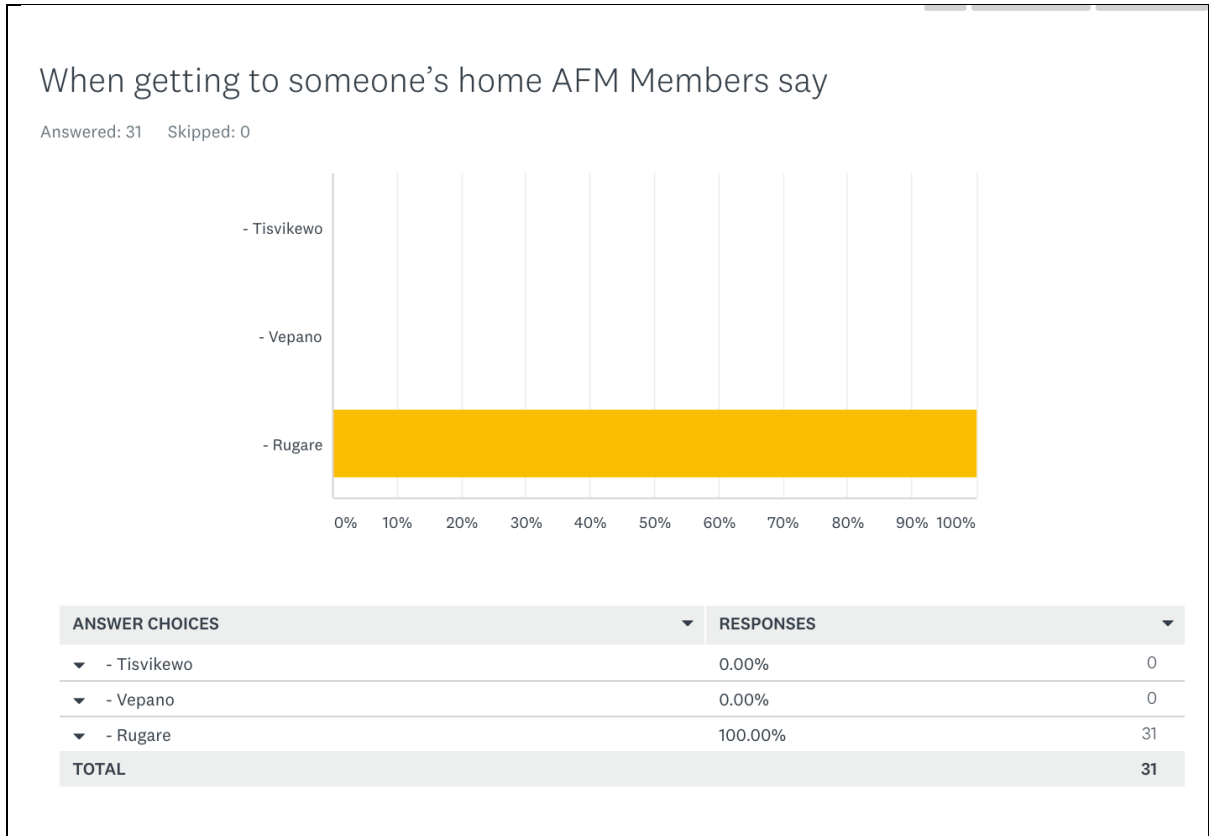
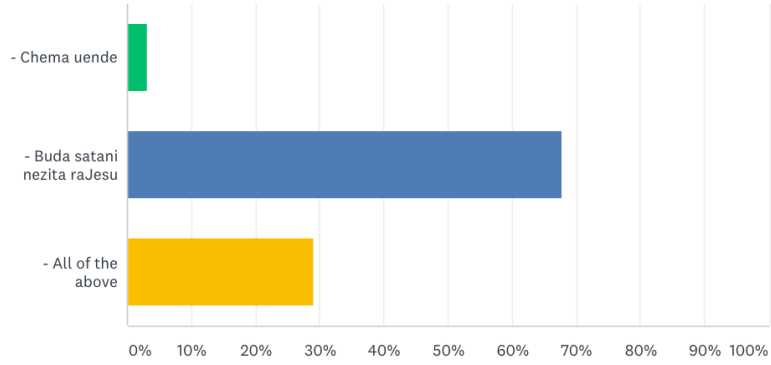


Figure 12

When casting out evil spirits, the following terms are used

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

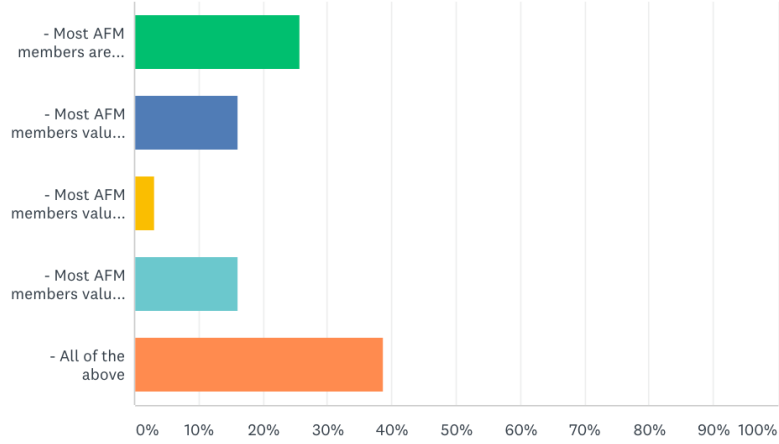


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
- Chema uende	3.23% 1
- Buda satani nezita raJesu	67.74% 21
- All of the above	29.03% 9
TOTAL	31

Figure 13

AFM 'ine hukochekeche' i.e. connectedness, means

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

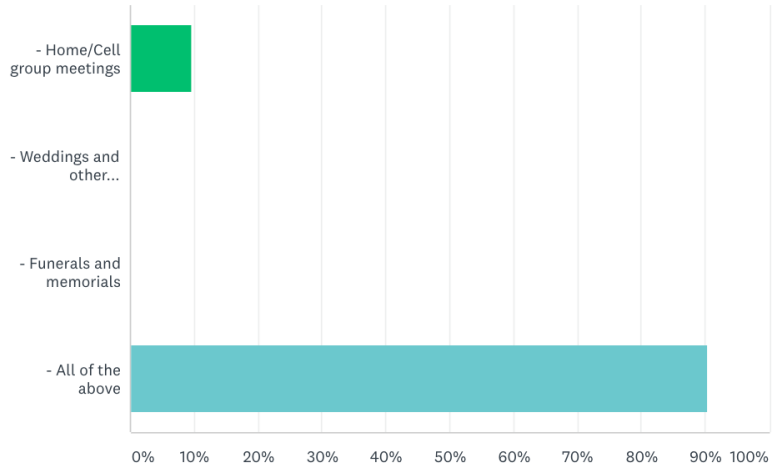


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ - Most AFM members are related	25.81%	8
▼ - Most AFM members value 'ukama' munaShe	16.13%	5
▼ - Most AFM members value African communal relations	3.23%	1
▼ - Most AFM members value 'kuwadzana kwaVatsvene'	16.13%	5
▼ - All of the above	38.71%	12
TOTAL		31

Figure 14

Communal experiences of fellowship and togetherness are practically demonstrated during

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

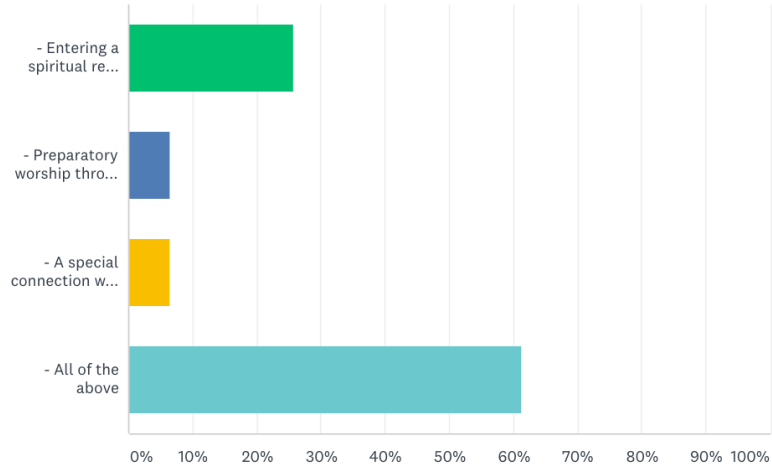


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ - Home/Cell group meetings	9.68% 3
▼ - Weddings and other celebrations	0.00% 0
▼ - Funerals and memorials	0.00% 0
▼ - All of the above	90.32% 28
TOTAL	31

Figure 15

In AFM 'kupinda muMyeya' means

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

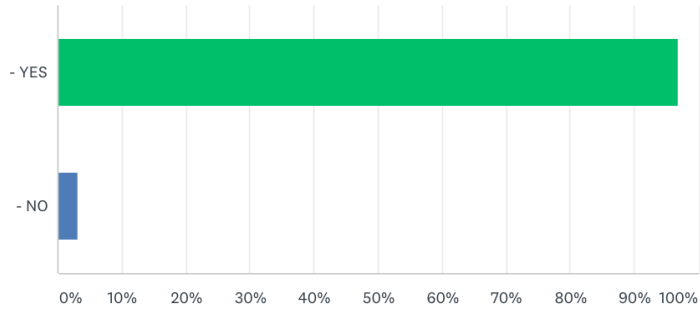


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ - Entering a spiritual realm where you feel the presence of God	25.81% 8
▼ - Preparatory worship through songs to create a spiritual atmosphere	6.45% 2
▼ - A special connection with God by intense prayer	6.45% 2
▼ - All of the above	61.29% 19
TOTAL	31

Figure 16

The AFM of long ago used to regulate Christian behaviour through public confession of sins and public discipline

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

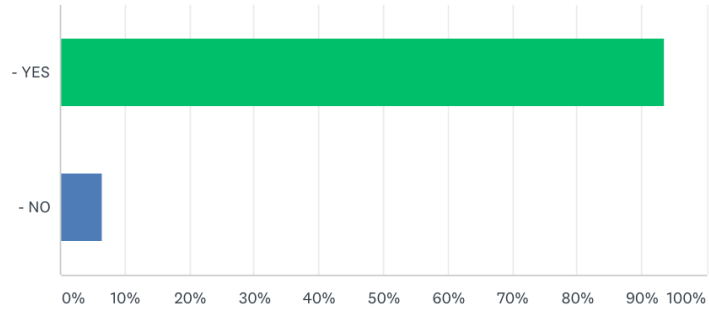


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
- YES	96.77%	30
- NO	3.23%	1
TOTAL		31

Figure 17

My African background shapes my worldview and spirituality

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

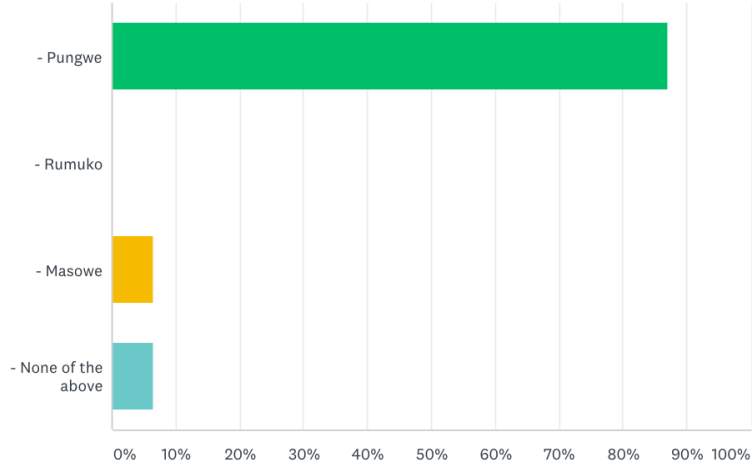


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
- YES	93.55% 29
- NO	6.45% 2
TOTAL	31

Figure 18

All night prayers were originally known as in the AFM

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

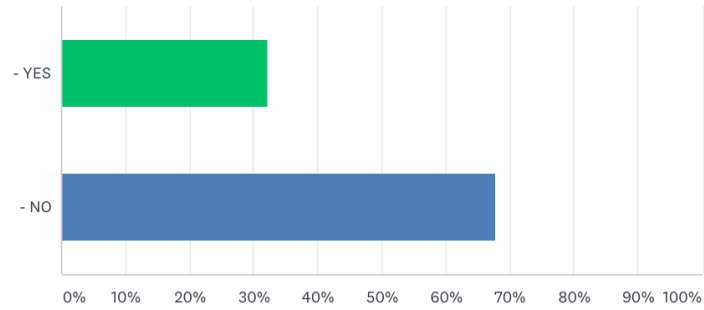


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ - Pungwe	87.10% 27
▼ - Rumuko	0.00% 0
▼ - Masowe	6.45% 2
▼ - None of the above	6.45% 2
TOTAL	31

Figure 19

In the AFM, addressing of existential issues such as prayer for the sick is sometimes called 'kushandirwa'

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0

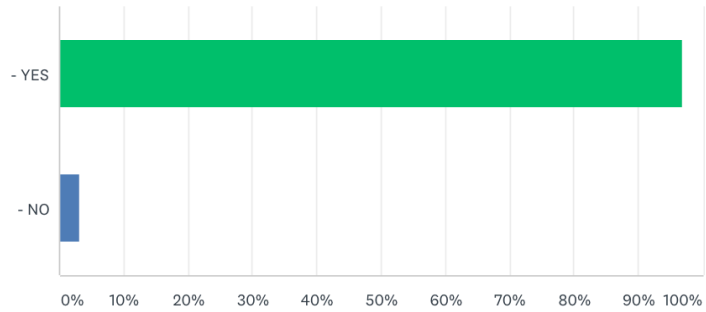


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ - YES	32.26%	10
▼ - NO	67.74%	21
TOTAL		31

Figure 20

AFM is a slowly adapting and modernising Church

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
- YES	96.77%	30
- NO	3.23%	1
TOTAL		31

