




African Pentecostalism and Ecological Spirituality: Liturgy and Supplication from a Pneumatology Perspective

Patricia Dudu Ngwena (Doctoral candidate)
Department of Philosophy, Practical & Systematic Theology
University of South Africa
Email. patriciangwena@gmail.com
Orcid.org/0000-0002-0654-6886

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Abstract

The article substantiates to highlight the importance of Pentecostal hermeneutic reference to liturgy, pneumatology, and ecclesiology. African Pentecostals worship in a manner that embodies the Holy Spirit in all aspect of worship, bearing in mind interactive acts which connects the worshipping community together with the living God and not a faraway saviour of humanity, but God all of creation. All of creation responds to the creator in worship and adoration. This brings to the fore the pervasiveness of the Spirit as the spring of life, on which the interrelated, interconnectedness and full participation of all of creation hinges. Communities are bound together by their charismatic Pentecostal experiences and common acquaintance particularly with alienation and biased judgement based on ecclesiological views and radical spirituality. While Pentecostal hermeneutics fueled by works of the Holy Spirit is distinct from other hermeneutics, the danger is when Scriptures are mis-interpreted and used out of context. Spirituality conveys an amalgamated integral or component analysis regarding its historical background, interpretation, and practice. African spirituality is therefore, understood 'as a collective entity' It is expressed within the connectedness of individuals, groups of people which forms the community. Therefore, individual spirituality within an African context is practised in a way that ensures the wellbeing of the entire community. In practicality it involves one's immersion into the livelihoods within the shared space through participation in one's community (Magesa, 2010:71). African spirituality is basically a moral obligation related to African lifeworlds and religiosity within the community at large. Ecological spirituality from the African context becomes the unifying power between humanity and the natural world by enhancing relations and accountability towards the earth community. Ecological spirituality brings forth the depth of ethics exhibiting highlighting environmental concerns intrinsically and inextricably are intertwined (Ngwena, 2021:56).

Keywords: Pentecostal hermeneutics, liturgy, pneumatology, ecological spirituality, epistemology.

Introduction

Based on ecclesiological episteme the Bible is hermeneutical, and therefore translation and interpretation is vital, although Pentecostal hermeneutics raises eyebrows in theological conversations. This can be addressed positively by acknowledging epistemology in theories. It is



fundamental to consider the diversity of attitudes and lifeworlds' in the African Christian community of the Spirit, and the central role acquaintance plays in Pentecostal hermeneutics. When the Holy Spirit is involved, according to Pentecostals, there ought to be a proper pneumatic interpretation. The reason for this is that Pentecostals are inclined to the work of the Holy Spirit in almost everything practiced or taught (Karkkainen, 1998). Thus, the Holy Spirit is invoked during interpretation in stimulating the Scriptures read/consumed or heard and working in the lives of the Pentecostal believers to an extent that they can minister to masses led by the Holy Spirit. This is based on pneumatology manifestation which derives from many forms of African Pentecostalism that have developed a Pneumatic link to Christianity and biblical tradition. For example, most African Indigenous Churches (AICs) are led by prophetic leaders who did not receive theological training. The Holy Spirit is regarded as the only credited and anointed guidance who will never be inadequate. The hermeneutic of experience, according to Archer, enables the Pentecostal community to hold a distinct, coherent narrative tradition within Christianity across denominations (Archer, 2004:41). Pentecostal communities are bound together by their charismatic attitudes and common experience of alienation and displacement of which the Holy Spirits heals and restores. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit, who did great works in the life of Christ and followers past and present. For example, the resurrection and miracles performed by the Apostles in the book of Acts, lives within the faith community. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit can draw to their attention relevant Scriptural passages that will help them address in confidence contextual challenges in their lives. Hence, many Pentecostal preachers do not even see a need to go through theological training because the Holy Spirit is the revelatory agent between the Bible and its reader (Becker, 2004). Plüss concurs with Becker and by attributing an important role to the Holy Spirit and holiness, Pentecostals acknowledge that any religious experience is, but a process submerged in Christianity (Plüss, 2003). There is divergence and convergence between African Pentecostals, neo-Pentecostals, mission Pentecostals and African Indigenous Churches Pentecostals episteme.

Pentecostal hermeneutics acknowledges the written word as the word of God that inspired the prophets and biblical authors, readers can read and understand scripture only through the works of the Holy Spirit. According to Turaki's contribution, he explains the concepts of reality embedded in the spirit realm to infuse or permeate all spiritual phenomena led by principles of spirituality at any given time and space. Spiritual scrutiny is a must as Paul indicated to the Church of Corinthians (1st Corinthians 14:29-33). This is not to ignore circular scientific knowledge at hand but placing the work of the Holy Spirit above normality or universal episteme. Therefore, fellowship with God through Scripture reading, prayer, worship, liturgy, and other activities is pivotal in Pentecostalism as it enhances knowledge about God based on the Texts. Furthermore, this requires every believer to have a personal relationship with God (filled with the Holy Spirit) and be able to read and interpret the Bible and minister to others particularly to converts without losing the message in the process. The essence of these practices among Pentecostal believers is to be able to engage with the Bible as the church through the work of the Holy Spirit (Moore 1987). While Pentecostal hermeneutics fueled by the presence of the Holy Spirit is distinct from other hermeneutics, the danger is when Scriptures are quoted or used out of context by pastors or lay prophets to drive their own ambition or agenda using the pulpit for their own selfish gains and self-gratification. It is problematic when the word spoken by a prophet is taken as the final word on one hand but abusive to the listeners or audience. The main problem, as pointed out by Plüss (2003), is that ill-trained self-proclaimed Pentecostals care little about hermeneutics, but faithfully take the literal interpretation of the text which can result in misinterpretation and this may mislead the masses (Resane, 2017; Kgatle, 2017).

Contemporarily, we are witnessing challenges from African Pentecostal churches that continues to mushroom across Africa generating a device misconception of the healing ministry. What is



missing in Pentecostal movement today is the affirmation and presence in all activities of the Holy Spirit in the ministry as stipulated in the book of Acts. For example, the early African Pentecostals developed an ecclesiology that was informed by the Spirit healing movement which they formed an integral part. Just as the Apostles saw themselves moved and ordered by the Holy Spirit (2nd Peter, 1:21). Steven Land explains this phenomenon eloquently in his publication, "Pentecostal Spirituality". A Passion for the Kingdom (Land, 1997:59-60). For example, the abuse of Scriptures, prophecy, and contradictions in experienced and revealed truth as inspired by the Holy Spirit. The actions and explanations of Pastors Lesego Daniel and Lethebo Rabalago of Rabboni Centre Ministries and Mount Zion General Assembly, respectively, illustrate the challenges facing African Pentecostalism. Both these ministers attribute feeding their respective follower's grass and spraying them with an insecticide to the instruction of the Holy Spirit. This is beyond human comprehension whether you belong to the faith community or a non-believer. Rabalago further states that "*He uses anything that the Lord directs him to use to heal people*" and that is absurd (Kgatle, 2017).

According to Resane, this is a typical example of the egoism central to the hermeneutics of the charismatic Christianity in South Africa'. By *charismatic Christianity*, or *radical Spirituality*, referring to the movement born from the revivals of the 1970s led by a Black holiness preacher named William Seymour. Seymour was a student of Parham in Houston, Texas. He carried the new message to Los Angeles and became one of the key leaders in the Pentecostal revival, which occurred in a former African Methodist Episcopal church in Azusa Street (McGee, 1988:58). The pentecostalisation of mainline churches in some instances resulted in the establishment of independent congregations often founded by theologically untrained leaders, although some did some short-term training with American-evangelical based or related Bible Schools spread across the African continent. The complexities of the untrained Pentecostal leaders are not only a danger to society but contributes to destroying the biblical exegesis and distort the Text. Without a theological framework it is utterly impossible to convey the Gospel to the masses in its totality bearing in mind the context, and tradition chronologically of the written text. With neo-Pentecostalism came theological aberrations like the notorious prosperity gospel driven by fame and avarice.

The proponents and adherents of this gospel believe in wealth accumulation (the spirit of Mammon) by robbing the innocent and their willingness to saw seed aiming at one goal to secure individual prosperity. A complete misconception and misunderstanding the notion of seed and harvest in (Genesis 8:22, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and Ephesians 4:28). This is a complete distortion from an African Christian perspective that recognizes the centrality of the experience of the Holy Spirit in pneumatic African Indigenous Churches teachings (AICs). The author takes cognizance of different applications of the term *African Pentecostalism* by many scholars. For example, Phiri (2009) limits it to the movement resulting from the 1970s revival, while Clark (2001) applies it to African nationals recruited by formerly white-led Mission Pentecostal denominations and totally excludes the pneumatic African Indigenous Churches episteme. Maxwell's application differs and brings together neo-Pentecostals and Mission Pentecostals in unism (Maxwell, 2006).

African Pentecostalism and Liturgy

Pentecostalism has created a niche for itself among Africans. The success of the movement lies in its ability to promote inculturation across religious barriers influencing social ground and liturgy. Pentecostalism has become ubiquitous in Africa, that it is becoming difficult to dichotomize churches in terms of theological and liturgical considerations. For a movement that started on grounds of religious autonomy, it is remarkable and admirable that it has succeeded to dictate the



religious tempo of Christianity in Africa. In their nascent stages Pentecostal churches earned the degradable accolade as wizard churches because of their overt and uncontrolled manifestations of Holy Spirit possession. The phenomenon was the by-product of their uncompromising and dogmatic stress on speaking in tongues as the imperative sign of Spirit baptism among believers without which salvation was impossible or at best incomplete. Pentecostal's view Peter's contextualization of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:17–18) as the watershed for Christian prophetism. Joel had predicted a pneumatic proliferation that would defy social barriers. The descent of the Spirit would mean breaking barriers on all fronts regardless of religiosity, cultural norms, and social engagements.

According to Kabasele, it is through liturgy that African culture expound or highlights the symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are interpreted and expressed (Kabasele, 1996). Other liturgical contributions in African theology apart from worship are rituals performed as symbols of celebrating life in its totality. In Pentecostal liturgy the church represents a community actualizing the paschal mystery by affirming the work of salvation in which Christ continuously intercedes for humanity. In African Pentecostalism, liturgy fundamentally serves as a sermon and a symbol of love and appreciation particularly when the congregation responds in ululation (Ngwena, 2021). There is a minor difference between African indigenous Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. The contrasting component is that Neo-Pentecostalism leans towards personality cultism as the founder dominates everything and everybody in the church he or she founded. Whereas African Indigenous Pentecostalism turns to be patriarchal, attuned to African traditional culture where a male figure is given the leadership role in the healing movement amicable, and is orientated towards the Old Testament teachings and prophesy (Khanyile, 2016). Examples, of such Indigenous Pentecostal Churches and leadership, such as, *Baka Shembe* or *Emanazaretha* founded by Isaiah Shembe in 1911 in Kwa-Zulu Natal and the *Zion Christian Church (ZCC)* founded by Engenas Lekganyane in 1924 in Limpopo, South Africa. Both churches have customized liturgy and vernacular.

The Shembe Church is made up of multicultural ideas like those encouraged by African philosophers, names such as, Bantu Biko, Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha. The Shembe Church rejected the oppressive elements of Western culture and adopted those it deemed positive and rewarding. Founder of the Shembe Church, Isaiah Shembe took a step further by reviving African culture and customs through worship. Isaiah Shembe encouraged people to embrace and practice their culture through liturgy without fear and intimidation. The Zion Christian Church (ZCC) complementing *Baka Shembe*, or *Emanazaretha's* attitude took into consideration the importance of African spiritual healing and cultural context in Pentecostalism. Africans have always believed in spiritual healing, which cast out the evil spirits of darkness associated with *batsakatsi* (witchcraft). The ZCC also applies the principle of healing within the African cultural context and liturgy plays an important role in worship distinctive to the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) and Baka Shembe sacred dance *Umgidi* which is totally condemned by Neo-Pentecostalism.

The notion of Pentecostal celebration from an African perspective

The tenets of Pentecostal worship which are Spirit movement in different stages according to spiritual gifts of those participating, the sacred dance *umgidi* in which the performers dress code includes loinskins, headgear made from animal hides. The sacred dance itself involves the beating of cowhide drums and the singing of hymns composed by Isaiah Shembe as exemplified in the Shembe hymns rhythm of the drums and blowing of the horn. During worship the congregants experience emotional release and spiritual healing takes place. Healing is regarded



as the main manifestation of the Holy Spirit as illustrated in (Joel. 2:28), predicts the pouring of the Spirit upon all humankind, which most African Pentecostal prophetic leaders adhere to. Through the devine power which forms a biblical analogy to the corporate within the accredited Pentecostal leaders. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is perceived as not for individual empowerment or self-gratification, but for the greater good of the community in terms of healing and restoration. Holy spirit in operation enables a transformative, vibrant, and moving encounter with the divine (Sithole, 2010:34). The notion of celebration ought to be understood within the framework of Spirit-filled Pentecostal worship. Vilakazi concurs with Sithole and defines the notion of celebration as the culmination of divine within the structural systematic order of the church leadership. Spectators or congregation guests do not participate in the sacred dance unless they possess spiritual gifts. It is this spiritual encounter and experience that characterizes Pentecostal worship. It typifies the lifeworlds of which Pentecostals have come to live their lives. African Pentecostals draw insights from this Text "*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (1st Corinthians 2:14).

Contemporary, several Christian churches are adopting Pentecostalism approach of worship and liturgy. Pentecostalism is a Spirit-movement hence led by the Holy Spirit among individuals and groups of people. For Pentecostals, worship means experiencing the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of the Church or gathering. It is through worship that humanity is connected most significantly in communion with the divine, and it is through the Spirit that all congregational worshipers relate to each other and to the Holy Spirit. This understanding of communal life and worship in the Spirit has become the greatest source of intrigue and attraction while simultaneously becoming its pinnacle for criticism as well, especially from mainstream churches. Spirit-filled worship as in the Pentecostal tradition is an experience-based worship that informs the Pentecostal faith and practice. Pentecostal worship, as seen in sacred Scripture, is a transformational or spiritually formative event. For illustration, (2 Corinthians 3.18), describes the worshiper who beholds the image of God as being transformed from one glory to the next. Paul for illustration uses Moses's transformation encounter with the Lord as beholding God's glory with unveiled face, thus implying the transformed image. This was the residual glory that remained upon Moses' countenance after he returned from the mountain. This account demonstrates to the contemporary church the lasting effects resulting from Pentecostal worship.

Pneumatology and ecology from an African Pentecostal Perspective

In this article I intend to provide a conceptual framework for articulating or presenting pneumatology in the context of African theology as the '*vital force*' or metaphoric of Spirit which embodies life and relationality as God is conceived as life giver and sustainer. In Biblical terms the spirit is classified as *ruach*, (Hebrew), *pneuma*, (Greek) and *spirare* (Latin) articulate spirit as pervasive, intangible energy whose fundamental quality is vitality and freedom and whose fundamental purpose is to create, shape, and guide as emphasized by Hodgson (Hodgson, 1994). From a theological point of view, it is admissible that *vital force* is the power of God present in all creation and without which life is not possible. Analogically therefore, it can be construed that *vital force* is the Spirit of God understood as the principle of life and enabler of communion within creation.

Referring to communion with creation I mean reconciling with creation as the earth community and acknowledging the interconnectedness between humanity and all of creation regardless of origin and characteristics (Ngwena, 2021:51). Such an interpretation highlights the idea that the whole of reality is pervaded by God's vital force, which makes life possible in its inter-relatedness



and interdependence. The emphasis here in highlighting the Holy Spirit as the '*vital force*' analogically considers the dilemma of language and liturgy in Pentecostalism. African Religious language is often misguided and misunderstood by Neo-Pentecostals in terms of worship and can result to semantic atheism (Sakupapa, 2012). For example, in the global north the antisemitism term (meaning hostility to or prejudice against) is thrown around in favour of one group of people or religion instead of the broad spectrum the term entails.

It is imperative to acknowledge that language and liturgy plays a critical role in Pentecostalism in terms of worship by incorporating culture which on its own reinforce self-identity. On the same token we cannot ignore the fact that culture is not static but evolves systematically and periodically. It is also crucial to acknowledge Pentecostal episteme from an African religiosity perspective. It is not by accident or chance that both African eucharistic prayers and liturgy in words and acts exude the African terrain and lifeworlds in terms of worship and sanctification (Ngwena, 2021:68). Contemporary critiques of African Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism are perhaps overstated and stereotype, there is dualistic understanding of the providence of the current time and space, and the spiritual realm. Regardless of tensions due to different worldviews, a foundational similarity exists between the two pneumatologically encampments. The keen interest in addressing social concerns through liturgy particularly for the poor and the outcast, as well as the justification for theological praxis resting on Christian faith and the power of the Spirit. While it may at first be difficult to envisage this as a congruence, but rather as an alternative reflection of the divergences, it nevertheless reflects similarities between African Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism imbued.

Another Pentecostalism dimension reference to ecology is brought to light by Wallace, by applying a biocentric approach (Wallace, 2001). He introduced a new metaphor for Spirit as the '*Green Face of God*' based on biblical nature imagery which depict the Spirit as vivifying breath (Genesis 1:2, and Psalms 104:29-30), healing wind in (Judges 6:34, John 3:6, and Acts 2:1-4), living water, and the divine dove. Johnson on the same view strengthens the cosmic dimension of the Spirit when she asserts that the Spirit is "*the dynamic flow of divine power that sustains the universe, bringing forth life*". She argues that this "*indwelling, renewing, moving*" Creator Spirit is the source of novelty in creation and of the communion between all creatures (Johnson, 1993). Hodgson, on a different approach sums pneumatology and ecology eloquently, he writes, "*God's love for the world is erotic in the sense that God creates, desires, and allures the world in its vitality and materiality, while at the same time transfiguring that materiality into relationships of spirituality, that is, of inwardness, recognition, mutuality, self-giving*" (Hodgson, 1994). However, the interconnected or oneness of African Pentecostalism regardless of their social status and educational achievements, Africans have a cultural predisposition towards the notion of God and all of creation. Western Christianity has not been successful from time memorial even by forceful, brutal, divisive and prejudice measures to alienate African religiosity and theology (Mathole, 2005). Reading the Bible in vernacular and African liturgy has enabled the flow of Christian spirituality which missionaries did not want to realize for fear that it would mean revival of heathenism or paganism (Dube, 2015).

According to Gabaitse, the continued activity of the Spirit in illuminating the biblical text towards life-giving and emancipatory hermeneutic is central to Pentecostal ethos. Contextualization of the Good News happens when one is under the influence of the Spirit and not in vacuity (Gabaitse, 2016). The African Indigenous Church pneumatic variant according to Maxwell, are the agents of contextualization therefore, reducing the gospel to a version of African religiosity hence, he argues that African Indigenous Churches were not uncritical in their appropriation of the gospel and African culture. Indeed, AICs modified certain aspects of African culture particularly in liturgy and



worship. As a result of this bold approach Pentecostalism embracing the pneumatic front gained momentum across mainstream churches (Masenya, 2005).

The Notion of Creation Integrity

As Pentecostals we often assume that faith communities acknowledge that all of creation as a onetime endowment has its own intrinsic value and integrity. As the faith community we seldom believe that the church upholds her theological ethics and human values, hence the church agenda to reformulate a theology of creation. This is the missing element which the Indigenous people have been calling for regarding the notion of creation integrity. Creation of integrity brings justice, peace, and harmony to all of creation. Christian anthropocentrism has enabled senseless exploitation of the land and its natural resources. The alienation of the land from the people and the destruction of indigenous lifeworlds due to colonialism and missionaries' exploitation remains catastrophic to date. Based on spirituality discernment (Spiritual discernment requires that we have a spiritual capacity for distinguishing between opposing forces or secular worldviews), the dignity and integrity to all of creation derives from acknowledging that the earth community inhabits a shared space with all lifeforms in communion and solidarity, and ought to shun human exploitation and policies that leads to destruction of life (Ngwena, 2020:32).

African Eco-theology endeavour has sought to acknowledge and critique Christian doctrines and dogmas that turn to inhibit or devalue ecological concerns due to lack of deep spirituality. Spiritual bankruptcy enables humanity to speak of wars with nature and conquering creation, which is delusional to say the least. The natural world thrives without humanity's interference in terms of pollution both on land and air. Often humanity forgets that all of creation is part and parcel of the earth's biosphere. We ought to constantly renew our human participatory actions through worship and land custodianship in the grand liturgy of the universe as the earth community in unison regardless of historical backgrounds.

In addressing ecological spirituality to his audience or readership, Fox posed this question. How can humanity deal with cosmic energy, responsibility, and morality without cosmic spirituality? (Fox, 1983). Thus, humanity ought to acknowledge that ecological spirituality is formed when we confess the interconnectedness in creation, and when we are totally grateful and joyfully portrayed in our worship/liturgy that all life-forms owe their existence to the Creator. Through spirituality we enter a new understanding of creation where God is first and foremost the Creator and Lord of the universe at all times past and present. It is a misconception that only environmentalist lobbyists are concerned about the natural/wild world. Ecological devastation is a global concern across disciplines. Ecological spirituality shows the depth of ethics, and that justice and environmental concerns intrinsically and inextricably are intertwined (Asoanya, 2004). Pentecostalism ecological praxis outlines the fivefold Pentecostal narration of the gospel of Christ, comprehensively as a theological backdrop. a) The doctrine of Christ as Saviour and the 2nd coming King. b) Christ the Sanctifier. c) The divine Healer. d) The Spirit baptizer.

Christ the Saviour

Christian anthropocentrism and ecological insensitive individuals or groups of religious peoples understanding of the scope of salvation is generally identified among various factors as inhibitors or stumbling blocks to Pentecostal concerns or interests with reference to ecology. The infamous publication by the Presbyterian layman Lynn White Jr. "*The historical roots of our ecological crisis*" squarely puts the blame on Christian tradition and the notion of dominion of man over the natural world which gave impetus to western science by encouraging empirical investigations (White,



1967). Theologians in particular refuted White's unfounded allegations by indicating the simplicity in his publication from several areas including historical viewpoints. Others like Wesley Granberg-Michealson articulated in detail the short comings in Lynn White's publication. First, White's description of biblical narratives regarding ecology is selective and highly distortive. Second, his argument that Christianity paved the way for the scientific technological revolution is highly questionable. Third, his assumption of the global ecological crisis that it stems from the mindset of western culture is historically dubious (Granberg-Michealson, 1989). Ecological Pentecostalism is about redemption of sin against all of creation (particularly human ill-practices) as illustrated in (Romans 8:21-22). Therefore, "*they must repent of their sin, confess it, and change their ways towards it*". From a theological perspective, due to human ill-practice humanity has not only sinned against the Creator, but to all of creation (hence the contemporary ecological crisis). Consequently, redemption is all about restoring relationships as the earth community. It also means that if all of creation is within the scope of the redemptive work of the Spirit, so is the human body, not just the human soul.

Christ the Sanctifier

An Eco-theological view on the doctrine of Jesus as sanctifier not only expands the scope of what is sanctified to include nonhuman creation, it also expands the scope and thus potential for how believers may participate in the Spirit's sanctifying work (a setting apart for God) especially in terms of worship and liturgy. We co-worship with the natural world. For example, in Eucharist ceremonies as formative aspirations and ecclesiastical basis (which brings forth ecological custodianship) sanctifying worship of the created world. Sanctification in a nutshell from an ecological perspective brings all of creation together because all of creation is a doxological and eschatological dwelling place for God. Participation or engaging in the sanctifying work of the Spirit cannot be dichotomised between the spiritual and the material. The mutual interdependence of human and nonhuman means all of creation is within the breadth of participating, by the Spirit, in the redemptive glory and holiness of the Creator. In view of the Eucharist, the natural world is not a means to an end, but it is rather a co-worshipper with humanity in the priestly offering, by all participants, of bread and wine, and co-receiver of the Spirit of life in its totality. From an African Pentecostal perspective, the household of God is hospitable and inclusive to all inhabitants as they are sacramentally interconnected.

The Divine Healer

Divine healing by the Holy Spirit is inclusive to all of creation regardless of origin. Furthermore, divine healing is inherently physical, social, and ecological because it emerges from the Spirit of creation. African Pentecostalism brings to the fore the Christian mystical tradition that intuits a link between the Spirit and the healing and flourishing of creation from the nature-based symbols of the Spirit—for example, living water, warming fire, light, and wind. The common practice or tradition with Pentecostalism is that believers are summoned to participate in the Spirit's healing work through prayer, including prolonged intercession on behalf of creation. Humanity cannot reconcile with the Creator while the Earth is in peril due to human malpractices. It is imperative for human repentance which will ultimately enable progressive and prayerful healing and reconciliation with all of creation is required. The genocide and ecocide we are witnessing in contemporary times such as the State of Israel's daily bombardment of a particular groups of people in their homeland is beyond the scope of disruption to all life-forms as is the kidnapping and murder of innocent hostages. The damage is irreversible and spiritual bankruptcy is demonstrated to all participants and supporters of evil. There is no justification in destroying creation whether it be human or non-human.



The Spirit Baptism

The doctrine of Spirit baptism is comprehended primarily through affirming the outpouring of the Spirit (Cosmic) at Pentecost as inclusive of all creation thereby extending the connection of Spirit baptism and advocacy towards the contemporary ecological catastrophe. Soteriological participation in the Spirit that intensifies the ontological nature of the Spirit's work in creation towards God's redemptive purpose through human repentance and reconciliation towards creation. Based on the reading in (Ephesians 4:7-11), the faith community draws a connection between the equipping of the Pentecostal church through the descent of the Spirit, and the immersion of the whole of creation in eschatological expectation or end times. The pneumatologically trajectories portraits the Spirit of life in abundance and can be understood in terms of both original creation and its eschatological transformation into a new creation. Therefore, Spirituality and ecological praxis in Pentecostalism is an eschatological anticipation of the future of creation.

The ecological theology of Denis Edwards and Salie McFague's, bring forth an explicit pneumatologically framework to the ecological discourse. Edwards' theory highlights that the story of the Holy Spirit is co-extensive with (what contemporary cosmological science view) the fourteen-billion-year evolutionary history of the entire universe, not only breathing life into the world but also empowering the creative process. Bringing insights from both the biblical and patristic traditions into dialogue with contemporary science introduces attainable into the religion and science conversation. The dynamism of the Spirit or the ruach (breath) of God, for example, helps us think about the vigorous process and creation continuity of the world. This unlimited determination on a more critical note also suggests an eschatological phenomenon or a teleological dimension to the universe, which provides for a connection according to Edwards between pneumatology and the emergence of novelty and complexity in the creation narratives (Edwards, 2007 & Mcfague, 2000).

Edwards' notion of the Spirit of God immanent to and active participation within creation continuity contributes towards a fundamental theological framework for understanding God as the Pneuma Creator. In Edwards' theology of creation, Word, and Spirit work mutually and reciprocally as the 'two hands of the Father' based on Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons unique cosmology of expression in the formation and transformation of the universe. He writes. "God is simple, uncompounded being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to himself, since he is wholly understanding, and wholly spirit, and wholly thought, and wholly intelligent, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, wholly seeing, and wholly light, and whole source of all that is good" (Against Heresies 2:13).

For this reason, Edwards points out that the self-organizing principles such as the evolution of complex processes and structures guiding the revolving of the universe is inexplicable if a materialistic metaphysics is assumed but resonates well with the pneumatologically theology of creation. For example, if the Word *Logos*'provides the divine pattern for creation's forms, then the Spirit is the divine mind (1st Corinthians, 2:10-16) that communicates the patterns of the Logos to creatures and the divine breath that empowers creaturely formation. From this, the Spirit is not only the giver of life and the source of novelty and creativity in the world, but also the ontological basis for creation's intricately structured interconnectedness between all of creation and the divine Triune Godhead. McFague on the other hand develops her panentheistic agential-organic model of the God-world relationship analogously to traditional conceptions of the spirit-body relationship. From a pneumatology perspective, pneuma (spirit) makes a frantic emphasis not only on the



divine intellect or wisdom (Logos theology) transcendent over the world's evolutionary process, but also on the divine embroilment within creation.

African Pentecostal tradition

The African Pentecostal tradition draws insights from both the Old Testament and New Testament principles. When searching for indigenous wisdom knowledge within the Earth, spiritual healing may seem to be pagan practice to Neo-Pentecostals, however, our Scripture narratives from time memorial point to Creation, not just in illustrative metaphor, but also as a source of wisdom and guidance. It is through the natural world that humanity is interconnected and dependent on the natural world. According to Magesa, there are fundamental distinctions between African Pentecostalism and African Indigenous spiritualities which when woven together form a remarkable tapestry (Magesa, 1998).

In the book of (Mathew 6:25-30), the author addresses humanity's deepest fears, such as insecurity, hunger and finitude, Jesus calls us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air reference to provision and sustainability. When the early faith community sought solace, clarity, or inspiration, they went to the wilderness and encountered the Divine power. The wildness – the chaos – of biblical wilderness, deserts and seas allows the Spirit to move and speak in unique and transformative ways. In our post-colonial world, we tend to read ancient texts through a lens of sentimentality, alienation and even fear towards wilderness, beasts, and anything that smacks of nature apart from worship; yet the ancient mind did not see the divide between humanity and the rest of the Creation (combined in worship) that we have inherited in prevalent Christian theology today. Scripture supports the indigenous wisdom knowledge view that the wilderness presents the most authentic, powerful, and transformative divine experiences, and that humanity can participate with integrity in both civilization and wilderness. At times, the Spirit calls us to tend our vineyards, hearth, and home. We ought to balance this cultivated life with the transfiguration, rebirth and resurrection that can happen only through the freedom of the Creator and the natural/wild world. The Bible remains the ultimate source of authority for African Pentecostals, and following biblical texts in context often brings a balanced sustainable pneumatology', one that highlights the relationship between biblical Spirit power and indigenous African notions of vital force coupled with inspirational spiritual power and determination. Neo-Pentecostalism have not always acknowledged the vital contribution that African Pentecostal churches have added value to a dynamic pneumatology.

Conclusion

The article has articulated hermeneutically the importance of liturgy and worship in spirit with all of creation ethos from an African Pentecostal perspective. As African Pentecostal forebearers, names like Isaiah Shembe of *Baka Shembe* or *Emanazareth* and Angus Legyanyana of the *Zion Christian Church* (ZCC) of the African Indigenous Pentecostal churches opines, through the Holy Spirit, God is present in all things and all things are in God. It is plausible to argue that the Holy Spirit is not solely the Spirit of redemption of human afflicted souls, but also that of creation as illustrated in (Psalm 148 and (Colossians 1:15). When humanity repents, we reconcile all of creation with the Creator. Therefore, the work of the Spirit should not be interiorized to the church and the individual believer in conversion, rather it must include the whole of creation (Kaoma, 2013). African people(s) perceive creation in terms of relations between God, humanity, and the natural world (Gitau, 2000:23). A world without a community (which brings a sense of belonging and identity) is unthinkable and completely undesirable because it is incomplete. Humanity in



communion or bondedness completes and adds value to livelihoods and vitality in all life-forms exemplified in liturgy and worship (Ngwena, 2021:67).

In summary, the African notion of vital force opens avenues for reflection on the cosmic breadth of the Spirit given its emphasis on life, relations, and interconnectedness. Bearing in mind the conceptual framework of vital force. However, one can argue that the Holy Spirit presence is recognized and acknowledged in a panentheistic evaluation of all of creation as the vital force that illuminates life in its totality. This approach permeates the African Pentecostals churches involvement in ecology and liturgy not just in worship but in inclusive sermons towards earth replenishing. In fact, in African cosmology, the sacredness of nature is derived from nature's relationship with the creator whose vital force has animated nature. Humans are therefore placed in an ontological relationship with the natural world given their common descent from the creator. A pneumatologically understanding of vital force enhances this ontological relationship as this article attest to culminate. Furthermore, from an African Pentecostal and religiosity perspective, relations established from humanism and the rest of the universe is not a project of conquering and exploiting the weak, meek, and vulnerable. It is not an epistemology showcase between African Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals, but a bigger project of spirituality across earthly barriers and episteme. It is a project of mutual dependence and interconnectedness within the earth community encompassing all life forms – the visible and non-visible (spiritual realms) and the future (Ngwena, 2021:60).

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