

**EXPLORING ECONOMICS NEO-PENTECOSTALISM AND SCIENTIFIC RATIONALITY:  
A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON  
IMAGINING A BETTER PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY**

by

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## DECLARATION

I

**PAUL SIMANDALA MAPANI**

Declare that **Exploring Economics Neo-Pentecostalism and Scientific Rationality: A Critical Reflection of Imagining a better Pentecostal Theology in Livingstone** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of competence references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Paul S. Mapani  
(Signature)

Date: 16. January 2020

# ABSTRACT

This study explored the lack of integrating a scientific imagination and rationality in the hermeneutic and theological practices of neo-Pentecostal churches in the town of Livingstone, Zambia. Although the vantage point of the study was primarily practical theology, the researcher adopted both an interdisciplinary and a multidisciplinary approach. This assisted the researcher in understanding the different theoretical nuances that inform neo-Pentecostal theological practices as propagated by its proponents. An in-depth scientific analysis premised on the critical theory approach was conducted to find out whether or not neo-Pentecostal communicative practices contribute positively to the economic conditions of local church members in Livingstone. The theological framework for this study was based on the “pastoral cycle”, which ought to be at the very heart of any contemporary practical theology (Ballard & Pritchard 2006). The research methodology consisted of data collection, interpretation and analysis (comparing and contrasting primary sources in the light of the data collected). Research participants' personal narratives of their experience of neo-Pentecostal practices were heard in a semi-structured format. These aided in establishing ecclesiastical views on the causes of the lack of integrating a scientific imagination and rationality in neo-Pentecostal spiritual experience; and consequently informed the study on whether the current theological orientations of neo-Pentecostal congregations in Livingstone have a positive or negative impact on the economic conditions of members. Two forms of data collection were employed, namely qualitative interviews and observation instruments.

**KEY TERMS:** Neo-Pentecostalism; Practical theology; Pastoral cycle, Science; Technological advancements; Indigenous African beliefs; Poverty, Spirituality, Economic conditions; The prosperity gospel

# NKOMISO LOWU NGA NA VUXOKOXOKO BYA NDZAVISISO WA DYONDZO

Ndzavisiso lowu wu langutisa ku pfumaleka ka vuanakanyi hi vuntshwa bya xisayense na ku va na ngqhondo eka mafambiselo ya vulavisisi na vuxopaxopi ku hlamusela matsalelo na mafambiselo ya swa vugandzeri eka tikereke ta Pentakosta leyintshwa edorobeni ra Livingston, eZambia. Hambileswi masungulo ya ndzavisiso a ku ri mafambiselo ya vugandzeri, mulavisisi u tirhise fambiselo ra *interdisciplinary* na *multidisciplinary*. Leswi swi pfunete mulavisisi ku twisisa ku hambana eka swa thiyori leyi yi nga xiseketelo xa Pentakosta leyintshwa ya swa vugandzeri na mafambiselo ya kona tanhilaha swi endliwaka hi lava nga vachumayeri va yona pentakosta leyintshwa. Vuxopaxopi bya xisayense byi seketeriwe hi thiyori yo xopaxopa leyi nga endliwa ku kuma leswo xana mafambiselo ya Pentakosta leyintshwa ya pfuneta eka swiyimo swa ikhonomi eka swirho swa kereke swa yona eLivingston. Rimba ra swa vugandzeri eka ndzavisiso lowu wu seketeriwe hi ndzhenzheleko wa vurisi bya kereke ku nga "pastoral cycle", lowu wu faneleke ku va mbilu ya mafambiselo wahi na wahi ya vugandzeri (Ballard & Pritchard 2006). Methodoloji ya ndzavisiso a yi katsa ku hlengeletea vutivi, ku byi toloka no byi xopaxopa (ku kotlanisa na ku pimanisa swihlovo swa vutivi hi ku landza data leyi yi nga hlengeletiwa). Lava a va ri na xiavo eka ndzavisiso, va endle marungula ya vona na ntokoto wa vona hi mafambiselo ya Pentekosta leyintshwa ya yingiseriwile hi fomati yo ka yi nga kunguhatiwangi swinene ku nga *semi-structured format*. Leswi swi pfunete ekusunguleni mianakanyo ya kereke ya vukreste hi swivangelo swa ku pfumaleka ka ku hlanganisa na ku anakanya hi vuntshwa mavonelo na ntokoto eka swa moya hi swa Pentekosta leyintshwa; hi ku landza swona leswi, swi pfunete ndzavisiso hi leswo xana mavonelo yo hambana hi swa vugandzeri bya Pentakosta leyintshwa eka nhlengeletano eLivingston leswo xana yi na vuyelo lebyinene kumbe lebyi nga ri ku lebyinene eka swiyimo swa ikhonomi ya swirho. Ku tirhisiwe minxaka mimbirhi ya nhlengeleto ya vutivi, ku nga *qualitative interviews* na xitirho xa ku languta kunene leswi endlekaka (observation instruments).

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of the study was to find out how neo-Pentecostal pastors in Livingstone dealt with economic poverty, both in their local churches and within their respective communities. Fundamentally, the study sought to find out how the local pastors engaged with science and technological ideas in seeking workable solutions to mitigate economic poverty. Since neo-Pentecostalism takes very seriously the aspect of Christian spirituality in all facets of human life, the researcher was seeking to understand from the participants how their theological orientation informs and interacts with scientific and technological thought in dealing with practical solutions to material poverty.

The study concentrated on the town of Livingstone, Zambia. Whereas its target studied population was the residents of Livingstone, its sample group constituted of neo-Pentecostal pastors. The choice for Livingstone was premised on two factors. Firstly, Zambia is the birthplace of the study's researcher. Despite the fact that he has lived for many years in Germany, each year he spends a considerable amount of time in Livingstone. Secondly, the researcher is a practicing pastor from a traditional, neo-Pentecostal Church background. Against this backdrop, he believes that he is in a good position to comparatively assess the subject of this study fairly, informatively and in a constructive manner. Fundamentally, this study was concerned with one main research question and two additional sub-questions:

- (1) How does neo-Pentecostalism influence the economic success in Livingstone, Zambia?
  - (1.1) In what way do neo-Pentecostal churches' exegetical and hermeneutic approach to God, and money impact on economic success?
  - (1.2) How do scientific and technological rationality of the hermeneutical approach and praxis of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone contribute to economic development?



It would be disingenuous to commence with constructive critiquing of neo-Pentecostal liturgical practices in Livingstone as it relates to integration of scientific and philosophical paradigm processes into their homiletic disposition; without first acknowledging their efforts of either intentionally or unintentionally positively galvanising practical theology. This alone has made them a force to be reckoned with in their own right, for it means that they have been able to cultivate the Christian message to reach a wider and multifaceted audience. Neo-Pentecostal believers in Livingstone have creatively managed to take their message outside their own neo-Pentecostal Christian context and made it accessible to those outside the bounds of their congregations. This by itself is authentic theology: the engaging with different constitutes in the public sphere with the salvific Christian gospel of the redeeming message of Christ.

Dreyer <sup>1</sup> puts it fittingly when making reference to the arguments of three South African theologians John de Gruchy, Etienne de Villiers and Bernard Lategan in his work *Public Theology and the Translation Imperative: A Ricoeurian Perspective*. These three theologians, Dreyer maintains, have essentially pointed out that good public theology uses comprehensive and accessible language, and aims at translating the Christian vision as well as theological involvement in the communal sphere in order to reach audiences outside the normalised Christian tradition. Nevertheless, the core argumentation of this study is that even though neo-Pentecostals churches in Livingstone have penetrated the wider audience with their message, they have not fully appropriated their influence by integrating scientific, philosophical and technological imagination to materialise their message for the economic benefits of their followers and the communities at large.

In this study, the word science is defined as the discovery of phenomena and laws of nature which have always existed but were not known to people. Technology, on the other hand, implies the formation of new processes and products and their right

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<sup>1</sup> Dreyer, J., S. (2011). *Public theology and the translation imperative: A Ricoeurian perspective*. AOSIS Publishing. HTS Theological Studies. Vol 67, No. 3 (2011). [online]. Available at: <http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/1157/2027> [Accessed on 18 September 2016].

application (Mangum 1989:144). This understanding is critical in helping us comprehend the town's severe economic conditions, even as neo-Pentecostal churches seek for sustainable and practical solutions to the economic struggles in Livingstone. To this effect, as sub-question, it was necessary to explore the integration or the lack thereof of a scientific imagination within neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone as it pertained to economic development? Fundamentally, though, the core issue of inquiry was concerned about examining neo-Pentecostalism in Livingstone, and its impact on the economic outlook of the town vis-a-vis the country. Bearing in mind that 87% of the Zambian population claim to be Christian, with an upsurge of Pentecostal churches that attract many adherents.<sup>2</sup> According to data from the Zambian Central statistics, the country has over 17 million inhabitants,<sup>3</sup> with a landmass of 752, 612 Km.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was necessary to streamline the study to one particular town, Livingstone in order to conduct a more focused research.

Anderson (2004:103) explains that Pentecostal and Charismatic movements undoubtedly are becoming dominant forms of Christianity on the African continent. Certainly, this holds true for the town of Livingstone. Even a casual observation shows that the whole town of Livingstone has been engrossed in a neo-Pentecostal Church tradition. For the purpose of this study, however, by neo-Pentecostalism, we mean the practice of the various African churches founded by indigenous locals which emphasise the working of the Holy Spirit, particularly the ecstatic phenomena such as prophetic utterances, speaking in other tongues, divine healing and exorcism (Anderson 2004:103). The word “neo” is a prefix, and it simply means “new”. Technically stated, neo-Pentecostalism implies new Pentecostal spiritual traditions as opposed to the classical ones. These churches are not a product of Western Pentecostal mission enterprises established by missionaries sent from classical Pentecostal churches in

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. Diplomacy in Action. (2007). *2007 Report on International Religious Freedom*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2007/90127.htm> [Accessed on 31 July 2016].

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.zamstats.gov.zm/latest/Zambia%20in%20Figures%20Booklet.pdf> [Accessed on 31 July 2016].

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.zamstats.gov.zm/latest/Zambia%20in%20Figures%20Booklet.pdf> [Accessed on 3 August 2016].

America, Europe and South Africa to Zambia<sup>5</sup>, even though they may at times borrow some of the theological practices from them.

The Pew Research Centre think-tank issued a report asserting that there are over 107 million Pentecostal Christians in Africa today – that is 12% of the continent's population.<sup>6</sup> Pentecostalism has been around in Africa for over 100 years, but a new form of this movement has brought in a new phenomenon occurring on the spiritual landscape of the Church in Livingstone. It is this new occurrence of emerging neo-Pentecostal theologies that this study was interested in. Neo-Pentecostal church traditions comes in all forms with diverse theological orientations, some of which might be questionable. Thousands of the faithful flock every Sunday morning to make-shift tent gatherings, state-of-the-art conference facilities, discotheques, school buildings, hotel conference rooms and warehouses – to listen to vibrant neo-Pentecostal messages. The byways of the town of Livingstone are usually adorned with a myriad of slogans such as “come receive your healing, come have a financial breakthrough, deliverance for lack of success in life, the time for massive miracles is now”; to mention but four. For this reason, many neo-Pentecostal congregations are literally quadrupling in terms of membership with followers flocking to receive what is usually described as the supernatural blessings from preachers and prophets. These preachers are usually referred to as men and women of God and some of them live relatively luxurious lifestyles. The underlining rationale for such an extravagant lifestyle is to model God's supernatural blessing bestowed on them by way of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Brouwer *et al.* (1996:197) call this the exported American gospel, which they say projects the notion that faith can instantly gratify material wants, and it has been exported globally, including to Africa. This notion, according to Brouwer and Gifford (1998:9), builds on the American gospel of wealth; this has been preached since a

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<sup>5</sup> Lumbe, J.,M.,K. (2008). *Origins and Growth Of Pentecostal And Neo-Pentecostal Church Moevements In Zambia Between 1989-2000*. Master Dissertation. University of South Africa. [online]. Available at: <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/1488/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1> [Accessed on the 31 July 2016].

<sup>6</sup> Pew Research Center. Religion & Public Life. (2006). *Overview: Pentecostalism in Africa*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/overview-pentecostalism-in-africa/> [Accessed on 31 August 2016].

century ago and it makes the religious culture compatible with the worldwide commodity culture.

It is believed that anointed men and women of God (pastors, prophets and prophetesses) could then supernaturally pass on these spiritual blessings, which are manifested in financial and material abundance, to the faithful. Parker (2015:1-2), a professor of counselling and psychology at Regent University, affirms in his book *Led by the Spirit: Towards a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making* that at the heart of Pentecostal practice is the experience that God's Spirit is directly involved in guiding believers in decision making and action. This is why, according to Parker, employing a critical view that evaluates such claims in an unbiased manner is vital.

Some theological scholars and church ministers acknowledge this spiritual movement as a positive development for the image of Africa. Undoubtedly, this is Kalu's (2008:5-6) reoccurring theme in his classical work *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Of course, one would understand why some are enthusiastic to uncritically advance the notion of Christianity in the global South. Bediako (2004:108) calls it “the present shift of the centre of gravity of Christianity to the non-Western world”. For far too long, Africa's image to the world has been that of poverty, corruption, intellectual incapacity, war and disease. Therefore, looking to Western nations for everything has been the *modus operandi* for centuries. Pentecostal Churches and their variations now account for most of the over 60% of Christians in the global South (Wild-Wood and Rajkumar 2013:221), and more often than not, this is perceived as a positive development. Ngong (2010:125) puts it more competently when he writes:

Because of Africa's diminished and diminishing status in our contemporary world, it is no surprise that scholars would want to publicise anything that may lead to the perception of the continent as a rising force in the world

Understandably, one may not always concur with the way that the African continent and its people are often depicted in the Western media machine. However, one could argue that in Livingstone, neo-Pentecostalism still has a long way to go in reversing the negative image portrayed about Africa. This is because the dogma of the gospel of

prosperity as propagated by the neo-Pentecostal churches, which claim that all the citizenry shares equitably in its moral economic, is still far-fetched to many. The reality of abject poverty is still very much rampant. Newlands (2006:83) explains that Jesus' prime target during his earthly ministry was to aid the economically impoverished. Neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone could draw valuable lessons from Newland's assertion. Sadly, we live in a world where people are valued largely by the power of their economic potencies and not by the large number of people who subscribe to a particular pneumatological soteriology, informed by the gift of *glossolalia* (Ngong 2010:124).

Paul Collier, the renowned Oxford economist, in his provoking work *The Bottom Billion*, describes the phrase "bottom billion" as those citizens at the bottom of the world's economic development and who are, in essence, not progressing economically but stagnating or even regressing. These people, Collier argues (2007:3-4), live in 14<sup>th</sup>-century conditions characterised by poverty, plague and illiteracy. To a large extent, the town of Livingstone fits this portrayal. To put it into context, Collier (2007:7) contends that 70% of the bottom billion reside in Africa. The following is a common reality in Livingstone: a location with a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, dilapidated infrastructure, broken healthcare systems (save for the rich who can afford expensive private care), soaring youth unemployment, low life expectancy and a lack of proper sanitation. Additionally, there are other grim conditions, such as the brain drain caused by meagre remuneration for the skilled workforce and the quadrupling divide between the haves and have-nots. For example, the current doctor and nurse population ratios in the country stand at 1 to 15,000 and 1 to 1,500; this falls much lower than the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended doctor-population ratio of 1 doctor to 5,000 and 1 nurse to a population ratio of 700.<sup>7</sup>

The common trend of some corrupt politicians who amass wealth at the expense of the poor masses is a reality the Church can no longer escape. Because of wielding too much power many political leaders get corrupted (Mbaku 2010:12). The situation of poverty

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<sup>7</sup> The Human Resource crisis in the Zambian Health Sector – a discussion pap [Accessed on 21 September 2015].

has been exacerbated to some extent by multi-national firms that exploit the nation's abundant natural resources by not paying their fair share of taxes.<sup>8</sup> Frankly, things are not as fine in Zambia economically as neo-Pentecostal proponents would want us to believe. Hence, those who maintain that revival fires of neo-Pentecostalism are changing the face of Livingstone do not fully acknowledge the dire reality of poverty in the town. Constructing a new and reformed practical theological framework that will deal with peoples' actual economic problems and goes beyond just having a spiritualised worldview could yield more tangible results. It is this unbalanced spiritualisation of all of life, which neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone ought to re-evaluate. Many locals subscribe to such a worldview because neo-Pentecostal theological postulation fits well with Traditional African Religion constructs.

Conrad Mbewe, a respected Christian leader in Zambia and pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church, affirms the above argument by saying:

I think that one reason why the Charismatic movement in Africa has been like a wild bushfire is because it has not challenged the African religious worldview but has instead adopted it. It has simply baptised it with Bible verses and Christian words that previously meant something totally different.<sup>9</sup>

Here, the researcher is not advocating for doing away with the African spiritualised worldview by embracing a Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Walter Rauschenbusch or Reinhold Niebuhr theology. Rather, what the researcher is attempting to highlight is the possibility of economic potential that might be achieved if or when neo-Pentecostals integrate scientific imagination and philosophical thinking into their hermeneutic construct.

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<sup>8</sup> Curtis, M. (2015). *Extracting minerals, extracting wealth*. War On Want. Fighting Global Poverty. [online]. Available at: [http://www.waronwant.org/sites/default/files/WarOnWant\\_ZambiaTaxReport\\_web.pdf](http://www.waronwant.org/sites/default/files/WarOnWant_ZambiaTaxReport_web.pdf) [Accessed on 13 September 2016].

<sup>9</sup> Mbewe, C. (2013). *Why is the Charismatic Movement Thriving in Africa?*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.conradmbewe.com/2013/07/why-is-charismatic-movement-thriving-in.html> [Accessed on 8 August 2016].

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The hypothetical position in this study is that unless the dominant theological practice of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone, which spiritualises all of reality (spiritualised cosmology) including human existential reality, are significantly reformed to incorporate a scientific imagination, the levels of abject poverty will continue to rise unabated. This is because the problem of poverty is more than just a spiritual issue. Rather, it is a very complex matter that compels the Church to be involved at macro-levels, not necessary as an economic institution but as a moral voice fulfilling its prophetic calling. The challenge for the neo-Pentecostals liturgy is that it is usually not reflected through academic lenses or engagement – instead, experience takes the dominant role in theological reflection (Cartledge 2016:2).

That is why the research problem will focus on examining the causes and consequences of the lack of integration of scientific imagination and rationality into the hermeneutical approach of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone. This aforesaid reality is necessary in order to deal with the nation's dismal economic conditions in which many of the faithful believers find themselves today. With 60% of the population living below the poverty line and 42% living in extreme poverty, Zambia is in dire straits indeed.<sup>10</sup> But when one contrasts these figures with the prosperity theology of neo-Pentecostalism, this becomes problematic.

First, the way that neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone respond to the difficult economic conditions in which many of its followers find themselves is by emphasising the working of miracles of prosperity and divine healing. Second, it does not fully espouse the ethos of hard work, investing, strategic planning, innovation and entrepreneurship (Freeman 2012:71). Freeman (2012:71) posits that the magical approach to wealth and heavy emphasis on tithing sends a contrary message to the classical Protestant ethic. The underlining rationale for much of neo-Pentecostal

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<sup>10</sup> The World Bank. *The World Bank in Zambia. Overview*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/zambia/overview> [Accessed on 27 August 2016].

theology, according to Gifford (2001:65), is that illness and poverty are a result of sin, lack of faith and demonic forces.

Teaching local church members in the postmodern era of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century that the way to come out of poverty is through exorcism, anointing with water or oil and through giving money in form of tithes and offering to the local congregations is not only problematic exegetically, but it is also extremely precarious for we are talking about a country ranked as one of the poorest in the world, according to World Food Programme (WFP) report of 2013/2014. 60% of the population lives under the poverty line. In rural areas, poverty levels remain stubbornly higher and the mortality rate of under-fives stands at 75/1000 live births.<sup>11</sup>

The spiritualised understanding of each and every human problem in Zambia undermines scientific rationality, which the researcher argues, is critical for human development. Therefore, while people in other parts of the world endeavour to carry out scientific research that finds the cures for various forms of illnesses, Africans are encouraged to rely on miracles (Ngong 2010:129). Rather than advocating for improvement in healthcare and seeking solutions to poverty alleviation through technological advancements, Pentecostal preachers organise deliverance centres for prayers (Ngong 2010:128-129).

### **1.3 Relevance of the Study**

This study is relevant precisely because of the lacunae (gap) that exist in the body of scholarly works conducted on the interrelationship of neo-Pentecostalism in Livingstone and scientific and philosophical ideas. Noticeably, in recent years there have been few scholarly works written on neo-Pentecostalism in Zambia. For example, there is Paul Gifford's work titled *A corrupt and Uncaring Christian Nation*, which touches on, among other things, neo-Pentecostal churches in Zambia (1998:205-217). Additionally, there is the master's dissertation *Origins and Growth of neo-Pentecostal*

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<sup>11</sup> World Food Programme. (2014). [online]. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/stories/10-facts-about-hunger-zambia> [Accessed on 31 July 2016].



*Church Movements in Zambia 1989-2000* by John Mutunda Kampenda Lumbe, *Neo-Pentecostalism in Black Africans* by Brian Siegel and *The Changing Face of Christianity in Zambia: New Churches of Bauleni Compound* by Bernhard Udelhoven.

This study, nonetheless, is unique in the sense that it specifically juxtaposes the reality of economic poverty, neo-Pentecostal theological praxis and the integration of scientific cognitive perspective. To the best of the researcher's knowledge it was found out that there have been no similar studies conducted on this very topic, nor is there a work that outlines precisely this subject the way this study has. Like in many other towns in Zambia, Neo-Pentecostalism in Livingstone is growing massively and there can be no denying of the enormous sway and influence it has on the faithful and the community. The burgeoning of churches with an emphasis on *glossolalia* (baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues), prophetic utterances predicting events, miracles and healings are a testimony to the fact.

The “the man of God” and “woman of God” notion, is often used to indicate the fact that certain pastors or church leaders are endowed with great divine power and authority to function in the supernatural. Therefore, it is claimed that these “men and women of God” are able to transfer these blessing, as it were, to those who are obedient to the word of God (the Bible). What is striking, nonetheless, is that in the midst of this spectacular increase of neo-Pentecostal-type churches, levels of poverty have continued to increase. The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) in its report points out that the Basic Needs Basket of June 2016 for a family of 5 in Livingstone was approximately US\$386<sup>12</sup> For many locals, this figure is unattainable on a monthly basis due to high unemployment rates and a high cost of living. And so, the figure for those who are unemployed is way lower than the metric calculation for the poverty line of US\$1.25/per day that is given by the United Nations.

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<sup>12</sup> The Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection in is very reputable Christian organization in Zambia. It deliberates on a number of pertinent societal issues. These range from economics, politics and civil engagement matters. [http://www.jctr.org.zm/images/06.2016rptBNBOutput\\_-\\_Livingstone.pdf](http://www.jctr.org.zm/images/06.2016rptBNBOutput_-_Livingstone.pdf) [Accessed on 12 September 2016].

## 1.4 Structural Background of The Interviews

It should be noted that the interviews for this study were not structured on a *Yes* or *No* response approach but were rather a qualitative style aimed at obtaining deeper insight from the respondents by letting them explain their ideas and thoughts in details.

Though the actual interview questions totalled sixteen (16), the actual asking did not necessarily follow a chronological order, or at least not all the time. It happened that in certain instances the respondent would answer the next question unknowingly, even before it was asked. In some instances, it was necessary to advance a follow-up question so as to further explore the dynamics of the topic. There were moments when some questions had to be rephrased in order to ensure that the respondents understood what was being asked of them. Because *research is concerned with asking and answering relevant and researchable questions* (Boeije 2010:1).

The empirical data from the interviews was collected using an electronic portable voice recorder. After-which the researcher then repeatedly listened and analysed the data. This helped in following through the grounded theory procedures, so as to identify categories of data during the depth investigation of the interviews (Strauss & Corbin 1998:43). Primarily, grounded theory (GT) deals with the systematic, yet flexible strategies of collecting and analysing qualitative data. Therefore, because it is inductive by nature, it requires one to interact and compare data during the whole process (Charmaz 2014 :1).

All the interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis. Normally, a neutral place was agreed upon, for example, a restaurant and guesthouse or community park (such as Mukuni Park). There were times when the interviews were done at the participant's residence, which would usually be near the church vicinity. In one interview session two study participants opted to be interviewed together in one seating. There was no time duration for the interviews per se, even though the initial plan was to have at least 60 minutes per interview. At the beginning of each interview an introduction letter from the supervisor of the researcher was handed to the respondent to read through and then

consent. The study participants had the option to withdraw at any time because they engaged in the exercise on a voluntary basis and none were remunerated.

From the outset of this project the intention was to have a gender balanced representation reflected in views. However, this was unattainable not by choice but because female pastors, in general are very few in Livingstone. A few that were contacted either did not avail themselves or were very busy with other engagements.

## **1.5 Objective of the Study**

The primary objective of the study was to contribute to the ontological and epistemological dimension of the way that practical theology is understood and engaged with by neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone. This contribution was threefold:

First, to contribute to the theological theory, in terms of religious and theological practice that consciously and actively integrates a scientific imagination and faith into pastoral theological reflection.

Second, this study seeks to usher in a new paradigm shift in the way that pastoral praxis is carried out among many neo-Pentecostal church pastors in Livingstone – that is as it relates to their main theological position: that the sole remedy to abject material poverty should not be confined to a Christian spirituality premised on spiritual deliverance, prosperity theology, divine healing and exorcism alone. The study sought to argue that structural causes of poverty in Livingstone can only be curbed when integrating rational thinking and scientific imagination as well as faith and spirituality in the pastoral praxis. In his fascinating work entitled *In Search of Health and Wealth: The Prosperity Gospel in African Reformed Perspective*, Kroesbergen (2014:7) succinctly says “the prosperity gospel” purports that faith in God results in financial material blessings, wealth and health. It asserts that it is God's will to bless the upright with divine health and security. Subsequently, sickness, poverty and lack of success in life are as a result of a curse. So,

positive confession, faith and giving money and donations to the Church will break the curse.

Third, the study also sought to validate that the inculturation of neo-Pentecostalism into the Zambian context is a good thing. However, if the same is comprehended purely outside a critical theological reflection rooted outside the perimeters of sound biblical hermeneutics, it poses an immense challenge to authentic Africanisation of Christian spirituality.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to foster in neo-Pentecostal homiletic and hermeneutic approaches the integration of a critical and scientific dimension into its theological praxis. This would then contribute to a theological paradigm shift to cause neo-Pentecostal adherents to think of poverty not merely as being a spiritual problem but a structural, socio-political and economic issue multiple solutions. To do this, an element of critical thinking and scientific imagination together with Christian spirituality has to interface for the common good of the people in Livingstone. Otherwise, the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch's adage "Where there is hope, there is religion" becomes hollow (Bosch 1992:499).

## **1.6 Chapter Divisions**

The study consisted of seven chapters. The first chapter dealt with the introductory aspect, which encompasses, among other things, the relevance and objective of the study, the literature review and the methodology. Chapter two concerned itself with the role of practical theology. It was necessary to do this because practical theology principally deals with a matrix of descriptive empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks (Osmer 2008:4). Chapter three looked at the economic and sociological situation in Zambia especially Livingstone. The fourth chapter explored the influence of neo-Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was necessary to discuss some of the positive aspects brought about by the advent of neo-Pentecostalism, in order to achieve a balanced academic discourse. In Chapter five the aspect of African ontological and epistemological construct was discussed. Here the researcher sought to argue that in a

globalised world, indigenous neo-Pentecostal African theologies cannot afford to isolate themselves under the pretext of preserving African moral values and cultural identities. The researcher also argued that indigenous African neo-Pentecostal theologies and ethnographic moral philosophy should not remain static, but rather re-invent themselves for the betterment of the economic development of congregants. Chapter six looked at the aspect of proposing scientific methods in theological reformation and witness of neo-Pentecostalism. In chapter seven, the findings and analysis of the study in relation to the economics of neo-Pentecostalism and scientific rationality were discussed. Noticeably, some of the actual experiences and responses were written verbatim. This helped in the categorization of data into themes and patterns. The researcher was thus able to examine how the study participants, for example, understood neo-Pentecostalism and science, communal engagement, technology and faith, causes of poverty and biblical hermeneutics among others.

The study concluded in chapter eight, where it summarized the main elements of discourse. Of particular significance the study set out to contribute to the field of practical theology by proposing a reformation to the ontological and epistemological conception of neo-Pentecostal theological engagement and praxis. In addition, the study sought to positively contribute to the possibility of integration of scientific rationality and neo-Pentecostalism as opposed to considering them being in conflict. By so doing, the aim was to argue for practical, sustainable, workable and rational solutions to mitigate extreme material poverty instead of only proposing meta-physical remedies alone. The study attempted not to only theologise from the safe environs of theological ivory towers, like Niebuhr, Barth, Tillich and other classical scholars have been accused of doing, without engaging practically (Cone 2011:70). But to propose for a positive engagement that affirms an interface of Christian spirituality with critical thinking and scientific imagination.

## **1.7 Method of Research**

Fundamentally, methodology can be described simply as a way of doing something (Mouton 1996:35). In other words, there is not one 'correct' method or way of

conducting research. It all depends on what is being researched and the theoretical framework involved. Mouton and Esquivel (2014:176) understands methodology this way:

The gnoseological route of which purpose is to perform actions pertaining to research, either to solve a problem regarding an object of study or to solve a necessity.

The key phrases in Mouton and Esquivel's definitions are *doing something*, *solve a problem* and *solve a necessity*. This is exactly what this study attempted to achieve. Present-day practical theologians are principally agreed that their discipline is an action science (Pieterse 2004:9), the actual research process first began by empirically reflecting on neo-Pentecostalism's influence in Livingstone. Secondly, the *critical theory* approach by virtue of sound biblical hermeneutics in order to understand the authenticity of the bipolar relationship between theory and praxis was employed.

Thirdly, in light of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the communicative acts of neo-Pentecostalism proponents in Livingstone were analysed. This was for the purpose of observing if their claimed encounter with God through the power of the Holy Spirit brings genuine salvation and redemption that manifests itself in both social-economic and spiritual new life.

Fourthly, this study aimed at developing a theory for the praxis of a new communicative action premised on faith whilst actively engaging a scientific imagination. The researcher's initial hypothesis is that this theory for a new praxis can assist neo-Pentecostal preachers to sermonise the gospel message by invoking critical thinking and imagination based on empiricism and science alongside side the divine. This is because practical theology is empirically oriented because it applies the dynamic complexity of theory-practice to a given social context; this study includes both theoretical and empirical approaches (Cahalan & Mikoski 2014:2-3).

### 1.7.1 The Qualitative Approach

According to Creswell (2014:4), a qualitative approach explores and seeks to understand the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) maintain that a qualitative research approach is basically a paradigm by which a researcher takes a concrete grasp of the social action of an insider's own context. Another way of saying it: in this study, the researcher was trying to understand the personal experiences and narratives of the study participants to try and comprehend the reality of life from their vantage point.

Against this backdrop, a qualitative approach to data gathering and analysis was used by means of conducting detailed interviews and questionnaires. In essence, a descriptive qualitative approach formed part of the methodological base for investigating two of the subsequent components. Firstly, it investigated the hermeneutical authenticity, or "the importance of rigors and interpretation" (Cahalan & Mikoski 2014:5) of neo-Pentecostal pneumatology practice. Secondly, the descriptive qualitative approach aimed at examining the long-lasting impact of such a theology on Church members' imaginations. This descriptive qualitative data gathering came in form of detailing the descriptions of specific situations using in-depth interviews, structured questionnaires, observations and official document reviews, personal experiences and narrative accounts. Bazeley (2013:4) stresses that researchers who engage in a qualitative study focus on describing, interpreting and analysing people's experiences and the way they act and think about the world around them and themselves.

Therefore, the reason for a descriptive qualitative method for this study was to further explore concrete life experiences of perceptions, personal narratives and individual challenges (if any) in relation to neo-Pentecostalism and doctrine formulation. Sometimes, the predisposition in some of the churches is to gloss over and reprimand those adherents who question the theological and religious soundness of neo-Pentecostalism. In this case a popular Bible text is usually appropriated to counter any divergent views of those who question the legitimacy of certain doctrines: "Touch not my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm" (1 Chronicles 16:22). For this reason, in-

depth and structured interviews were conducted in an atmosphere void of intimidation tactics and spiritual manipulation in order to gather untainted data.

In interpreting, comparing and contrasting data collected, the researcher was conscious of the fact that one's previous and past social and cultural experience can influence the way that qualitative data is comprehended (Bazeley 2013:4). The personal experience and personal perceptions are critical to establishing a firm understanding of the ecclesiastical, political, social and structural conditions in which neo-Pentecostal believers find themselves in Livingstone.

### 1.7.2 The Task

This study sets out to examine and be informed about how neo-Pentecostal adherents in Livingstone experience the reality of the neo-Pentecostal religious phenomenon in their daily lives – that is when mirrored from a scientific dimension. Its major task was to inquire whether this religious experience has a concrete and positive influence on the lives of the faithful, and how infusing a scientific contemplation into this religious experience might contribute to the service of neo-Pentecostal members.

Due to the complexity of the subject, and the time it took for each participant to answer the questions exhaustively, the researcher opted to narrow the interview schedule questions to only sixteen (16). The questions were of an open-ended nature. Hence, in answering these questions the study participants gave detailed responses because of interest were the participants' views about their experiences of neo-Pentecostal involvement; and how they reconciled their religious experience with scientific thinking. The following were the actual questions asked to participants (verbatim):

1. What is your basic understanding of science?
2. Are neo-Pentecostal religious experience and science compatible?
3. Are scientific and neo-Pentecostal religious explanations philosophically incompatible?



4. How can science inform and enter into a dialogue with neo-Pentecostal religious experience?
5. Should neo-Pentecostal pastors be encouraged to inform about themselves about science by having some sort of formal training?
6. Do you think the problem of material poverty can be resolved by purely spiritual solutions alone?
7. Do you think people would become less religious and less spiritual if the alliance of science and faith was vigorously encouraged?
8. Do you think the prosperity theology teaching in its current format is biblically balanced or does it need a reformation, or should it all together not be even taught?
9. Does your faith community have a favourable view of the role of science in life?
10. What do you think are the major causes of poverty in your community?
11. Are you in agreement with the theological view that poverty is the direct result of sin, not tithing and a lack of strong faith?
12. Are you better off economically ever-since you became a member of your local church (neo- Pentecostal church) or have you regressed, or are you still in the same place you were before?
13. Principally, do you think the Bible is conflicted or is supportive of scientific and technological advancement views?
14. Should neo-Pentecostal churches actively engage in ministries that teach members the basic principles and skills of entrepreneurship and small business investment engagements or should they concentrate on teaching about tithing and seed-faith as a more plausible method?
15. Why do you think many Western nations are much more economically and technologically developed and advanced than Zambia?
16. What would be your advice on the role science should play in your own life, the Church, the community and our understanding of God?

### 1.7.3 The Population

According to Creswell, phenomenological research “involves studying a small number of subjects” in making sense of the substance of human experience (Creswell 2013:15). Hence, from the total population the actual participants were streamlined to 20 pastors who formed the focus group. Certainly, one cannot interview every neo-Pentecostal member in Livingstone because of the large number involved.

Purposive sampling of diversification in age, education and gender was a deliberate choice so as to have a plurality of perspectives. When conducting qualitative research on phenomenological nature, one ought to access a wide range of personal experiences and perspective on the subject of inquiry (Quraish & Philburn 2015:65).

While qualitative methodologists are unlikely to agree on exact sample sizes needed for qualitative studies, they generally agree that many factors can affect the number of interviews needed to achieve saturation.

Since this study adopted a qualitative approach premised on the phenomenological framework as opposed to a quantitative method, talking to participants, asking them questions and allowing them to freely tell their own experiences and personal life narratives was essential. This was important so as to include multiple realities in order to acquire an undented understanding as opposed to using an investigation from a single subjective reality (Yin 2016:16).

### 1.7.4 The Interviewees

The target number of interviewees was twenty (20) participants. The ages of the study participants ranged from 21 to 75 years. Of the twenty (20) participants, ten (10) were of neo-Pentecostal church tradition. At the time of the study all the pastors had been involved in active ministry for at least 5 years. The study included three (3) female pastors. The smaller number of women pastors for this study should not be construed as displaying gender disparity. Rather, it is because, the number of male pastors in neo-

Pentecostal churches in Livingstone is usually way higher than that of women. Notwithstanding the fact that neo-Pentecostal churches are making great progress in having more women take up leading ministerial roles in congregations than in traditional mainline churches. The study aimed at having 25% of the total number of participants holding at least an undergraduate degree from a recognised institution.

The choice for such a varied demographic outlook is a deliberate one. The idea was to have as much diversity among study participants as it were possible. The participants did not necessarily express similar viewpoints on the subject matter even though they had a common denominator, which was their neo-Pentecostal church affiliation. And so, it was anticipated that factors of age gap, gender, church ministerial experience, academic and education variety would yield diversity in how each of the interlocutors perceives, interprets and made sense of their existential reality when answering the research interview questions.

All the twenty (20) study participants took part in the study on a purely voluntary basis. This meant none of them was paid any kind of financial remuneration. Nevertheless, occasionally the investigator did provided refreshments during interviews. A special thank you card and a personal letter thanking all the participants was to be mailed upon successfully completing this research work.

#### 1.7.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected primarily through scheduling meetings at the interviewee's home or at a neutral place like a coffee shop. Before each interview, it was explained to the participant that the sole purpose of the study was to contribute to the researcher's academic studies for his doctorate degree requirement. Secondly, a letter of introduction from the researcher's university supervisor, explaining and thanking the participants for their willingness to assist in the study was handed to them. Thirdly, a letter of consent was as well given to each participant. All the 20 participants were informed of the fact that the data they provided was to be recorder using an

electronic recording device or written down for the sole purpose of conducting thorough research.

### 1.7.6 The Interviews

In compliment to the 16 questions, a non-directive interviews approach, based on personal neo-Pentecostal religious experience, was integrated into the research method. This was instrumental because a complex phenomenon such as neo-Pentecostalism cannot be fully captured using only structured questions. Engaging deeply with the experiences, historiography, reality and perception of pastors, church members, women, men, the old and young and both educated and non-educated was critical. The researcher did, at some intervals, allow for a free flow of speech from participants telling their own personal experiences. These narratives and personal experiences aided in grasping the ontological and epistemological thinking behind their neo-Pentecostal experience (Quraishi & Philburn 2015:45).

### 1.7.7 Descriptive Approach and Critical Theoretical Framework for the Study

Although the majority of qualitative researchers will analyse data both before or during collection (Saldana 2016:7), it is, nevertheless, important to mention that when collecting and analysing the qualitative data for this study, the researcher was employing a descriptive approach method (Saldana 2016:7). The study was descriptive since the researcher was documenting the personal views of the study participants' experiences of the neo-Pentecostalism phenomenon in Livingstone. The researcher used a critical theoretical framework to examine the soundness of neo-Pentecostal praxis in relation to a scientific perspective. This study was looking for repetitive patterns (Saldana 2016:3) in data, which may or may not affirm the importance of assimilating a scientific dimension with neo-Pentecostal practice. In other words, in a study such as this one with a phenomenological context, critical analysis and contrasting of data was plausible (Saldana 2016:18). Fundamentally, however, the researcher was searching for some particularities, variations and patterns in the data collected, so as to find accurate ways to explain it.

In qualitative research, although appropriate methods and theories have to be applied to what is being studied, constructing a well-defined hypothesis is usually not encouraged seeing one cannot for sure tell what the final data might reveal (Gibbs 2007: xi). Metaphorically, one would compare this to a person going on a secret rendezvous. It is impossible for either of the two people involved to pre-empt how the appointment will turn out and whether there will be positive or negative feedback from the dialogue. Since it is improbable to precisely predict what the other person will say or envisage their body language, their tone of voice or their personal views. To this end, one can only authentically analyse after relevant data has been collected – the rest would be mere speculation.

### 1.7.8 Analysis

Analysis concerns itself with the process of transforming data by means of an analytical procedure that crystallise it into coherent, understandable, verifiable and original information (Gibbs 2007:1-2). Here the main objective was to obtain information that would fit into all these categories from the interviews by letting the participants tell their own experiences freely and talk about how they understand and make sense of the sixteen questions. It is in telling stories about how people in Livingstone experience the neo-Pentecostal phenomenon (narrative theory) that one can then begin to perceive, understand and interpret reality the way the narrator comprehends it. Nevertheless, the challenge in most scholasticism is regarding how one interprets, retells and critically imagines data collected. It is a challenge since it is practically impossible for the researcher to be absolutely value-free on the subject under scrutiny – to do so would be to claim divinity of oneself. The researcher is also part of the study whether conscious of it or not (Gibbs 2007:1-3).

Dreyer in his article *The narrative turn in practical theology: A discussion of Julian Müller's narrative approach* makes a point that the narrative approach is widely accepted among many theologians both nationally and internationally. He, however, makes a critical distinction between the narrative metaphor and narratology:

The latter is based on the knowledge of narratives as a phenomenon and the ability to analyse and interpret the narratives. It, therefore, also works with stories, but is structuralist and analytical in the analysis thereof.<sup>13</sup>

So, the researcher was establishing, from the interlocutors' engagement with responses to the sixteen interview questions. As well as discussing (data generated), pertinent themes regarding how they would deal with the possibility of neo-Pentecostal theological experience interfacing with science for the economic good of the faithful. The information that was obtained from the interview schedules and personal narratives of the neo-Pentecostal religious experience assisted in grasping the existential reality of how neo-Pentecostals perceive the reality of abject poverty and how they deal with it. After this, the researcher reflected on this information theologically and constructed and then theorized it by interfacing the homiletic praxis of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone with a scientific imagination.

### 1.7.9 Confidentiality

The confidentiality of all participants for this study was very important. Consequently, participants wanting to participate in the study anonymously were granted this wish. It is very important to respect people's privacy because valuing people means that their intrinsic human dignity should be protected at all times (Lowrance 2012:2-3). This, therefore, means that all the study participants engaged freely in the study and had the right to withdraw at any time from the study participation. Those that chose to take part in the study did so voluntarily even though the researcher was also fully aware that anonymization of data by removing identifiers may have a positive or negative impact on the topic under investigation. Finally, coercion, manipulation or any breach of informed consent was to be avoided.

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<sup>13</sup> Dreyer, J., S. (2014). *The narrative turn in practical theology: A discussion of Julian Müller's narrative approach*. AOSIS Publishing. VERBUM ET ECCLESIA. Vol 35, No 2 (2014). [online]. Available at: <http://www.ve.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/889/1940> [Accessed on 17 September 2016]

### 1.7.10 Ethical Consideration

This study did not in any way violate the laws of the land, individuals and that of the town of Livingstone. Instead, it attempted to adhere at all times during its entire process to respect the rights of individuals, pastors, women, men, churches and the community at large. To this effect, the responses and information shared by the participants were of voluntary volition and not under any kind of duress. The theological views and responses of the study participants were respected and there was no known bias involved in documenting the data collected. Academic rules were adhered to at all times, which meant that acknowledging intellectual property to avoid any sort of plagiarism was the modus operandi. And finally, this study endeavoured to maintain at all times during the process the values of integrity and of remaining accurate and authentic in its documentation.

## 1.8 Summary

The first chapter was an introductory segment, laying a foundation of how the study progressed. The chapter primarily dealt with the aspects of the problem statement and the relevance, objectivity, literature review and methodology of the study. The aspects of methodology, analysis, ethical consideration, qualitative approach, demographic of participants, the task and confidentiality of participants were discussed.

# CHAPTER 2

## 2.1 Literature Review

The current neo-Pentecostal church praxis without the incorporation of an informed scientific imagination could be problematic in the long term. Quite often, the challenges of faith studies as a science have been exacerbated by the three main trends in theology: the theocentric, anthropocentric and Cosmo-centric trend. Due to this separation, Christians often do not have the right tools or know-how to solve the meaning and role of God in philosophy, for humans and in the context of natural science (UNISA Tutorial Letter on Faith, Philosophy & Science 2012:6).

The Protestant movement's dogma of the *five solas* (*sola Scriptura, solus Christus, sola fide, sola gratia and Deo Gloria*), on which exponents of neo-Pentecostalism base its theological practice, should perhaps be interpreted in a more holistic manner by engaging a scientific imagination rather than only adopting a fundamentalist approach alone (Allen 2010:77). It seems, however, that the conception of *sola spiritus*, to the exclusion of scientific thinking, has become the acceptable *modus operandi* for neo-Pentecostal church traditions and liturgies in Livingstone. The high levels of poverty in Livingstone experienced by the locals, 52 years after Zambia's claiming of independence, are very troubling.

In discussing *the task of the church in a new scientific age*, Nebelsick points out (in Mangum 1989:57) that often we sometimes see the task of science and technology as the cause of the mess the world is in, but that “through a more rational and better use of science and technology they become a means of hope”. The proposition, therefore, is that instead of giving up the vision of solving the world’s problems through science and technology, the Church should regard science as insightful and technology as a God-given instrument – if used correctly, it can alleviate many of today’s problems (Mangum 1989:58). Against this background, education of the clergy ought to be broadened and intensified to encompass some scientific orientation, as observed by Ajakaiye (in Mangum 1989:147). Needless to say, it is a scientific resourcefulness and



rational thinking that calls for practical solutions; for example, whereby churches provide the poor people with access to the financial services they lack – services like savings, loans, insurance and money transfers, like the ones of Muhammad Yunus, founder of the microfinance movement and the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (Fikkert and Mask 2015:16).

In discussing the aspect of contextualisation in theology, Bosch affirms the importance of a dialectical relationship between the dimensions of theory and practice that has its roots in praxis or experience (Bosch 1992:425). To this effect, neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone do command a significant influence on the shaping of minds in the town because of their large membership number. In a country where well over 15% of its population regard themselves to be Charismatics, Classical Pentecostals and new Pentecostals (Allan 2004:104), there is an urgent need for integrating a critical and scientific dimension into their theological praxis. This is essential because more often than not, prosperity theology is presented as the sole remedy to poverty. Subsequently, the fundamental theory is that God rewards the faithful with the blessing of Abraham translated into material wealth, health and financial success. That is if they give tithes, offerings and “seed-faith” money to the Church or prophets/prophetesses (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:202, 204, 211). Therefore, a scientific imagination would go a long way in transforming people’s minds to not only think of poverty as simply being a spiritual problem but, among many other things, as a structural, socio-political and economic issue.

Gifford (1998:205-217) did a detailed study on the role of the Church in Zambia prior to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation by the then president F.T.J Chiluba. He wrote a whole segment on Zambia titled *A corrupt and uncaring Christian nation*. During this era, many Pentecostal churches were euphoric about Zambia being declared a Christian nation and forgot their prophetic responsibility of speaking to political power about moral responsibility. As a result, issues of corruption and poor economic conditions have continued to impact the living standards of many Zambians. Again, this demonstrates the importance of interfacing the element of critical thinking and

scientific imagination together with Christian spirituality to enable people to constructively on matters of economic sustainability.

Mbiti (2015:9-10) reminds us that Africans are very religious people in absolutely all aspects of their social life. So, if all of life should be seen as a locus of God's presence through the incarnation of Him/Her (God) through actions in the day-to-day realities and struggles of people, as Bevans (1992:12) seems to infer, the challenge then is the contentious theological subject regarding "the problem of theodicy" (Miller-Mclemore 2012:26). Since God's omnipresent love cannot turn a blind eye to the immense economic sufferings of the people of Livingstone. It is important to reflect on this because real theology is not an abstract discipline detached from the actual experiences of individuals and their communities (Cochrane and de Gruchy & Peterson 1991:17).

Mbiti (2015:10) contends that Africans' social lives, cultures, political organisations and economic activities are influenced by a sense of religiosity – it is interesting to note how Mbiti links religiosity and *economic activities*. It is, thus, imperative that African people should think carefully about their religious orientation and what relevance this has to their lives. This is the point Willis (2012:123) makes when citing Macchia's views: Pentecostals have tended to steer clear of modernity's drift towards scientific objectivity and the use of historical methods, focusing rather upon the spiritual quest for the truth and the authority of scripture. Willis (2012:125) quotes Yong, who points out that isolating oneself from engagement with others on the pretext of a biblical literalism approach – on the part of Pentecostals in a globalised world and particularly at a scientific and intellectually level – is not beneficial. It is, therefore, essential to develop a pneumatology that advances scientific rationality in order to enable local adherents of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone to develop material resources that are needed for improving their lives.

Blaming Western culture's influence on Africa, as some form of *pseudo-Westernization* that prevents African pastors from finding solutions to issues regarding real life, as Daramola (2016:3) suggests is not helpful but rather retrogressive. Reading the world scientifically does not imply reading the world as if God is non-existent; it basically

means focusing on deciphering the workings of the physical world. It also means attaching scientific exploits to the transcendent Spirit of God, who is at work through science, and not ascribing this knowledge to demonic spiritual forces (Ngong 2010:141-142). It is this very lack of critical and rational thinking that has reduced the role of a prophet from one of a godly spokesperson, who boldly and unashamedly critiques the powerful elite regarding social injustice, to one of a neo-Pentecostal prophet – one that, today, can be equated to a diviner of an African Traditional Religion (ATR), cleansing people from spiritual ailments and foretelling material success or failure (Ngong 2010:143). In this regard, the lack of a critical and scientific world-view has caused neo-Pentecostals to lay the blame for poverty on witches, ancestral curses, not giving money to the prophets/prophetesses and not giving tithes and offering to the Church.<sup>14</sup> One wonders, though, in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century era, if neo-Pentecostalism can really deal with issues of wealth inequality just by means of the *prosperity theology* and a worldview that still holds firmly to the doctrine of demonology when the rest of the world is moving ahead so fast (Maxwell 1998:67).

What some neo-Pentecostal followers do not quite acknowledge in their theology of the spirit is that the fundamental causes of poverty are structural ones, the understanding of which is far beyond the common woman and man. George Newlands (2006:83) persists that, “the means of delivering sufficient food in our modern world involves complex logistical and economic issues”. In other literature, Newlands (2006:94) brings our attention to the Christology of Bonhoeffer, which critiqued Ecclesiastical Triumphalism for its refusal to actively engage with the needs of those who suffered unjustly.

Nonetheless, scholars like Freeman (2012:21) do not see the role of neo-Pentecostal church communities as completely negative. Rather, they are of the view that new Pentecostals play a major role in motivating business behaviour and empowering

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<sup>14</sup> Ocran-Stiles, D. (2013). *Jesus' Kingdom Message and Ghana's New Christianity: A Contextual Approach to the Praxis of the Kingdom of God. Master of Philosophy*. University of Oslo. Faculty of Theology. [online]. Available at: <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/35824/DavidxStilesxOcranxxMasterxThesis.pdf?sequence=1> [Accessed on 3 August 2016].

people to be daring and aim high in their entrepreneurship quest. Freeman (2012:20) argues that neo-Pentecostalism in Africa does play a role in neoliberal capitalism and development, just like Protestantism did or Weber's Calvinist theory emphasised. In a modern capitalistic Africa, operation on principles of neoliberalism and the values of neo-Pentecostal thinking are a catalyst that helps members to break free from the limitations placed on society (Maxwell 1998:351).

In their magisterial work *Mere Creation: Science, Faith and Intelligent Design*, Michael Behe *et al.* (1998:364) argue that the reason Christians fear advancing scientific knowledge is that it may contradict biblical truths and undercut the Christian understanding of God as the creator of all things and redeemer. Moreover, they affirm that "Christian theology has no reason to fear and every reason to embrace scientific research" (Behe *et al.* 1998:382). For example, they employ the notion of intelligent design alongside theological reflection when they refer to the case for intentionality in intelligent design. They reason that intelligent design is at once more modest and more powerful today; the observable features of the natural world demonstrate the intelligence behind the zillions of biological complexities. Furthermore, they reckon that intelligent design stays away from emphatically speculating the moral character and purpose of this intelligence in nature. Hence, they observe that theologians are tasked with designing a rigorously formulated scientific theory that they can apply to the God of the Bible (Dembski 1998:16-18). What most neo-Pentecostals fear is the Darwinian natural selection and randomness theory as encapsulated in *The Origins of Species*. In their book *Anarchy Evolution: Faith, Science, and Bad Religion in a World Without God*, Graffin and Olson postulate that Darwin argued that the myriad of complexities in the evolutionary process, and the sheer brutality of nature and the uncoordinated variances in species which causes some species to die and others to continue living, is based on the 'survival of the fittest' principle. This caused Darwin to question the (at the time) very broadly held view of natural theology (Graffin and Olson 2010:56-60; Dembski 1998:17).

Kalu (2008:39-41) observes that African Pentecostalism has African roots, even though he admits the role of missionary influence. He mentions that the prophetic revival

movements in Africa were a necessary indigenous response that produced a distinctive and enthusiastic form of African Christianity. Undoubtedly, here Kalu is in agreement with Mbiti, who gave an illustration of a Western-trained African theologian, who after nine and half years of theological training failed to exorcise a spirit from her own sister; rather, she demythologised her suffering, according to Bultmann (Asomoah-Gydu 2005:198-199).

Anderson (2004:103-104), maintains that Pentecostalism is big business in much of sub-Saharan Africa. He reckons that it comes in various forms and theological orientations. Firstly, there is the Classical Pentecostals that have been in operation in Africa since 1907 under the influence of first missionaries from Azusa Street. Secondly, he holds that there are also the African initiated churches, usually referred to as AICs or spirit and “prophet-healing churches”. He observes that these churches possess their own uniqueness but also mirror classical Pentecostalism. Anderson's view, however, according to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:11) is refuted by scholars like “Pomerville, Peterson and Sepulveda, who see it as erroneous the idea that all Pentecostal movements trace their lineage to Seymour's Azusa Street mission or to Paharm's initiative”.

Asamoah-Gyadu's (2005:10-11) argumentation here is multifaceted. The first argument is that the Azusa position portrays Pentecostalism as an American export rather than as the work of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, it overlooks other previous renewals, which were equally significant. Thirdly, he maintains that Pentecostal outpourings in Haiti and India predate those of Azusa. But there is also a more recent tier of Pentecostal Churches – or, rather, a movement – that began in the early 1960s and is growing phenomenally in numbers, sometimes being simply referred to as ‘the movement of Charismatic churches’ (Kalu 2008:89-91). Although the two terms Pentecostals and Charismatics are usually used interchangeably, technically they are not one and the same thing. The latter deals with all those movements which manifested gifts of the Holy Spirit outside of the classical Pentecostal tradition (Anderson 2006:144).

The words Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism are also not the same; they are at times also considered to be one and the same, but nevertheless, scholars differentiate the two. In her article *Wealth and Worth: Pastorship and neo-Pentecostalism in Kumasi*, Karen Lauterbach mentions writes:

There is a distinction between Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches. The former are the so-called classical churches, introduced by foreign missionaries [...] the latter group represents more recent established Pentecostal churches. These churches are the offspring of the older Pentecostal and Protestant churches or are independent churches.<sup>15</sup>

In this study, however, the term neo-Pentecostalism will be used to encompass both the Charismatic and neo-Pentecostal theological and liturgical beliefs. The underscoring theory of neo-Pentecostalism is that the salvific work of Christ does not only concern deliverance from sin in the spiritual sense, but that it also involves the acquiring of good health, financial success and material wealth (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:202).

Jones and Woodbridge (2011:14-16), nonetheless, critique what they call the *new gospel*. They argue that fundamentally, it omits Jesus and neglects the cross by falsely promoting wealth, money and health at the expense of promoting Christ. In bringing their argument across, they quote Charles Spurgeon, who said:

I believe that it is anti-Christian and unholy for any Christian to live with the object of accumulating wealth. You will say, are we not to strive all we can to get all the money we can? You may do so. I cannot doubt but what, in doing so, you may do service to the cause of God. But what I said was that to live with the object of accumulating wealth is anti-Christian”.

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<sup>15</sup> Lauterbach, K. (2006). *Wealth and Worth: Pastorship and Neo-Pentecostalism in Kumasi*. Ghana Studies. v 9 (2006). Pp 91-121. [online]. Available at: [http://www.academia.edu/5895785/Wealth\\_and\\_Worth\\_Pastorship\\_and\\_Neo-Pentecostalism\\_in\\_Kumasi](http://www.academia.edu/5895785/Wealth_and_Worth_Pastorship_and_Neo-Pentecostalism_in_Kumasi) [Accessed on 17 September 2015]

Moreover, they assert that renowned neo-Pentecostal preachers like Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin Jr., Robert Tilton, Joyce Meyer T.D Jakes, Joel Osteen and Frederick Price are some of the main propagators of the teaching of the prosperity theology. They then export it globally through the power of television (Jones & Woodbridge 2011:15-16). Ingram (2010:23) makes a similar argumentation in *Faith Lifts: Finding Life's Vital Connection, God*, when he points out that faith should not be perceived as a means to an end, but rather it is a means to God. Ingram's assessment is that faith for modern Charismatics has been reduced to a magic wand which quickly removes and dissolves all the crises and calamities of life. Neo-Pentecostals believe that faith in God opens the doorway to health, financial and material prosperity. The challenge, however, comes when, one argues that countries with a high percentage of nonbelievers are among some of the freest, most stable, best educated and healthiest on the globe. Countries such as Sweden, with 82% of the population not believing in a personal God, and Norway, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands all have high numbers of people who do not believe in a personal divine creator (Graffin and Olson 2010:110-111).

Fundamentally, proponents of the neo-Pentecostal theology of a spiritualised cosmology do not so much ascribe to the notion that humans are surrounded by the manifestations of science and technology. The discovery of molecular DNA, the worldwide web or cell phone mobile connectivity and the like have transformed the world the way we know it (Dembski 1998:62-63; Graffin & Olson 2006:246-248). It may seem paradoxical to some that neo-Pentecostals are at times hesitant to openly engage scientific and technological imagination, when they actually use electronic mass media to disseminate their message (Kirsch 2008:61). Often, Christians are too confident that they know all the answers to life – this is one of the main reasons why young adults “feel disconnected from church” (Coyne 2015:11).

The challenge remains which is that neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone have re-examine the “God of the gaps” approach, which is the view that what is unexplainable scientifically proves the presence of a supreme being (Dembski 1998:313-314). Natural scientists cannot yet prove scientifically the origin of life, for example, however, it does not imply that one day they would not be able to do so. There was a time in history

when the official view of the Church was that the earth was stationary and it was at the center of the universe, but the Polish priest Nicholas Copernicus in 1514 advanced another theory that it was the sun that was stationary and not the earth (The Bible, Creation and Ecology 2010). The real test for neo-Pentecostal Christians is to seek for ways and means of a positive interface between science and faith rather than debunking every notion which does not correlate with popular Christian propositions (Willis 2012:159). Denying the pivotal role that scientific reasoning plays makes the Christian faith more vulnerable to public scorn in the eyes of the scientifically informed. This is not because God is not real but because of a gestation of some religious leaders and teachers to engage with science and technology in constructive ways. It is no wonder that Lynn White's classic essay *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* puts the blame categorically on the anthropocentric doctrine of the Church. Due to its promotion of the dogma of domination of nature according to Genesis 1, as well as the elevation of human beings' interests while excluding the rest of the non-human creation in the ecosystem (O' Brien 2010:131).

Arguably, much of the neo-Pentecostal theology of material abundance and divine wellbeing is predicated on a spiritualised cosmology and the anthropocentric view to the exclusion of scientific realism. Hence, it might seem paradoxical that this study proposes a scientific integration to neo-Pentecostal theology, or theologies for the betterment of human economic development, while making reference to White's famous essay. This is because White strongly critiqued Western science and technology as the root cause of environmental degradation because it was informed by Judeo-Christianity. He writes:

I personally doubt that disastrous ecologic backlash can be avoided simply by applying to our problems more science and more technology. Our science and technology have grown out of Christian attitudes toward man's relation to nature which are almost universally held not only by Christians and neo-Christians but also by those who fondly regard themselves as post-Christians.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.uvm.edu/~gflomenh/ENV-NGO-PA395/articles/Lynn-White.pdf> [Accessed on 5 August 2016].



White's strong analysis just goes to show the importance of having a healthy dialogue between science and Christian theology on a continuous basis.

Wickmann (2014:5) suggest another view to the God and science debate. In his work *God of the Big Bang: How Modern Science Affirms the Creator*, he points out that science and religion discourse has been jeopardised by the illusion of a conflict between them, perpetuated by those entrenched in their own positions and who refuse to critically reflect on their own positions. Furthermore, Wickman (2014:170) argues that one does not necessarily have to choose between the two because it is possible to be a *faithful Christian* and also be somebody who engages with science skillfully.

Paul Gifford<sup>17</sup> in his illuminative article titled *Africa's Inculturation Theology: Observations of an Outsider*, he observes that for Africa to survive in today's world and to participate equally globally, the continent will require the education skills from the fields of science, engineering and technology. Subsequently, he adds that these disciplines should not be viewed as being traditionally Western.

Barbour (2000:2-3) holds a similar view to that of Wickman. In his book *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers or Partners*, Barbour points out that science and religion are often perceived as enemies locked in a moral conflict. Science asks about causal relations between events, while religion asks about the meaning and purpose of life. To this effect, Barbour states that the two enquires, science and religion, offer a complementary perspective on the world. They are separate and independent, but they are not in conflict. Hence, he advances a fourfold typology:

1. Conflict typology: biblical literalists, who affirm that science and religion are in fact enemies, mainly hold this view.

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Gifford is a professor of religion at the university of London. He is a respected scholar and academic and specializes in African Christianity. Some of his famous works are: *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* and *African Christianity: its Public Role* among others. Gifford, P. (2008). *Africa's Inculturation Theology: Observation of an Outsider*. Hekima Review, No. 38, May 2008. [online]. Available at: <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/7956/1/AfricasInculturationTheology.pdf> [Accessed on 5 August 2016].

2. Independence typology: This school of thought holds the view that science and religion can indeed co-exist provided they keep their separate safe domains.
  
3. Dialogue typology: This view holds the notion that science and religion, theologians and scientist can engage as dialogue partners informing the other where the other falls short.
  
4. Integration typology: This approach suggests a more extensive and systematic kind of partnership in which science and religion interplay.

Basically, the theological essence of the neo-Pentecostal Church's pastoral praxis in Livingstone is framed around the *conflict typology* and, to a lesser extent, around the *independence typology*. Subsequently, material prosperity, divine healing and exorcism are considered to be the results of one's literal and effectual implementation of "the word of God" (biblical inerrancy approach). The idea that the personal and cultural histories of the writers who contributed to the Bible are infused into the scripture itself is unfathomable for neo-Pentecostal believers (Brueggemann *et al.* 2002:2; Jacoby 2010:97-98). So, when material prosperity and divine health, for example, are absent in the faithful's life, it is then assumed that they are not in synchrony with *the word of God*.

In their work *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism*, Brouwer *et al.* (1996:252) write:

The invocation of miracle religion for a whole variety of material needs indicates that even those people who are moderately comfortable are afraid of instability and have little concept of their own individual agency within the political economy.

By implication neo-Pentecostal approach might be construed to assume that if one has achieved some level of material success, he or she is more spiritual than those who have not. Interestingly, economic indicators, entrepreneurial skills, accessibility to capital

markets and technological advancements are rarely factored into this whole neo-Pentecostal spiritual matrix. This approach can be traced back to the early Pentecostal beliefs that regarded science as the enemy of faith due to the assertions of evolutionary biologists and palaeontologist who claimed of the non-existence of God (Yong 2011:3). This is not to say that Pentecostals have not always negotiated the tension between science and faith. In fact, Yong (2011:6) gives an example of the Oral Roberts University (ORU), which combined medical science and Christian faith when they opened their City of Faith Medical and Research Centre.

Nonetheless, the dichotomy is that the very churches that shy away from the enormous beauty of science make use of computer technology to advertise themselves. This is because whether we are conscious of it or not the science of digital technology has permeated itself into the economic, social, physical and even the spiritual dimensions of human daily lives (Jewell 2004:15). Essentially, Jewell (2004:16) argues that more often than not, the Church has lagged behind in embracing the positive aspects of the science of technologies available today. From Jewell's reasoning, it becomes expedient to argue for the indispensability of scientific reasoning and engagement on the part of neo-Pentecostal churches' practice in Livingstone in order for them to remain relevant.

Ballard and Pritchard authorities, in the discipline of practical theology, argue that the field of practical theology in our time is said to be at the very cutting edge of the Christian encounter with vital features of modern culture (2006:4). It is fundamental to point out that philosophical idealism and scientific mentality are not always agreeable. But can contribute positively to empowering neo-Pentecostal followers to form a more engaging interpretation of reality as it relates to people's economic situations. This can be realised, for instance, by engaging *...process philosophy to interpret scientific and religious thought within a common conceptual framework* (Barbour 2000:3). Other scholars, nevertheless, might question the lack of interpretation of scriptures primarily informed by comprehensive biblical exegesis on the part of neo-Pentecostals. Usually, neo-Pentecostal churches do so much take into consideration the understanding of the contexts in which the Bible was written and the recognition of various authors and

genres. The different epochs, customs and cultural norms of the Bible time are also usually neglected (Oliverio JR. 2012:119).

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 The Role of Practical Theology for this Study

In practical theology, it is very important to discern what individuals or communities require at a particular juncture in that specific community. Otherwise, the practicality aspect becomes futile. For we know that “truth is found in the community of shared meaning and is appropriated by a process of growth into wisdom” (Anderson 2001:17). For example, there are times when pastors ought to offer only spiritual ministry to their congregation and communities such as offering prayers and exorcisms. But in other instances, a different Christian ministerial service is required. For instance, the immediate need of a hungry person is not prayer but giving them food. Neither is teaching Christian forgiveness the first priority a woman being physically abused by her partner, for example, but safety and security should be prioritised. In the same way that neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone should be encouraged to constantly contextualize their message in order to seek for sustainable solutions to the economic malaise church members face. The researcher is of the view that, it requires the service of both scientific and the spiritual approaches to economically empower congregants and change a community.

It ought to be noted that the researcher does not assume that, the integration approach of scientific methods into the hermeneutical practice of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone, will solve all economic poverty. Rather, this humble proposition is just one of the many possible remedies neo-Pentecostal adherents could adopt. The South African writer Andrew Murray (2010:8) said:

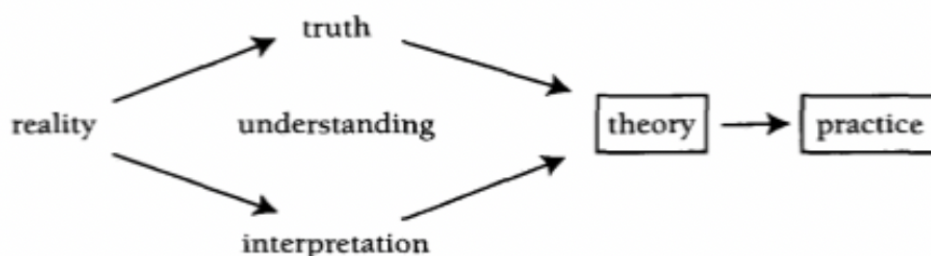
Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure:

It was this awareness that encouraged the researcher to respectfully engage the study participants to find out how they thought the study best enriched their congregations

and community and how their own epistemological and ontological responsiveness impact them economically. The reason that the researcher takes this standpoint is that in practical theology, there should not be any place for arrogance. One should have an open ear to listen and an open heart to suggest an appropriate service to those who need it the most.

First of all, it is very important to emphasise that practical theology is really public theology, because Christ is at the centre of Christian public engagement. This realisation is informed by God’s Spirit at work, not only in the life of the Church and individual believers but in families, nations and the world over (Volf & McAnnally-Linz 2016:3-4). Practical theology is “an action” – science concerning itself with the bipolar connection between theory and praxis which brings about change to a particular community (Pieterse 2004:9). It is the science aspect of practical theology that the researcher was interested in when seeking for ways of economic progression for neo-Pentecostals. Studying the communicative actions of neo-Pentecostal churches and believers in Livingstone was crucial because usually church members’ actions are a result of that which is communicated to them. In other terms, the way that the gospel is preached and applied is very critical. Jesus at one time said, “Consider carefully what you hear” (Mark 4:24).

Andrews’ (2002:1) description of practical theology embraces the fundamentals of this particular theological discipline, for it explains the back-and-forth link between theological revelation, theoretical science and practice of ministry. To this end, Andrews (2002:1) contends:



*Figure 1: Anderson's Modern Approach to Practical Theology*

Practical theology is not simply a science of diagnosis and application within a selective discipline, like some areas of medicine.

Rather, it is the reflexivity of an engaging process of “praxis” between theology, theory and practice. Andrews’ (2002:1,8-10) discourse is centred around the issues of social, political and economic injustice that polarised black and white communities of the U.S.A. In the 1960s at the height of the civil rights movement and the *black power movement*. However, his rendering of black practical theology as a theology that engages communities and society at large in faith action is applicable to the Livingstone context as well. But even more importantly, it takes the dimension of the truth of experience and action as the core of its theological contemplation (Anderson 2001:23).

From a biblical literalist point of view, one could point out that a practical theologian is one who is an agent of godly transformation. This transformation is brought about by the consciousness of God’s presence to both communities and individuals. It is this awareness of the divine presence that makes a follower of Christ perceive God’s acceptable will in the service of individuals’ and communities by being an active exemplary believer and spiritual moral agent (Romans 12:1-3, Matthew 5:13-16).

Ballard and Pritchard (2006:1-6) are of the view that it is restrictive to defining practical theology as a particular field of study dealing with Christian life and practice within the Church as it relates to a wider societal context. Since in recent times the discipline of practical theology has broadened widely and attracted many a scholar.

It raises the theological issues of meaning and truth in relation to the living out of the life of faith. It brings together theory and practice. It relates to pastoral skills and ministerial training. But it is also concerned with every feature of social policy and cultural experience (Miller-McLemore 2012:18).

This affirms the notion that practical theology goes beyond just the usual mantra of the affiliation between beliefs and practices. Rather, practical theology is at the very centre

of that which constitutes theological knowledge, and theology not only describes how people live in their faith communities and society, but it also imagines new ways of living one's faith in a more meaningful and satisfactory manner.

It is in this cognitive awareness that this study sought to task itself with constructing a practical theology of economic neo-Pentecostalism that uses scientific and technological advancements of the 21<sup>st</sup> -century in order to make a dent in economic poverty. However, this will that neo-Pentecostal pastors in Livingstone integrate a critical reflection on the merits of engaging with scientific contemplation in the way that they present their sermons to their congregations. The researcher was interested in having a theological engagement premised mutual respect and constructive discourse with neo-Pentecostal pastors and church members in Livingstone; to discuss the critical role that science can play in enhancing their full spirituality. When people are hungry or in need of basic human needs such as clean drinking water, shelter, sanitation and primary health care, they require practical solutions that will alleviate their predicament. This is not to say that prayers in the life of neo-Pentecostals in Livingstone should be diminished. But rather to practically solve the pressing needs that church members grapple with daily. The researcher's preferred understanding of practical theology is that even though it reflects on theory, fundamentally, it is an applied theological discipline throughout (Patton and Woodward 2000:5). For it deals with studying God in the context of others and the ministry or the service we offer to other people.

Practical theology is tasked with the critical functional role of examining beliefs, experiences and human realities of society and church in relation to the ostensible beliefs. However, at the same time, it keeps a balanced tension between the "interplay of theory and practice" (Cahalan & Mikoski 2014:2). Consequently, this understanding become the bedrock of this study. Which was to critically examine the experiences and human realities of the neo-Pentecostal devotees' lives in relation to a scientific approach. To put it differently, the researcher was interested in hearing from neo-Pentecostal pastors in Livingstone and their followers about their theological views on how scientific intellect and engagement, if adopted, is able to impact their lives.



Another reason why this study was premised essentially on practical theology is that the researcher wanted to reflect critically on the biblical hermeneutical tradition of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone and how this has a direct impact on the daily lives of members. Usually, theologians normally are aware of the importance of having a rigorous interpretation of scripture. Hence, every theological practice has a particular hermeneutical location to it (Cahalan & Mikoski 2014:5).

The term neo-Pentecostal has been used all throughout this study to indicate those Pentecostal churches which are organically Zambian and not affiliated to any traditional missionary churches. It denotes specifically those churches that McClymond (in Robeck & Yong 2014:32) refers to as churches of the “Third-wave era” which began in the 1980s. He calls these churches “Pentecost outside Pentecost” even though they still subscribe to the doctrine of speaking in other tongues (baptism of the Holy Spirit) (in Robeck & Yong 2014:32). Therefore, respondents at times used both terms, neo-Pentecostal and Pentecostal churches but referring to the same thing.

# CHAPTER 4

## 4.1 The Economic and Sociological Situation in Zambia Especially in Livingstone.

Livingstone is the tourist capital of Zambia and lays on the southwestern part of the country. It is famously known for the Victoria water falls, popularly known as Mosi-oa-Tunya (the smoke which Thunders) in the local language, making it one of the most popular tourist destinations for both local and international visitors. Data obtained from the Livingstone town council reviews that over 66% of the inhabitants of Livingstone live below the poverty line.<sup>18</sup> According to the Zambian statistics data, Livingstone has a population of over 139 thousand.<sup>19</sup> The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS is still a challenge to a town that has inadequate health facilities. Christianity accounts for 95% of the Livingstone population, other religions like Moslems account for 2% with another 2% practicing other forms of religious beliefs and the rest do not affiliate themselves to any religion<sup>20</sup>. In recent years various development agencies have been involved in some socioeconomic, infrastructural and institutional development activities aimed at improving the livelihoods of rural families.

Although some infrastructure like roads, water wells, bridges, schools and health structures have been built and some skills imparted to the community, a donor dependency syndrome still exists among the communities in resource mobilization.<sup>21</sup>

The situation has been exacerbated by the high unemployment particularly among youths, high prostitution and inadequate social services in education, health care, shelter, water and sanitation. A report by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), a local civil society organization affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church points out that the Basic Needs Basket of June 2016 for a family of 5 in Livingstone

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<sup>18</sup> Livingstone City Council. (2006). *Livingstone District: Situation Analysis*.

<sup>19</sup> Obtained from Zambia statistics office.

<sup>20</sup> Livingstone City Council. (2006). *Livingstone District: Situation Analysis*.

<sup>21</sup> Livingstone City Council. (2006). *Livingstone District: Situation Analysis*.

was approximately US\$386<sup>22</sup>. And that trajectory of a high cost of living has continued even in 2019 according to the same organization. This figure is unattainable to sustain on a monthly basis for many locals, due to high unemployment rate and a high cost of living. So, for those who are unemployed the figure is way lower than the metric calculation for the poverty line of US\$1.25/per day given by the United Nations.

The above mentioned social-economic reality pauses a big challenge to the local church ministers in terms of how they construct their summons and theological praxis, in order to remedy the reality of poverty. Davie (2015:6) argues that since poverty is more than just an economic matter, but also a moral and ethical issue, pastors should be encouraged to equip themselves intellectually on how to deal with it.

In order to better understand the sociological and economic situation in Livingstone, it was important to understand the context of the country as a whole. Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa with a population of over 17 million. From its total population 60% of Zambians live below the poverty line, and 42% are categorized as extremely poor. The rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence stands at 14.3% of the population with close to 1.5 million orphans. In 2016 Zambia was classified as having the third most hungry inhabitants globally.<sup>23</sup> Zambia is ranked at number seven globally on the scale of HIV/AIDS prevalence.<sup>24</sup> It is in this social-economic context that pastors find themselves.

Another feature that characterize the economical and sociological situation in Zambia is that of life expectancy and government expenditure on health. The average life

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<sup>22</sup> The Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection is a very reputable Christian organization in Zambia. It deliberates on a number of pertinent societal issues. These range from economics, politics and civil engagement matters. Available at: [http://www.jctr.org.zm/images/06.2016rptBNBOutput\\_-\\_Livingstone.pdf](http://www.jctr.org.zm/images/06.2016rptBNBOutput_-_Livingstone.pdf) [Accessed on 12 September 2016].

<sup>23</sup> Lincoln, JF. (2018). The Scope of Hidden Hunger in Zambia. *Journal of Food Science and Nutrition Technology*, [online]. Volume 3 (3), p. 2. Available at: <https://medwinpublishers.com/FSNT/FSNT16000151.pdf> [Accessed on 18 March 2019].

<sup>24</sup> Lincoln, JF. (2018). The Scope of Hidden Hunger in Zambia. *Journal of Food Science and Nutrition Technology*, [online]. Volume 3 (3), p. 2. Available at: <https://medwinpublishers.com/FSNT/FSNT16000151.pdf> [Accessed on 18 March 2019].

expectancy for most ordinary Zambians is way below that of other nations in the region. According to the World Health Organization statistics of 2015 life expectancy for males in Zambia was 59 and for women was at 65<sup>25</sup>. Zambia's total expenditure on health per capita for 2014 was US\$195, but for a Western country like Germany, just for illustration purposes, in that same year it was US\$5, 182.<sup>26</sup> This indicates that a nation's economic situation has a direct correlation to the social-economic challenges such as poverty, diseases and mortality rate.

Zambia is endowed with an abundance of natural resources; it has a huge fertile landmass. The country has very fertile agricultural land of about 58% of total land mass.<sup>27</sup> The country has also plenty of sunshine all year round and it has enormous hydroelectric potential due to its many rivers and lakes holding 35% of all underground water in the Southern Africa region.<sup>28</sup> However, the country still has enormous challenges with electricity shortage and production of enough food. Zambia has the potential of producing 6000 Mega-Watts of hydroelectric power, but it only manages to produce 1,715.5 Mega-Watts (Adams *et al.* 2014: 11). Many food products and other merchandizes in local supermarkets and shops are imported. There are also a lot of street vendors who sell cheap Chinese-made products, which are relatively affordable for many locals who cannot afford to buy expensive goods. There are many *Salaula* shops (these are shops that sell second-hand clothes mainly from Europe and the United States of America). When purchasing these sorts of clothing, one is at least assured of buying something very cheap but of relatively good quality.

Zambia experienced relatively economic growth in the past due to the booming copper prices of the 1970. But the 1980s International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural

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<sup>25</sup> World Health Organization (2017). Zambia. Available at: <http://www.who.int/countries/zmb/en/> [Accessed on 15 July 2017].

<sup>26</sup> World Health Organization (2017). Zambia. Available at: <http://www.who.int/countries/deu/en/> [Accessed on 15 July 2017].

<sup>27</sup> Zambia Development Agency (2019). Available at: <http://www.zda.org.zm/?q=content/natural-resources> This is data is from the Zambia Development Agency website [Accessed on 10 August 2019].

<sup>28</sup> Zambia Development Agency (2019). Available at: <http://www.zda.org.zm/?q=content/natural-resources> This is data is from the Zambia Development Agency website [Accessed on 10 August 2019].

adjustment programmes resulted in a number of major companies closing down. The lack of economic diversification meant that:

The translation of economic growth into improved living standards for the poor majority remains an enormous challenge, and is undermined by the HIV/AIDS epidemic<sup>29</sup>

Zambia has 1.4 million children between the age of seventeen and under who have experienced the death of at least one biological parent due to various causes, HIV/AIDS being one of them (Hunleth 2017:162). Because the country relies heavily on borrowing from international markets from Western nations and China to sustain its national budget, it is difficult to build modern health infrastructure when the country has to service its debt. However, despite the limited fiscal resources faced by government, Zambia has made advances in providing health services.<sup>30</sup>

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report titled *Zambia: Staff Report for the 2015 Article IV Consultation—debt Sustainability Analysis* gives a glimpse of Zambia's mounting debt. The report says as of 2011, Zambia's stock of external public and private debt had been rising and by the end of 2014, it stood at 24% of GDP.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Neo-Pentecostal churches' Practical Communal Engagement

Some Scholars argue that the Church is in a good position to help Africans combat poverty but only if it vigorously seeks tailor-made solutions applicable to the African

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<sup>29</sup> Burgess, R. (2015). Pentecostal and development in Nigeria and Zambia: Community Organizing as a Response to Poverty and Violence. *PentecoStudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. 14. pp. 176-204. [online]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282475552>. [Accessed on 12 August 2019].

<sup>30</sup> Hopkins, C. & Pokrywa, L. (2018). Zambia: A State Fragility Analysis with Policy Options. Masters Dissertation. From *Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Carleton University* [online]. p. 4. Available at: <https://carleton.ca/cifp/wp-content/uploads/Zambia-2019-Fragile-States-Policy-Brief.pdf> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2019].

<sup>31</sup> International Monetary Fund (2015). *Zambia Staff Report For The 2015 Article IV Consultation-Debt Sustainability Analysis*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/dsa/pdf/2015/dsacr15152.pdf> [Accessed on 19 April 2017].

context (Nthala in Kretzschmar *et al.* 2009). Freeman (2012: 26) observes that neo-Pentecostal churches are more effective in bringing about social and economic change compared to non-church organizations, due to their vigorous communal engagement.

Of the twenty (20) pastors that participated in this study, eleven (11) were involved in some community project or program that saved the community, and in some cases provided employment to some people within that particular community. The following were the community projects pastors were directly involved in, as project initiators or as partners with other Christian churches from overseas: community school, chicken farming, carpentry, vegetable gardening, small-scale pig farming, metal fabrication, computer training for women, Bible training school, community development school, primary health care clinics, and house block making.

The observation made on these communal projects was that, they were relatively very basic because essentially, they did not operate on a purely business model of achieving profit margins, rather they mostly functioned on a charitable organization model. For their financial support they relied on well-wishers, volunteers and the goodwill of Christian churches and organizations from outside, in particular from Western Europe and North America.

The Second observation made was that, in the Livingstone context neo-Pentecostal churches' public communal engagement has been more concentrated on building schools, most often pre-primary and primary schools. However, in a town with so much poverty, high unemployment and with hardly any industries the educational sector is just one of the many areas needing development.

Third observation was that these communal projects had an enormous potential for growth and expansion. That is, if they operated on regular business models, such as focusing on profit margins and employing well-qualified personnel to run these projects and aiming at growing them in order to compete at a global scale. The high levels of poverty and unemployment in Livingstone, make it a huge challenge for these church-initiated projects to put a dent on poverty without first adopting purely business framework practices. Baloyi brings a similar challenge to Black Reformed churches in South Africa concerning their long-held unsubstantiated idea that church ministries and

business ventures are somehow antagonistic to each other.<sup>32</sup> It is for this reason that he, Baloyi, contends that churches should not stay on the margins of business venturing but be like their white counterparts who are church ministers but also accomplished farmers, for example – some even run transport services and supermarkets.

Baloyi's assertion above is critical, because in a capitalistic world where vigorous competition for resources and power is the order of things, relying on donations and free-will contributions alone might only achieve limited success. Self-empowerment is one of the most effective ways to encourage wealth-creation and for establishing strong business entities in order to create employment (Anderson 1994:36-38). The researcher is of the view that, Western donor churches and agencies may have good intentions when assisting churches in less-developed nations like Zambia. But perpetual assistance can turn into a dependence syndrome. When this happens, it might weigh heavily on Zambian churches' self-dignity, and thus curtailing their God-given potential for devising solutions that are appropriate for their context. Because quite often, these local churches and pastors have a far better understanding of the economic situation they face than the donor churches do (Fikkert, Mask & Warren 2015:20).

One study participant reckoned that, as a pastor she often challenges her church members to live a productive life by evaluating their financial security and business ventures. She used the term “you have to reflect your year” and also “you have to evaluate your life”. According to her, if church members are financially well-off, they will curb generational poverty. Pieterse (2004:21-22) says practical theology in the context of a congregation is a communication science, he adds that preaching plays a vital role in church and community for it stimulates dialogue with God and with fellow members concerning how we relate to the biblical message.

Pentecostalism's public role has been acknowledged by many a scholar. Omenyo (in Robeck & Yong 2014: 143) in the *Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism* points out that Pentecostal churches have become a force to be reckoned with in Africa, specifically for their economic, social and political engagement. Omenyo adds that,

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<sup>32</sup> ME Baloyi Practical Theology University of South Africa, the Sustentasi in the Reformed Churches of South Africa: Unmasking the Dilemma facing Black Theologians, p. 432.

these churches are engaged in building institutions and businesses in order to complement public infrastructure. Whilst Omenyo's assertion is factual, at the same time one has to be cautious of making generalizations for a continent as big and diverse as Africa, with more than 54 countries and territories, and with thousands of ethnic tribes and cultures.

## **4.2 The Influence of Neo-Pentecostalism on Economic Development in Sub-Saharan African.**

Scholars such as Mbungua *et al.* (2015:3-4) are candid in critiquing neo-Pentecostal's prosperity theology as "a false gospel". It is false in their view, because they argue that its main focus is not seeking the attributes of a Christ-like nature but rather material wealth, jobs, husbands, wives and promotions.

However, some scholars take a different view, such as Togarasei<sup>33</sup>. He argues that Pentecostalism with its message of prosperity has a positive impact in Sub-Saharan Africa. Because it promotes entrepreneurship and teaches congregants to use natural resources, and other personal skills to be productive. Such as the building of private universities. As an example, Togarasei cites Bible Life Church in Gaborone Botswana, which in recent years has embarked on a project of building one house each year for the poor. Furthermore, Togarasei gives another example of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), which runs "orphans and destitute child fund" to support child education.<sup>34</sup> In fact, intellectuals like Dayton (1987:10) attribute the rapid growth of the Christian church in Sub-Saharan Africa to Pentecostalism, he calls this "...an agent in the growth Christianity church".

In their article *The Role of Religion in Development: Towards a New Relationship between the European Union and Africa* Haar & Ellis maintain that religion plays a

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<sup>33</sup> Togarasei, L. (2011). *The Pentecostal Gospel of Prosperity in Africa*. Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Botswana. Exchange 40 (2011) 336-350.

<sup>34</sup> Togarasei, L. (2011). *The Pentecostal Gospel of Prosperity in Africa*. Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Botswana. Exchange 40 (2011) 336-350.



pivotal role in developmental issues not only in Europe but in Africa as well, and so they argue that:

In sub-Saharan Africa, religion now forms arguably the most important connection with the rest of the world<sup>35</sup>.

There are many reasons that can be attributed to poverty in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Among these according to Houston<sup>36</sup> are bad governance, unfair trade practices, war-conflict, poor infrastructure, geo-political factors and historical factors of colonialism. But at the same time Houston explains that when church leaders and pastors are trained, they can be “agents of change” to economic and social challenges within their contexts.

Oludahunsi posits that the Church in Africa has a divine responsibility to get involved in economics, technology and even politics in order to bring about necessary change that benefit their communities.<sup>37</sup> Like Togarasei, Schliesser<sup>38</sup> too contends that the prosperity gospel within Pentecostal churches in Africa has some very positive aspects regarding development. She cites the Efatha Church in Dar es salaam, Tanzania which has a television station, a Newspaper company and a bank. Hence, through these church projects, employment is created for members. The Efatha Church plans to set up a university, an airport and a radio station. Additionally, the Efatha Church conducts business seminars in order to empower members with business skills and other entrepreneurship competencies.

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<sup>35</sup> Haar, G. T. & Ellis, S. (2006). The Role of Religion in Development: Towards a New Relationship between the European Union and Africa. *The European Journal of Development Research*. [online] Volume 18 issue (3), p. 352. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1080/09578810600893403> [Accessed 19 Mar. 2019].

<sup>36</sup> Houston, W. J. (2011). *Why Africa is Poor*. P. 83-94.

<sup>37</sup> Oludahunsi, J.K. (2005). Poverty in Africa: A Challenge to the Church. *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*. No. 12. P. 96-97.

<sup>38</sup> Schliesser, C. (2014). *On a long-neglected player: The religious dimension in poverty alleviation. The example of the so-called 'Prosperity Gospel' in Africa*. Zurich Open Repository and Archive. Exchange 43 (2014) 339-359.

## 4.2.1 Examples of Developmental Aspects of Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Above we mentioned some of the scholars who take the view that Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa has brought about positive aspects. These positive aspects are a good thing bearing in mind that, Sub-Saharan African ranks as the least developed region among all the developing regions of the world.<sup>39</sup>

In the following segment specific areas of development brought about by Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa will be looked at.

### 4.2.1.1 Individual Transformation

Generally, Africans are a communal-based people in terms of how they live and organize their lives. However, Freeman in her work *Pentecostalism and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa* contends that the dawn of Pentecostalism has brought a positive focus on individual personal growth and transformation. To stress her argument, Freeman mentions Martin, Maxwell and Barbalet, who use the terms *revision of consciousness, remaking of the individual and reorientation of persons* to individual change.<sup>40</sup> Freeman maintains that, it is this personal transformation that brings about behavioural transformation which then motivates an individual to aim high in order to achieve economic success.<sup>41</sup> Certainly, the individualized transformation aspect might not be fully understood let alone entirely enculturated in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa. This is due to the fact that, much of black African family traditions

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<sup>39</sup> P. 2. Calderon, C. & Serven, L. (2008). Infrastructure and Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *World bank Policy Research working Paper 4712*. [online]. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23550599\\_Infrastructure\\_and\\_Economic\\_Development\\_in\\_Sub-Saharan\\_Africa](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23550599_Infrastructure_and_Economic_Development_in_Sub-Saharan_Africa). [Accessed on 26 Mar. 2019].

<sup>40</sup> Freeman, D. (2015). Pentecostalism and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The London School of Economics and Political Science*. [online]. p. 5. Available at: [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67826/1/Freeman\\_Postcolonialism.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67826/1/Freeman_Postcolonialism.pdf). [Accessed on 26 Mar. 2019].

<sup>41</sup> Freeman, D. (2015). Pentecostalism and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The London School of Economics and Political Science*. [online]. p. 6. Available at: [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67826/1/Freeman\\_Postcolonialism.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67826/1/Freeman_Postcolonialism.pdf). [Accessed on 26 Mar. 2019].

go beyond just the nuclear family to encompass their extended relatives and neighbours. Inversely, the element of personal transformation within Pentecostalism might be construed by some as espousing egotistic propensities, which values self-absorption and development as opposed to community-oriented approach.

Agibji and Swart<sup>42</sup> observe that, the idea of material accumulation for personal gain is a alien concept to African traditional societies. Because to be wealthy in the African communal context, often implies that one is surrounded by many people and not live in self-isolation. Hunt also shares a similar perspective that, it as well means to experience joy and healthy whilst being connected to the divine.<sup>43</sup>

Another positive aspect of neo-Pentecostalism is that, in a world that is fast-changing to modern capitalism it helps its adherents in Africa to adapt to new economic trends brought about with modernity. As well as bringing into action *the rupture with African traditions, relieving the convert from the costly responsibilities to the extended family and expensive traditional rituals*<sup>44</sup>. Maxwell too, shares a similar viewpoint with authors who take a more positive outlook on the achievements of neo-Pentecostal churches, he reckons that the current wave of Pentecostal churches' teachings fosters what he terms *formation of capitalist attitude and activities*....<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Agbiji, O. M. & Swart, I. (2015). Religion and Social Transformation in Africa: A Critical AND Appreciative Perspective. *Scriptura* (2015), [online]. p 9. Available at: <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/scriptur/v114/10.pdf>. [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

<sup>43</sup> P. 5 (2002). Deprivation and Western Pentecostalism Revisited: Neo- Pentecostalism. *Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movements*. [online]. Vol. 1, nr, 2. P. 5. Available at: <http://www.urbanlab.org/articles/Hunt20022%20Pentecost%20&%20deprivation.pdf>. [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

<sup>44</sup> Köhrsen, J. (2015). Pentecostal Improvement Strategies: A Comparative Reading on African and South American Pentecostalism., P.49-64 in *Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums*, volume 161, Pastures of plenty. Tracing religio- scapes of prosperity gospel in Africa and beyond, edited by A. Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition. [online]. Available <https://edoc.unibas.ch/38937/> [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

<sup>45</sup> Maxwell, D. (1998). Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty? Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 (3, 1998) p. 3.

#### 4.2.1.2 Social-Economic Transformation

In terms of public involvement, Pentecostals are engaged in different communal activities such as: construction of schools, feeding schemes, orphanages centres and health institutions as well as rehabilitation and counselling programs for drug addicts, prostitutes and those living with HIV/AIDS<sup>46</sup>

Writing from the Nigerian context, Duke avers that

The gradual changes in Nigerian religious and social-cultural environments have paved way for the prominence of a Pentecostal brand of Christianity in matters concerning human security and flourishing.<sup>47</sup>

According to Agbiji and Swart, African Christianity today, through the lenses of Pentecostalism offers a new hope to society. Because of its great emphasis on the power of the word of God, which has divine dominance over evil forces that so often foster a poverty mindset and belief.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Agbiji and Swart give examples of the Redeemed Church of God and Christ Embassy as Pentecostal churches that have positively impacted their society due to their spiritual awareness of what the Bible teaches. According to these authors, churches in Africa have become platforms for business interests which include among other areas, hospitality, publishing, banking, broadcasting, and entertainment businesses.

Within the broad neo-Pentecostal dogma, the cause of social-economic problems goes beyond just examining the dynamism of macro and micro economic conditions. It is rather believed that, evil spirits from the spiritual realm are the foremost reason why

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<sup>46</sup> Adeboye, O. (2003). *Pentecostal Challenges in Africa and Latin America: A comparative focus on Nigeria and Brazil* Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa & Association of African Historians. 2006 (ISSN 0850-3079).

<sup>47</sup> Duke, E. O. (2014). Emerging Religious Marketplace in Nigeria: A Quest for Interpretation. *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition*. [online], Volume 6. P. 47. Available at: [http://academicexcellencesociety.com/emerging\\_religious\\_marketplace\\_in\\_nigeria.pdf](http://academicexcellencesociety.com/emerging_religious_marketplace_in_nigeria.pdf). [Accessed on 26 Mar. 2019].

<sup>48</sup> Agbiji, O. M. & Swart, I. (2015). Religion and Social Transformation in Africa: A Critical AND Appreciative Perspective. *Scriptura* (2015), p.11-13. [online]. Available at: <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/scriptur/v114/10.pdf>. [Accessed on 26 Mar. 2019].

people are poor and suffer ill-health among other things. Therefore, casting out demonic forces instils a sense of great optimism within a community to actively engage in finding solutions to social-economic challenges. Hence, "...the neo-Pentecostal doctrine of prosperity are all ways of solving the mysteries of neo-Liberal capitalism" (Marshall 2009: 25).

The discursive dogma of the neo-Pentecostalism message is premised not only on offering hope after a person dies, but it also emphasizes the now and here within the context of members' social-economic challenges. One of the distinctiveness of African Pentecostalism is that it places a strong emphasis on HIV-prevention programs and taking an active role to render assistance to those infected and affected.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, neo-Pentecostal churches take a leading role to mitigate extreme poverty and mental despair. For example, in the aftermath of the war conflict in Sierra Leone some Pentecostal churches functioned as problem-solving entities that offered hope to many. So, these churches provided a sense of community by means of arranging youth camps for young adults.<sup>50</sup> The Pentecostal custom of joyfully singing and dancing in church, and over-nights prayer meetings, as well as healing session and intensive worship meetings fosters a sense bonding, whereby congregants are able to share business ideas and offer counsel to each other on how to cope with social- economic problems.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Köhrsen J. (2015). Pentecostal Improvement Strategies: A Comparative Reading on African and South American Pentecostalism., P.49-64 in *Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums*, Volume 161, Pastures of plenty. Tracing religio- scapes of prosperity gospel in Africa and beyond, edited by A. Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition. [online]. Available at: <https://edoc.unibas.ch/38937/> [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

<sup>50</sup> Shaw, R. (2007). Making Pentecostal Memory in Post war Sierra Leone. *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol. 22, No.1. (2007), pp. 66-93.

<sup>51</sup> Horn, J. Christian Fundamentalism and Women's Rights in the African Context: Mapping the Terrain. *awid Women's rights*. [online], p. 6. Available at: [https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/feminists\\_on\\_the\\_frontline\\_-\\_christian\\_fundamentalisms\\_and\\_womens\\_rights\\_in\\_the\\_african\\_context.pdf](https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/feminists_on_the_frontline_-_christian_fundamentalisms_and_womens_rights_in_the_african_context.pdf) [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

### 4.2.1.3 Women Empowerment

The advent of neo-Pentecostal growth has brought about many social and economic developmental changes. Nevertheless, Gundersen in his article *Will God Make Me Rich? An Investigation into the Relationship between Membership in Charismatic Churches, Wealth, and Women's Empowerment in Ghana*, argues that though some academics contend that the spread of Pentecostalism empowers women on the continent, she maintains that there exists a "Pentecostal Gender Paradox".<sup>52</sup> Although data on women's involvement in church settings in Sub-Saharan Africa is limited, Agadjanian acknowledges the positive role played by Pentecostal churches in recognizing women's God-given spiritual gifts.<sup>53</sup> Agadjanian explains this recognition allows women in these churches to be ordained ministers of the gospel and, thereby allowing them to fully function in positions of authority.

Other intellectuals like Deacon and Parsitau, whilst acknowledging the tremendous changes made by neo-Pentecostal churches in Sub-Saharan Africa in recognizing the critical role that women play in church ministry, they postulate that patriarchal tendencies of viewing women as subservient to men still exist. This observation is based on a research they conducted with one particular neo-Pentecostal church in Nairobi, Kenya.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, researchers Cazarin and Grier hold the view that in recent times there has been a steady growth in terms of women participation in position

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<sup>52</sup> Gundersen, S. (2018). *Will God Make Me Rich? An Investigation into the Relationship between Membership in Charismatic Churches, Wealth, and Women's Empowerment in Ghana*. Department of Economics, Valparaiso University, 1400 Chapel Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46383, USA; Sara.Gundersen@valpo.edu. [online]. p. 10. Available at: [https://scholar.valpo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=econ\\_fac\\_pub](https://scholar.valpo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=econ_fac_pub) [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

<sup>53</sup> Agadjanian, V. (2015). *Women's religious authority in a Sub-Saharan setting Dialectics of Empowerment and Dependency*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4801002/> [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

<sup>54</sup> Deacon, G & Parsitau, D. (2017). Empowered to Submit: Pentecostal Women in Nairobi. *Journal of Religion and Society, Kripke Center*. Volume 19 (2017). [online]. Available at: <https://dspace2.creighton.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10504/109164/2017-4.pdf>. [Accessed on 28 August 2019].

leadership within Pentecostal churches, notwithstanding the Pentecostalism milieu of male dominance.<sup>55</sup>

Another positive aspect that neo-Pentecostal churches are involved in has to do with assisting in the mitigation of the HIV/AIDS impact on women by offering prayers for divine healing. In so doing offering both spiritual and emotional hope. Because most Pentecostal fully affirm the biblical concept that in Christ there is neither male nor female, but all believers are a unified spiritual entity (Gal. 3: 28). Therefore, they advocate for women empowerment by offering entrepreneurial skills to start small businesses and advocating for equality in education of the girl-child. The impact of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa is huge, particularly among women. Murthy points out that in Southern Africa the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women is the highest with about 59% of those living with the virus being females.<sup>56</sup>The countries affected the most in the region are Lesotho, eSwatini (formerly known as Swaziland), Botswana and South Africa.

Jansen et al. assert that, the church as a whole should not forget its priestly, prophetic and Kingly (my own addition Queenly<sup>57</sup>) role by being directly involved in the community by providing education and disseminating the correct information on HIV/AIDS.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Cazarin, R & Griera M. (2018). Born a pastor, being a woman: biographical accounts on gendered religious gifts in the Diaspora. Culture and Religion. *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, [online]. Volume 19, Issue 4. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/TMRJWUmskp2BZ6rqUbNe/full>. [Accessed on 5 Mar 2019].

<sup>56</sup> Murthy, J. (2015). HIV and AIDS: Implications and challenges for African churches. [online]. p.327. Available at: <http://revista.fuv.edu.br/index.php/reflexus/article/viewFile/291/292>. [Accessed on 5 Mar. 2019].

<sup>57</sup> The author of this thesis additionally used the phrase queenly to strike gender balance because the citation only used the word kingly, which can be construed to exclude the female gender.

<sup>58</sup> Jansen, C. A., Pretorius, F. J. & van Niekerk, E. J. (2009). *Education and the Role of the Church in Africa: three relevant aspects*. School of Arts, Education, Language and communication, department of teacher education, UNISA, Pretoria. [online]. p. 71. Available at: <http://www.koersjournal.org.za/index.php/koers/article/viewFile/117/86>. [Accessed on 5 Mar. 2019].

### 4.3 Summary

This chapter sort to highlight the social-economic situation of poverty in Livingstone Zambia. There is no shortage of academic who critique extreme versions of current neo-Pentecostal church traditions of material acquisition, spiritual deliverance and prosperity theology. At the same time, it was necessary to underscore the many positive attributes brought about by neo-Pentecostalism in sub-Saharan African. Examples of exponents who take such a view were cited together with some specific social and economic developments pioneered by neo-Pentecostal churches. Two examples among the many mentioned regarding social-economic development programs among neo-Pentecostal churches in-sub-Sharan Africa, were the Bible life Church of Botswana founded by Enock Sitima, where they build houses for the poor in the community and the Efatha Church in Tanzania that owns a newspaper company and bank.

It is reasonable to say that the current upsurge of neo-Pentecostalism in sub-Saharan Africa has divided opinions among followers, even among theologians' views are very nuanced on how to exactly characterize this Christian movement, which is rapidly spreading in the global south. Regardless of how one perceives this Christian movement, it cannot be denied that the message propagated by neo-Pentecostal churches resonates to communities around them otherwise they would not be such high numerical growth in countries such as Zambia.



## CHAPTER 5

### **5.1 African Ontological and Epistemological Construct: How it Informs Neo-Pentecostal Theology.**

It is a very complicated undertaking to describe African ontology and epistemologies bearing in mind the huge cultural and geographical diversity that exists on the continent. There is a limit to which one can explore African philosophical values of knowledge and being, due to the fact that, Africa has huge land mass measuring over 30 million square kilometres and has great diversity of languages and culture (Khapoya 2013:3, 12-14).

The way that many traditional African cultures understand knowledge of the transcendent is that, all of life and existence is interconnected. The natural with the supernatural, evil with good, and darkness and light are forces that surround humans daily (Fu-kiau 2001:18). In the Tonga tribe of Southern Zambia, when something good occurs in the community, it is believed that the Mizimo (good spirits/ancestors) have authorised the occurrence of that particular blessing. However, when something bad happens, say death, illness or miscarriage, then “Iheelo” (malicious spirits) are blamed for these incidents.

The existence of evil in most Zambian traditional cultural settings is never regarded as neutral. It is believed that there is always something that has angered the ancestors by virtue of the conduct of the community. Because when the ancestors are unhappy about something within the community, bad things are bound to happen. Thus, the only way to remedy this situation is to correct the wrong by ritualistically appealing to the ancestors to bring about peace. That is why diviners in indigenous Zambian culture play a very key role in the community. When something unpleasant happens, it is the role of diviners to seek out the cause and remedy the situation. Baloyi reminds us that in African traditional settings, the reality of death is never deemed natural, for it is

believed that there are always some other forces at work.<sup>59</sup> As a result, sorcery, witchcraft and ancestors are more often held responsible for why a person dies.

In his article *Distance no impediment for funerals: Death as a uniting ritual for African people – A pastoral study*, Boloyi avers that in an African traditional context, it is vital for the community not to anger ancestors since doing so has the potential of bringing about misfortune and physical death to community members.<sup>60</sup> To this effect, Baloyi points out that it is often believed that in order to avoid death, sickness and other misfortunes from happening, conciliatory rituals have to be performed so as to appease the ancestors. It is important to point out that at times, it is not only the displeasing of ancestors that is responsible for these calamities in the community; evil spirits are too, from witches (maloyi) and wizards are blamed for these mishaps such as motor vehicle accidents, unemployment, childlessness and incurable illnesses.

Contrasting the above to neo-Pentecostal theological practice of spiritual deliverance, one observes exactly how neo-Pentecostal praxis in Zambia mirrors African traditional ontological and epistemological construct. The pastor or prophet/prophetess assumes the role of the diviner. The “man or woman of God” diagnoses those church members who have problems with their finances, in marriages and those believers that do not seem to make any progress in their lives and their situations. Often, an evil spirit or something that the Christian believer did or did not do is said to be the cause of one's misfortunes. For instance, those in need of financial success (commonly known as a “break-through”) are often told that the spirit of poverty is the cause of their predicament. Other times, they are told that it is because they do not give tithe in faith by making a constant positive confession of their desires. In this case, the curse of poverty can only be obliterated by powerful prayers conducted by a man or woman of

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<sup>59</sup> Baloyi, M. E. (2014). Distance no impediment for funerals: Death as a uniting ritual for African people-A pastoral study. AOSIS Publishing. *VERBUM ET ECCLESIA*. Vol 35, No 1 (2014). [online]. Available at: <http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/1248/2126> [Accessed on 30 October 2017].

<sup>60</sup> Baloyi, M. E. (2014). Distance no impediment for funerals: Death as a uniting ritual for African people-A pastoral study. AOSIS Publishing. *VERBUM ET ECCLESIA*. Vol 35, No 1 (2014). [online]. Available at: <http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/1248/2126> [Accessed on 30 October 2017].

God upon receiving a seed faith offering. Mbewe, however, has a sharp critique about the neo-Pentecostal epistemological and ontological construct:

The pastor is the modern witchdoctor calling all and sundry to come to him for deliverance as a witchdoctor appeals to us by inviting us to see him for spiritual protection or when we were struggling with bad luck, childlessness, joblessness, illness, failure to attract a suitor for marriage or to rise in a job or get a contact, etc., these pastors do precisely the same thing. So-called prophetic utterances are made which explain why all this is happening, holy water or oil is prayed and dispensed, and some money is extracted from the person seeking help.<sup>61</sup>

The usage of the term *witchdoctor* may be problematic to some scholars who are aware of the history behind this pejorative terminology. European missionaries described all African traditional medicine practitioners by naming them with the obnoxious connotation prefix of a “witch”. It should be remembered that in today’s world, whiteness is synonymous with power, privileged and normative when compared to anything black African (Yancy 2008:25). Nonetheless, the point Mbewe is making is that the current wave of neo-Pentecostal churches in Zambia parallels African traditional religious practices. The way they do this is by adopting Christian semantics and instruments. That is why the Bible is so revered in these congregations and elevated to the extent that whoever dares question or critique what it says is immediately labelled a heretic or agent of Satan. Even questioning what the prophet teaches is seen as spiritual insolence as doing so implies questioning the very words of God from God’s mouthpiece.

The author of this this thesis was once given a prophetic word in one of the churches in downtown Livingstone, but what the prophet said about his life was way off the mark. When asked by the prophet, if what was prophesied was correct, the researcher responded, *no sir*. Both the prophet and congregation seemed bewildered that someone had the audacity to disapprove an incorrect personal prophetic utterance. The researcher

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<sup>61</sup> Conrad Mbewe is a well-known Reformed Baptist pastor in Zambia. He is one of the few prominent pastors that openly critiques about the wrong dogma in neo-Pentecostal churches in Zambia. Mbewe, C. (2008). *Nigerian Religious Junk!* [online]. Available at: <http://www.conradmbewe.com/2011/02/nigerian-religious-junk.html> [Accessed on 7 September 2017].

was not trying to be disrespectful to the church or the prophet but was just stating the factual truth. Therefore, one could be justified to argue that what is contributing to the mushrooming of questionable doctrines within neo-Pentecostal churches in Zambia is probably what the researcher calls *a culture of appeasement*. What is meant by the culture of appeasement is that under the guise of desiring to preserve social harmony and respect for those with spiritual authority, members are often hesitant to disagree with questionable prophetic utterances and, at times, even outright false doctrines.

African traditional moral values require people to tell the truth of the knowledge (epistemology) they have about issues, as well as to be honest about their peculiarity of being (ontology). In discussing the conceptualisation of good and evil, Motlhabi (1998:25) posits that in an African traditional framework, what is good is what promotes human welfare and social harmony. Moral evil, on the other hand is detrimental to human society since it is from this that misery, misfortune and disgrace come.

Second example is that of a woman who narrated to the researcher that the reason many women in churches are unmarried is that they engage in sexual intercourse with spiritual husbands in their dreams. It is believed that these spiritual husbands are demonic spirits, they then impersonate a real man after which they supernaturally engage in carnal knowledge with any unmarried woman in her sleep without her consent. The following Bible text is often appropriated as a proof text for the theology of spiritual husbands:

When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years (Genesis 6:1-3).

The lady went on to narrate that these *sons of God* mentioned in the Bible are in fact fallen angels who latter become demons (Genesis 6:1-3). According to her, whenever a demonic spirit engages in sexual intercourse with an unmarried woman during her

sleep, they then become spiritually married. As a result, the spiritual husband (or demonic spirit) would then supernaturally prohibit that single woman's desire for marriage. Consequently, she would then never be married not until she goes through the process of spiritual deliverance. Since spiritual husbands are malevolent spirits who mimic real persons, there is need to perform extensive exorcism by means of powerful prayers from an anointed prophet or prophetess in order to get rid of them. Sometimes, anointed holy water, oil and pieces of clothes are given to the person as a point of contact to access the power of the anointing of God.

Whether the mystery of spiritual husbands and wives is factual or not is not the point. The argument here is that African ontological and epistemological constructs, whether written or unwritten to some extent inform the spiritual concepts of doctrines in neo-Pentecostal churches. Thence, dismissing customary African spiritualised cosmology (Ngong 2010:19) as not being in tune with modernity becomes problematic, since like any other culture, the African self has to make sense of the Christian religion within the its traditional cultural context. This then affirms the argument that religion is very much part of the African traditional philosophy that one cannot separate the two (Motlhabi 1998:18).

In defence of the spiritual wife and husband belief, one pastor made reference to Prophet TB Joshua of the synagogue Church of all Nations in Nigeria, on which some neo-Pentecostal pastors in Zambia have modelled their ministry. The issue here is not to enter into a contentious debate on the theological stance of T.B Joshua, but rather to illustrate the argument that traditional African knowledge and existence do influence the way that neo-Pentecostal followers interpret the Bible. That is why scholars like Murove (2009:26) maintain that African ontology and the comprehension of ultimate cosmic reality are very much interrelated and new sciences are affirming this realism.

### 5.1.1 Preserving Traditional Zambian Cultural Identities in a Post-Modern Era

The impact of digital colonization is an immense challenge to the preservation of Zambian traditional way of life. One pastor mentioned that science and technology

should be scrupulously scrutinized before they are integrated into traditional Zambian society. Since according to him they have the potential to corrupt Zambian and African traditional morals values. Another pastor, for example, cited the dangers of pornographic addiction online as one of the reasons for not embracing the technology. Certainly, some of these concerns were justified, because some neuroscientists have done studies that affirm the negative effects of spending too much time online and the role of dopamine hormone<sup>62</sup> in human addictions and relationships (Richtel 2004: 373-374).

Still another pastor made reference to evolutionary biologists' theory that humans evolved from apes. As such, this was reason enough for not accepting science. Because, in his view, evolutionary theory runs counter to the Bible teaching that all humans are progenies of Adam and Eve. This shall be looked at in more detail when analysing the data.

Traditional Zambian moral values are conceptualized in the Ubuntu principle meaning *personhood*. It means a person's humanity is intricately interwoven with the lives of others in the community (Battle 2009:1-4). Principally, Ubuntu, which also means being human through other humans, implies doing unto others what one desires for himself or herself (the golden rule) (Luke 6:31). In the Tonga tribe of Southern Zambia there is an adage: *Imuntu tapengeli achisamu* meaning a person does not seek help from a tree. The meaning here is that in a community people should not adopt a compassionless ideology in which the modus operandi becomes desiring to meet their own personal needs but neglecting those who are less fortunate in society

Nowadays, the idea of traditional African moral values in Zambia is becoming less evident. This can be attributed to the influence of other more dominant cultures that enculturated themselves into Zambian society. For example, traditionally in Zambian culture, adults are respected for their wisdom and experience in life. Therefore, it is not

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<sup>62</sup> Previc' work, *The Dopaminergic Mind in Human Evolution and History* gives detailed scholarly view on the impact of high levels of dopamine as a neurotransmitter. Previc whose main focus among others, is cognitive neuroscience explores how the human brain has evolved and shaped human behavior over time. Previc explains in detail the dopaminergic mind and how it adapts itself to the modern society which is characterized by competing and stressful environment.

uncommon to hear a young person addressing an adult who is not necessarily a relative with *ba Taata*, meaning father, or *baa Ma*, which translates as mother. Even young children address young adults as uncles or aunts. However, in some neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone, it is not uncommon to hear elderly persons addressing a young pastor as father or mother. This is perceived as an acknowledgment of the spiritual authority of the pastor, who is a spiritual father or mother, but has nothing to do with one's age. This argument, nevertheless, cannot be sustained under Zambian traditional norms, as younger people expected to address the elder ones respectfully, not the other way around. This is seen as a societal moral value that has conserved communal cohesion in Zambia. But there is as well a biblical premise to it:

Stand up in the presence of the elderly and show respect for the aged. Fear your God. I am the LORD (Leviticus 19:32).

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).

Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters. Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her (Timothy 5:1-3).

Cultural norms are not static but keep changing and adapting to the influence and trends of post-modernity. And so, technology and science are at the forefront of altering and modifying traditional value systems in Zambia. For instance, an observation was made by the researcher at one burial service attended. A mourner used his Apple iPad device to take pictures of the deceased laying in a casket. Such a scenario would have been considered a big taboo in the 1980s or 1990s. This is because the dead are highly revered in traditional Zambian customs as they must be accorded great respect when passing over to the next life.

Another dynamic that is changing traditional Zambian culture is the rising of the upper- and middle-class Zambians who have access to modern technologies. Things like satellite television that broadcasts Western content directly into their homes, modish computers and top of the range mobile phones are altering traditional cultural norms. The trend of drifting towards a Western lifestyle among the middle-class was even more visible in some neo-Pentecostal congregations. It is not unusual to meet church members who have adopted a fairly Western-individualistic lifestyle, which is premised on the nuclei family construct as opposed to an extended model. Yet, the concept of the middle-class in Zambia is rather difficult to define due to *low average levels of earnings in the country, and the very wide gap between the low and high earners*. This is according to the Zambia Institute for Policy and Research paper by Nalishebo entitled *Who are the Middle class in Zambia?*<sup>63</sup> Relatively speaking, however, an average upper-middle class Christian in Livingstone, for example, is not so much different to a Christian living in Europe or North America in terms of what he or she is exposed to, that is in relation to information technology.

The above-mentioned current reality in Zambia goes to illustrate just how Zambian (or African) values have collided with other values of more a dominant nature outside of the African continent. This makes it harder to espouse cultural homogeneity of moral theory or theories that are organically African. Therefore, it becomes a huge challenge, if not an impossible feat to advocate for indigenous Zambian customs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in an era where the global village thinking is not only a mantra but a reality. An African metaphor of a hyena that split its body into two because it wanted to walk on two paths in its quest to trail the aroma of meat characterizes the current situation in Zambia.

### 5.1.2 African Cosmology and Salvific Process

The Oxford English Dictionary defines cosmology as “the science of the origin and development of the universe”. Traditionally, African thoughts on the cosmos,

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<sup>63</sup> ZIPAR. Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis & Research. [online] Available at: <http://www.zipar.org.zm/resource-centre/publications/policy-briefs/18-who-are-the-middle-class-in-zambia/file> [Accessed on 8 September 2017].



spirituality and the physical reality of life are not contemplated as multifaceted separate entities. Rather, the concept of holism regarding physical realism and that which is invisible are cogitated in their totality as opposed to their separateness (Kretzschmar et al. 2009:44-45).

Some neo-Pentecostal churches often will label indigenous African traditions and religious customs as being pagan practices (such as most in Livingstone). Therefore, adherents are encouraged to cut ties with their traditional practices. Paradoxically, though, these very churches tactfully use African symbolism to propagate their message (Omenyo in Robeck et al. 2014:136).

During the course of this study, one pastor narrated a fascinating story. He said there were some neo-Pentecostal pastors in town who denounce indigenous African religious practices. Ironically, there are other pastors who go out at night to the outskirts of town, where they frequently visit African traditional diviners and those who practice sorcery in order to acquire spiritual powers. The pastor said, they do this to give an impression of spiritual legitimacy to their followers through the miraculous powers they acquire from these diviners. This reality might seem illogical to a Western mind-set. However, fundamentally, there are some people in Livingstone who believe in the supernatural powers of witchcraft, mysticism and magic. Consequently, this worldview informs how they interpret the reality of life and the cosmos.

Christine Mullen Kreame, an expert on traditional and contemporary African art, holds that contrary to Western predisposition of separating the bodies of knowledge into various distinctive and separate entities, African structures are more inclusive and expansive for they bring together the fields of philosophy, religion and science to try and comprehend the cosmological realities (Kreame 2012:15).

All living beings in the cosmos possess vital forces of their own. Bujo (Murove 2009:282) points out that humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects have been endowed with spirit energy from God that sustains them. From this assertion, we observe that in an African cosmological framework, the divine, the physical, the intangible, the abstract and most importantly God are all interconnected.

Africans have always had a spiritual salvific conception of their own albeit not modelled on the Judeo-Christian formation of having the Torah, the Bible and Jesus as the centrality of belief. Rather, theirs is a salvific spirituality that esteems the important role played by ancestors. Thus, the concept of salvation in African religions, which venerates the mediatory role that ancestors play, should be regarded as having an authentic religious orientation of its own. Hence, enculturating Christology that links Christ as a Proto-Ancestor into the African salvation process as proposed by Charles Nyamiti and Benezet (Magesa 2010:84). This could be regarded as pejorative to indigenous Zambian religious contemplation. Probably, the appropriate methodology would be adopting spiritual and religious pluralism, a concept by Peter C Hodgson, cited by Magesa (2010:84-85).

It has often been argued by academicians like the late Sanneh (2003:47) that missionaries as well as colonizers, did not bring God to the African context. Instead, God's presence was there long before any outside missionary enterprise introduced the Christian Gospel the way we know it today. Mbiti (1985:92) who upholds the view that Africans' deep perception of the universe is incorporated into their religiosity alongside the way that they make sense of the environment around them.

When asked about how natives could comprehend the supercilious concept of a God without Western tutoring, the native Gambian theologian Sanneh (2003:47) puts it even more uncompromisingly when he stated: *no missionary tutoring was necessary to establish the idea of a personal God*. To some extent one sees the logic to Sanneh's assertion. Because God cannot be defined, nor can He/She be localized to the finite mind of any theological orientation, for God is who God is "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). God's manifest Spirit reviews its working in wherever method it wishes (John 3:3).

Therefore, it is logical to argue that, the indigenous African religion comprehends the concept of God, the universe and the sacred as a holistic entity all by itself, without the blending-in of an enculturated Christology. Some might contend that; salvation is to be found no other name under heaven or earth except in the name of Jesus the Christ (Acts

4:12). But contending from an African traditional religious orientation can opt to adopt neither the exclusivism nor inclusivism methodology, by espousing a pluralist approach. This is because under a pluralist methodology the salvific knowledge of the transcendent is facilitated by more than one religious' disposition (Magesa 2010:68).

The challenge for African theological scholars is that of pervading their theological writings with a Karl Barth, a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a John Calvin or a Martin Luther viewpoint to sort of legitimize their scholarly works to the wider audience. This tendency exacerbates the already condescending perception of African cosmological and salvific realism. Being perpetually subscribing to the theological orientations of classical Eurocentric theological scholars should not be persistently normalized. One would concur with Agbeti, who says that:

African traditional theology is to be distinguished from African Christian theology because one is theocentric, the other Christocentric (Muzorewa 1985:78).

The reality of the matter is that in today's globalised world where one would expect those in the know to exhibit some level of civility towards African scholarship, many do not. Masenya's maintains (nwana'a Mphahlele) that those who hold the reigns of power in academia do not take seriously the resources developed in Africa (Bailey et al. 2010:20-21). The tendency of desiring close affinity to Western theological reflection was evident even in the churches visited in Livingstone. It was not uncommon to see neo-Pentecostal preachers trying very hard to talk like Americans preachers. Even narrating one's experiences of having been to the U.S.A seem to suggest some sort of authenticity to one's theological position. Others would cite very well-known preachers as their spiritual model – televangelists such as Bishop T.D. Jakes, pastor Rod Parsley, John Hage, Prophetess Juanita Bynum and pastor Paula White to mention but five. Its noticeable from this list that no African preachers were mentioned. This goes to illustrate the argument that more often than not, the Christian experiences in some of these churches are seen as bona fide only when associated with Christian believers in the west. In fact, the observation made was that affiliation to

Western churches, be they in Europe or the U.S.A was something that was coveted. It was regarded as a blessing from God because signified some level of economic success. Some neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone do synthesise African traditional religious practices and African theology into their praxis; paradoxically this is done in secrecy. This could be attributed to the fact that those associated with African traditional beliefs are usually considered to be experimenting with evil dark forces. For example, the notion of ancestral veneration is perceived as demonic. Yet, as mentioned earlier, secretly some do consult indigenous African diviners. So, any person has apprehension in affirming a Christology centred on an exclusivism approach upholding Jesus as the only redeemer is construed as anti-God. Usually, the following scripture was recited as a scriptural foundation the theology of exclusivism.

Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him (John 14: 6-7).

It was obvious from the vantage point of the researcher that, some neo-Pentecostal churches visited regarded certain African indigenous traditional beliefs to be unbiblical. The idea of exploring and integrating the richness of traditional Zambian norms and customs into neo-Pentecostal theological praxis was not something that was apparent. The consultation of traditional healers and the pivotal role-played by ancestors in the community are not held in high esteem in the churches observed. The researcher's own observation was that, some current neo-Pentecostal congregations in Livingstone do not entirely consider the function of ancestors as being pivotal. Additionally, the usage of traditional herbs for medicinal purpose that too, is often regarded as contravening biblical teachings. The reason they reject any affiliation with African traditional ancestral beliefs is because of the belief that, such practices are sinful because they are associated with the devil. Theological Scholars like Clark (2012:127) and Steward strongly reject such an assertion. According to them they call this:

*The anthropological poverty of the African people and Black Anti-Africanness.*

This anthropological poverty is an exploitation of African values, cultural morals and ancient belief systems by power optics outside Africa (Clark 2012:127). Yet, and incongruously so, indigenous Zambian traditional beliefs still manifest themselves in the life of neo-Pentecostal adherents. Beliefs such as mental illness having a demonic source. It is never thought of as a problem of a biochemical imbalance in the brain cells, as Calbreath puts it (Smith and Yong 2010:133-134). Hence, invoking prayer for deliverance from these malicious spirits has to be conducted, otherwise bad luck or any other misfortune may continue to torment those deemed possessed.

## **5.2 A Critical Review of Christian Spirituality and Ancient African Civilization**

Africans particularly in the sub-Saharan region have accepted the Bible as their own, because in many respects it resonates well with African traditional norms and values. It was observed that within neo-Pentecostal church tradition in Zambia, critical theological consideration is not of great urgency. So, arguments like how the formation of the Bible came about, or the awareness of the missing original New Testament manuscripts hardly ever form part of the discussion.

Distinguished professor of New Testament studies Bart Ehrman (2005:10) writes:

Not only do we not have the originals, we do not have the first copies of the originals. We do not even have the copies of the copies of the originals, or the copies of the copies of the copies of the originals. What we have are copies made much later. In most instances, they are copies made many centuries later. And these copies all differ from one another, in many thousands of places.

Furthermore, Ehrman maintains there are both accidental and intentional changes that were made to manuscripts. To this effect, Ehrman (2005:90) contemplates on how it is that the last twelve verses of Mark could have been added by coincidence. This exposé challenges the view of a literalistic interpretation of the Bible. One such example is that of Jacoby (2010:88-94), who argues that the Bible is the *word of God* because it is intelligible, consistent, incorruptible authoritative, honest, supernatural and practical.

Ehrman's analyses might seem very radical to a Biblicist or Bible fundamentalist. But to those with a more liberal and reformist approach would regard his argumentation as informative and factual. For he concludes that the Bible has valuable lessons and moral values from which humans can glean. However, Ehrman (2005:11) posits that the Bible is a human book all through to the end. It was written by various human authors and scribes at different times and places who copied and changed texts. Recognizably, these authors had their own viewpoints, belief systems and theological orientations and cultural contexts that informed their theological position. In the researchers own view, it would be intellectual arrogance to reject the spiritual aspect of the Bible, because God's Spirit does indeed reform and inspire Christian believers through the words of the Bible.

There is a certain spiritual transformation that takes place in a person's life when they apply the words of the Bible to their own life. For example, there are aspects of the Bible that are beyond intellectualism and could only be attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. Conspicuously, again in the view of the author of this work, this does not necessarily imply that everything from the Bible is life-giving – what it means is that certain aspects of the Bible are explicitly a reflection of the work of the divine.

The introduction of Christianity to the African continent was draped with certain aspects that oppressed the minds of Africans. Sadly, even today, its interpretation to some extent is still used to subjugate the African mind (Biko 1978:61). Hence, it is imperative to read the Bible with a critical contemplation and to ask oneself very difficult, yet pertinent questions. This is necessary to free the mind from institutionalized religious systems. These systems prevent a broad section of Africans from adopting critical thinking and scientific imagination. Multidisciplinary analytic skills are needed to put African at par with the rest of the modern world as it relates to economics, industrialization and political dominance.

The Bible and the Christian religion inform much of neo-Pentecostal thought today. And affects every aspect of the followers' lives. It is precisely this Christian conscious that shape neo-Pentecostal contemplations that have permeated the spiritual fabric of many Zambians today.

In an age where the world is being controlled by the ingenuity of scientific technologies, there is still in Livingstone a citizenry that has close affinity with ideas of magic and witchcraft. Some challenge the idea that a person's economic hardship, illness or even unemployment status is as a result of spiritual invisible forces that need to be cast out from their lives (Marwick 1982:382-384).

Recognizably, it would be inaccurate to assume that superstitions are a preserve of only black Africans. Ashimolowo, pastor of a mega-church in London and a native Nigerian, postulates that superstitions are held in high regard by the majority of black African people, and that they shape their decisions and how they perceive the world around them. As a result, this has curtailed the ability of Africans to produce and achieve economic success (Ashimolowo 2007:96, 100).

Some scholarly arguments are unsettling to absorb, and others may be completely defiant. However, that is what good scholarship should be all about: reflecting and contrasting diverse scholarly perspectives. Let us look at one such unsettling school of thought from Williams (1992:74). He asserts that the greatest lie ever told was the creation of Christianity and the Logos, which is the reincarnated *Kristos-Christ*.

According to Williams (1992:36-40, 61-71) the creation of Christianity took a process of more than 700 years to develop. It was created by means of using the image of the Greek "Ptolemy I, Lagi" as the pseudo-messiah in alliance with some of the ancient Coptic Egyptians. Williams then expands his argument painstakingly by elucidating at length the proceedings of the Church councils beginning with the Council of Nicaea I (325 AD) and climaxing with the Council of Constantinople II (533 AD). He goes into detail about how the whole process of turning the image of the Son (initially Sun) *Serapis* into the divine being we call Christ today was done. Other theological scholars, such as Clark (2012:110-111) do not downright mention *Serapis* but do maintain the argument that Jesus Christ was a theological construct aimed at supposedly unifying the Church from a *Christological controversy* and thus infusing the Greek term homoousions (of the same substance as the Father).

Another critical area that causes difficulty when investigating Christianity is that of Arius from Alexandria. Often, he is portrayed as a heretic in much of Western-oriented theological writings. According to PH Gundani and GL Frank, Arius opposed the idea of the divinity description of Jesus Christ, as such, this situation brought-forth a doctrinal impasse at the council of Nicaea I (325 AD). Williams (1992:32-33), even so, refutes the vilifying of Arius. According to him, the only reason Arius was labelled a heretic was that he opposed the idea of creating an image of a European male called Serapis to be then called Jesus Christ. Subsequently, at the council of Ephesus (431 AD), the Melchite Coptic representatives following the orders of Celestine (carried out by Cyril), made a hypostatic union of the creature called the Virgin Mary with that of “Serapis”. Therefore, the created creature called the Virgin Mary became the Virgin *Theotokos* (mother of God) and thus the Logos (Serapis) become human flesh (Williams 1992:51). However, there are other theological academics that brand Arianism as a failure and as something that entreats the sinful nature of humans since it subjects the understanding of God to rational faculties (Poythress 1988:131, 136).

The scholarly arguments raised above are not aimed at discrediting Christianity’s long-held theological beliefs. But rather to emphasise the importance of searching extensively into African ancient history and pre-historical actualities. This search is vital to the understanding of the rich contribution Africa has made to various bodies of knowledge globally.

In many African communities, spirituality and religious traditions play a vital role in communal cohesion, Livingstone is no different. Sunday morning is a day when the faithful put on their best attires and members literally spend hours worshipping (singing and praising God) exuberantly with very loud music, dancing and clapping. There are also what they call deliverance sessions which are conducted for those possessed with demonic spirits. In some congregations they at times share meals together, or the pastor encourages members to invite fellow believers to their homes for a Sunday meal. Religious traditions and this sort of Christian spirituality are good for spiritual-social unity. Yet, not sufficient to address the difficult economic issues that Livingstone residents grapple with on a daily basis. This then calls for a theology of black African



consciousness and self-reliance as suggested by Mensa Otabil of Ghana (Anderson in Koschorke 2005:74) in order to come up with intelligent, viable, practical and sustainable solutions against poverty.

Pointing to the theological framework proposed by Ka Mana, Ekue maintains that churches in Africa must take up the important responsibility of re-examining the importance of their Christian message as they function within a political, social-economic, and cultural context. This is because churches are an important potency in the African community fabric in the development of transformation (Ekue in Koschorke 2005:107).

One of the brightest minds to have argued that black Africa was the birthplace of world civilization is the late eminent physicist and historian Cheikh Anta Diop. At the time when it was very unpopular to intellectually challenge a Eurocentric theory of the white origin of ancient Egyptian civilization. Diop (1974:10) boldly articulated that ancient Kemet (today's Egypt) the land of the black people, was the apex of civilization for over 10,000 years, when the rest of the world, Europe included was still trapped in barbarism. The whitening of every ancient civilization on the African continent according to Diop (1974:9) was a conception meant to debase black Africans and strip them of their:

#### Moral advantage of Egyptian civilization and other African civilizations

As if to add intellectual sarcasm to a Eurocentric theory on civilization. Diop is quoted by Asante (2007:62) as having claimed that the pharaohs of antiquity in Kemet (Egypt) were black-skinned rulers with curly hair. It is not surprising that on the very opening page of Diop's (1967: ii) work *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?* He depicts the portrait of the Sphinx by stating that it is not a shape that suggests European nor Semitic representation but rather a "Bantu" depiction.

Perhaps not surprising that, the scholarly accomplishment of the African multi-genius Imhotep is not very much pronounced in modern institutions of high learning today. As

a result, even when it is factual that Imhotep was the real forebear of modern medicine, astonishingly much of contemporary medicinal achievements are still attributed to Hippocrates, a man who was born hundreds of years after Imhotep passed on.

According to William (1993: xii), the ancient Egyptians were the ones who created the world's first three alphabets (the hieroglyphic, hieratic and phonetic scripts). William's perspective runs contrary to a Eurocentric scholarship, which believes that the natural sciences had their geneses in ancient Greek. Bauval, a distinguished Egyptologist, explains that,

Until very recently, the very idea that an advanced black race from sub-Saharan Africa was at the source of the ancient Egyptian civilization, and perhaps even of all civilization, was disturbing to many Western people and was pure anathema to those who held Eurocentric views (Bauval & Brophy 2011:159).

Moreover, Bauval (2011:160) mentions a sad reality of some very intelligent minds, such as professor Frankfort, who avoided the very usage of the term *Black Africans* when writing about ancient Egyptian civilization. Another example – that shows how racial bigotry even in academic settings is this assertion:

The type of thinking known today as scientific, with its emphasis upon experiment and mathematical formulation, arose in one culture – Western Europe and in no other (Pearcey & Thaxton 1994:17).

Perhaps this is the very reason why we observe time and again the marginalisation and misrepresentation of Africa in Western media machines, at times done purposely by some quarters Westerner academia who question the assertion of scholars like Diop (1974:1-10) whether indeed Africa is the birthplace of human civilization. To revisit what was stated earlier, ancient Egypt was then actually a land of black-skinned inhabitants (Williams 1987:19) although some Western Egyptologists would want to ascribe astounding knowledge such as that of the construction of the pyramids to the

Hamitic race, who they consider as a subgroup of European ancestry and not of sub-Saharan Africa. Current Egyptologists, however, as well as biologist, archaeologists and chemists argue that comprehensive scientific evidence does show that black Africans in Egypt not only possessed astronomical knowledge for their time but that also inhabitants of Sudan, Mali, Ghana and Ethiopia among other countries in Africa had an advanced ancient scientific consciousness long before the Europeans. That is the reason scholars such as James (1992:1-3) aim to challenge the notion of Greek philosophy and the Ethics of *Summum Bonum* (greatest good), which he argues is a plagiarized version of ancient Egyptian knowledge.

### **5.3 Salvation and the Economics of Neo-Pentecostalism**

The concept of salvation among neo-Pentecostals is not one that is confined to spirituality alone. Being born again (John 3:3) entails not only spiritual conversion but also being emancipated from poverty and disease. Being saved or born again (John 3:3) means one has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is this indwelling that guarantees the faithful economic success provided the 'saved' person abides by the principles of faith, tithing and positive confession. Price (1980:66), founder and pastor of Crenshaw Christian Centre in Los Angeles and a renowned *word of faith* preacher, says that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to give Christian believers supernatural power in their lives. The reason many Christians live a life that is substandard, Price (1980:66) maintains, is because they do not understand the reality of being new creatures in Christ. We observe here how being born again and filled with the Holy Spirit guarantees a person's entry into heaven, as well as economic prosperity. Another big proponent of this theological stance of economic blessing is Betty Price, wife of Frederick Price. In her book titled *Lifestyle of the Rich and Faithful* she ponders on the question of why many Christian believers are still going without having their needs met. According to her, God's children (the born-again ones) are supposed to have the best in life since God wants them to be blessed abundantly (Price 1999:1).

This message of economic success has found great resonance among neo-Pentecostal believers in Livingstone. One of the interviewees pointed out that God had blessed him because of acting on the Bible or the *word of God*. According to him, the expensive car he drove was a testimony to this fact. The implication, therefore, is that the more spiritually obedient a believer is the more material possessions he or she will acquire. Omenyo et al. (2014:141) are of the view that, Pentecostals' and Charismatics 'messages of material resources are perpetuated partly by the deteriorating economic conditions in Africa, and so acquiring spiritual knowledge underpins wealth procurement.

During prayer neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone do make use of holy water, anointing oil and other physical objects such as, prayer clothes to transfer the power of the divine to their follower. Usually, these objects are function as a point of contact for supernatural blessings for wealth. These objects in themselves are not the focus of worship, but it is believed that, once a man or woman of God, or a prophet has prayed over these items God's presence is invoked. The role of the prophet in Africa is used in a wider context – wider than how the New and Old Testament prophets operated (Oothuizen 1992:15). At times followers are required to give money to the Church or to the woman or man of God as a seed offering, so as to activate divine blessings. Furthermore, in some churches it is believed that one's faith determines the amount of money they give. Essentially, those with more faith will give bigger amounts resulting in a larger breakthrough.

In these churches it is taught that the Holy Spirit is not for sale, like Simon the sorcerer in the Bible who requested Peter to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit, to which Peter responded:

May your money be destroyed with you for thinking God's gift can be bought! (Acts 8:9-24).

Another biblical narrative that illustrates the argument God's Spirit is not to be merchandized is that of Elisha the prophet in the Bible. Elisha refused to accept a gift

from Naaman after he had healed him from leprosy. But his servant Gehazi secretly went to Naaman to solicit for it, thinking Elisha would not spiritually discern his actions. To which Elisha said:

Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money or to accept clothes—or olive groves and vineyards, or flocks and herds, or male and female slaves? Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.' Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and his skin was leprous—it had become as white as snow (2 Kings 5:26-27).

These two biblical scriptures were often used to remind followers that God's blessings are bestowed on believers for free. However, the observation made in some of the churches was that, it actually seemed the power of God was literally on sale. One such example, was of a Sunday church service attended were small bottles of holy water with an emblem of the prophet of the church, were being sold for K100 (an equivalent of about USD 8).

Not all neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone subscribe to a theology that emphasises the worship of the Holy Spirit, tithing and a total obedience to God's word, the Bible, as a precondition for economic success. Nevertheless, a number of them do endorse such a theology. Listening to their homilies and participating in prayer meetings, one noticed very little teachings on engaging with other methods for economic liberation. So, attributes that are essential for economic progression did not at all feature in most of the preaching. Such as: a strong work ethic, strategic planning, financial investment, having the culture of saving, the role of a good education and the impact of macro-economic policies of the national government. Rather, the prominent message featured was that followers of Christ can break the curse of poverty if they totally obey the spiritual laws of the Bible. Again, wider economic turbulences impacting Zambia's economy situation were of less concern.

Some researchers like the Zambian renowned economist Saasa and his partner Carlsson, using the quantification tool of the Central Statics Office of Zambia, put the poverty level in Zambia at a staggering 69.7%. But in churches, it is usually not mentioned that Zambia as a whole has continued to receive financial aid from Europe or what is often called donor countries: Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Saasa & Carlsson 2002:12,16). Interestingly, none of these European nations has a constitutional pronouncement of being a Christian nation like Zambia, and yet they use their taxpayer's money to assist a Christian nation.

It was under the declaration of a Christian nation constitutionally, under Frederick Titus Chiluba's regime that the Zambian neo-Pentecostal economy was compounded. By virtue of this declaration, for over two decades there was the euphoria in neo-Pentecostal churches that believe it would not take long before Zambia becomes an economic powerhouse. To the contrary, Zambia's economic indicators show that the country is not making a dent in poverty, as pointed out earlier from the observations of Saasa and Carlsson. Smith (in Robeck, Jr. et al. 2014:188) brings forth a similar argument when he points out Zalanga's analysis that nations like Zambia have failed to achieve economic success of the status of countries such as Japan and China, that are not Christian nations. Extrapolating from the Nigerian context, where neo-Pentecostal presence reigns supreme, it is noticeable that despite the exponential growth of churches they still have many economic challenges (Robeck & Young 2014:188). Again, this just goes to prove the hypothetical argument for this study that pure spirituality and more religiosity alone are not sufficient. In actuality, science, technology and a critical imagination are necessary components in contributing to poverty alleviation in Livingstone.

## 5.4 Hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostal Economy

It was observed that the Bible is expended as the ultimate and binding spiritual authority virtually on all matters of life and the hereafter in neo-Pentecostal religious practice in Livingstone. Perhaps this is the reason why the chasm seems to be widening between the Church and academy due to claims of absolutism and the unquestionable, and unchanging authority of the Bible (Fretheim 2001:6). In this section, we examine the common biblical texts used in these church traditions in fostering a spiritual-economic formation. Pastors in these churches do command broad oversight of their followers. So, some of these pastors are both spiritual leaders and economic advisors in their own right.

You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,’ says the Lord Almighty (Malachi 3:9-11).

The above Bible text is one of the most used among neo-Pentecostal ministers in Livingstone when preaching about economic emancipation. Tithe is the foundation bases for economic neo-Pentecostal theology. Against this background, followers are cautioned against robbing God by regularly giving their tithe.

Kelly has researched extensively the subject of tithe. In his work: *A Theologians’ Conclusions about a Taboo Doctrine: Should the Church Teach Tithing?* Kelly (2007:89), argues systematically that tithing text in Malachi 3:8-10 has been incorrectly interpreted by many churches. He categorically states that the teaching on tithing has been turned into propaganda in many churches today. Kelly informs us that those that were guilty of robbing God in Malachi 3:8, were the dishonest ministers or priests and not the general populace. So, those that were cursed were the priest themselves not the people.

According to Kelly (2007:57,65) there are two fundamental arguments as to why tithing in the new covenant is improper. Firstly, only the physical land of Israel and Israelite herdsmen in Israel were required to tithe their produce. This understanding eliminates all non-landowners, all tradesmen, and all who were too poor to afford to raise stock animals for a living in Israel. This definition about tithe, according to Kelly has not changed among the Israelites for a thousand years, it was still the same definition even during the time of Jesus. By inference, therefore, anyone outside the physical land of Israel should not be required to give tithe.

Kelly (2007:36) debunks the neo-Pentecostalism theological view that normalizes tithing. He avers that tithe only consisted of food that was eaten by the Levites, the temple labourers, and this standard still stands to this today (Kelly 2007:36).

So, going by Kelly's rendering the curse of poverty among churches does not apply in this case (Malachi 3:8-11). Like it was earlier noted that even though, the idea of the impact of macro-economic policies do not form the discursive feat of neo-Pentecostalism, the effects are still felt by followers. Max Weber's sociology theory of religion as it concerns the aspect of "rationalisation", will suffice in the neo-Pentecostal context in Livingstone. The concept of rationalisation involves a systematic application of scientific thinking to daily human life and activities. It is precisely this systematised application of knowledge that continues to transform the post-modern world (Turner 2011:53). Hence, the argument that not tithing is the main cause for the lack of economic development is hard to sustain, due to the multifaceted globalised economy.

The researcher reasons that, employing the Malachi text as a proof text to people who live in abject poverty and can barely afford one meal per day is not only going against God's loving and merciful nature, but also gives a flawed image of the African morality concept of Ubuntu. If one person hurts that ought to affect the entire community. Finally, Kelly (2007:65). avers that, it is not in the character of God to ask poor people to tithe because there is no text in the Old Testament which requires the poor to tithe anything, except for their free willing offering.



Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us (Ephesian 3:20).

Referring to the above text, one church member during a midweek Bible study gathering reckoned that believers needed stretch their faith by trusting God for bigger and better things, like desiring Mercedes Benz as opposed to simple Toyota. The exegetical context of the above scripture was not explored, which was about prayer to the Ephesian church community not necessarily material acquisition. The author in Ephesians, was admonishing this particular community to remain in the steadfast love of God made available to them through the power of God's Spirit. To use this text as a premise to trust God for a Mercedes Benz, or for any other big material acquisition, would be reading it out of context.

Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.' She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So, there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah (1 Kings 17:13-15).

The above text was another proof text that was quoted used when discussing financial and material blessings. One preacher told his church members that, if they wanted to economically succeed, they had to possess the faith of this widow. Certainly, one might draw lessons of hospitality, courage, supernatural providence and total obedience to God from Elijah's encounter with the widow at Zarephath. However, to use this text as a standard biblical script or proof text for Christians who desire to have their financial needs resolved is problematic because of its original context. Elijah was instructed by God to go to Zarephath, where this widow was to be his channel of Providence after the brook had dried. The drought came about by Elijah's own prophetic utterance due to the idolatry practice of the worship of Baal, endorsed by Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

The circumstances of drought, hunger and despondency affected all in Israel, including this widow, who seemed to not be a believer in Yahweh the God of Israel and Elijah. This is evident in the manner she responded to the prophet. *As surely as the Lord your God lives....* However, even though she was not a partaker of the covenanted commonwealth of Israel through her tenacious faith of taking heed to the instructions of the prophet, she found divine provision from the God of Elijah.

So, if anything, the moral of the story is that God's unfathomable sovereign nature does not discriminate, irrespective of a person's spiritual orientation. That is not to say the God of the Bible endorses polytheism, nor does this transcendent God consent to idol worship. Rather, in God's unequalled wisdom, He/She causes the sun to rise on those who do not commit evil and those who do, and also sends rain on both the unrighteous and the righteous (Matthew 5:45). Though the original contextual reading of this Bible text relates to not having a vengeful mind towards one's adversaries, the fact remains that no finite human has a monopoly over the doctrine of God's sovereignty. Subsequently, mortal men and women are incapable of grasping to the full extent how and whom God chooses to bless. The scripture below illustrates God's sovereignty:

For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9).

Still another biblical text that was frequently cited in the neo-Pentecostal congregations visited as a proof text demonstrating that God wants Christian believers to live a materially prosperous life accompanied by divine health was the following:

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth (3 John 1-2).

Factually, the third letter of John was addressed to a man by the name of Gaius, and the author merely wished the recipient well as in this greeting, which was not uncommon

for the Church at the time. In fact, the living Bible translation renders this text more appropriately:

Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit (3 John 1-2).

The author was not issuing a binding doctrinal standard of material blessings and divine health. To the contrary, Gaius is addressed *dear friend* by his spiritual mentor who wished him well and encouraged him for his steadfast commitment to the faith. Therefore, applying this text as a foundation for biblical economic success would be going contrary to the rules of sound biblical exegesis and hermeneutics.

David Yong Cho, the senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, who is said to lead the largest neo-Pentecostal church congregation in the world, is very popular among neo-Pentecostal believers in Livingstone because he is regarded as a respectable model. Pastor Cho too, bases his prosperity teaching on 3 John 1-2 in what he calls the *triple blessing* (Attanasi & Yong 2012:18).

We shall end with the following scripture as another text often appropriated as a proof text:

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease (Genesis 8:22).

This Bible verse is referring to Noah and his family, just after they survived the great flood that ravaged much of the plant and animal life. Here, Noah is being assured that the ecological cycles and patterns of the physical earth will continue to occur as a method by which God will continue to propagate life on earth, be it human life or non-human life such as animal and plant life. From this exposition, it becomes evident that the primary application of this verse is not concerning financial abundance through

giving to the Church. But an assurance to Noah by God that the cycles of natural environmental patterns would continue unabated, despite God's judgment that had come in form of a colossal flood.

We conclude this section by concurring with Kenneth J. Archer (2016:315-316). He says that future neo-Pentecostals rests on addressing areas of critique in their methodological approach to biblical hermeneutics. Archer (2016:315-316) adds that the future of neo-Pentecostals calls upon scholars who are shaped by the theology of the Spirit, to engage with previous Pentecostal-Charismatic articulations of hermeneutics by challenging the methods and modes of their interpretation.

## **5.5 The Theology of Divine Favour, Healing and Demonology**

In a neo-Pentecostal church congregation in Livingstone members are usually encouraged to testify to fellow believers in the congregation, concerning the blessings they have received from God. The most common testimonies are those of deliverance from economic poverty, illness and demonic possession. Believers also talk about breakthroughs in employment opportunities, traveling overseas, finding a marriage partner, buying a new car and house. Giving personal testimonies are import because at the root of Pentecostal theology are experience and hermeneutics that are informed by *the narrative tradition of the community* (Archer 2009:6). Mid-week prayer and deliverance sessions are usually conducted, to seek God's intervention in matters ranging from personal to family and national issues. What was observed was that the majority of the prayer request dealt with economic needs, medical conditions and protection from malevolent spirits from Satanists. It was also observed that those people in the community that acquire financial success in a short period of time and are not born again could be regarded as Satanists depending on the circumstances.

The idea of witchcraft and Satanism is deeply rooted in the theological understanding of neo-Pentecostal churches. Bloomer (2017:18) a strong advocate of demonology. He writes in his book *Witchcraft in the Pews*, that the ideas of witchcraft and divination are

allied to the devil, even though those who practice this do attempt to manipulate God's successes and good attributes. Surprisingly, the idea of attaining wealth outside spiritual means, is not so much considered. In fact, attaining wealth by means of the transcendent through faith, that in itself might be questionable, at least from a scientific perspective.

For example, there are churches in Livingstone that make use of anointing oil as a methodological process by which the faithful can receive divine favor and economic breakthroughs. The challenge, however, is that the amount of anointing oil one uses and the length of the process this should take before seeing results is unclear. Nonetheless, though, the spiritual realm does not apply physical laws, certain realities may not necessarily be quantified in scientific terms, but their existence can still be manifested in time and space. For example, Jesus fed 50000 people by miraculously multiplying 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, this in my view, can be regarded an economic miracle (Matthew 14:13-21). Or the healing of the blind Bartimaeus, which can be considered as a medical miracle (Mark 10:46-52). From this reasoning it may be argued that, *nothing is impossible with God* (Luke 1:37), since *what is impossible with men is possible with God* (Luke 18:27) as long as one has faith to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Factually, though, it can be argued that neo-Pentecostal Churches should then systematically avail their neo-Pentecostal economy and medical theological models, so that they can be replicated to curtail poverty and diseases. However, in spite of the proliferating of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone, poverty has continued to increase. A local pastor pointed out that the economic situation in Livingstone has deteriorated. He mentioned that Livingstone used to have a Fiat motor assembly, a textile manufacturing industry, a radio plant and a vibrant timber factory, but as of today, none of these are operational. Additionally, the pastor said the only main source of employment for the locals was the tourist industry, particularly the guesthouse business, where employees are paid very meagre wages as low as the K600 per month, the equivalent of US\$24.60.

Kuhn's proposes a philosophy of competing paradigms, which might be either objective or subjective in seeking for solutions (Poythress 1988:135). It is from this backdrop that the researcher reiterates his argument that, the theological praxis model for neo-

Pentecostal churches in Livingstone should intensively engage with science and technology, in order to build a viable local economy. This could avoid certain practices whereby some churches in town discouraging some of their members infected with HIV and AIDS from taking their medication, after they have been prayed for (this was articulated by one of the interviewees).

Arguably, faith alone cannot work in isolation without engaging with scientific reflection at some stage. Neither can science alone answer all the complex and profound questions that human beings have. Conversely, the challenge is that the idea of rationalism is often considered to be antithetical to religion; But cultural historians such as Dawson (1933:115) reason that rationalism is in fact a sort of religion because in the ancient world, it was the critical thinkers who were theologians as opposed to the priests. Furthermore, Dawson (1933:116) puts it that, in the ancient Greek world great thinkers were not only philosophers and scientists but *religious reformers and prophets of the Logos*.

There was another striking observation made in the way that neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone perceived the matrix of malicious spirits and wealth creation. Opulent black Zambians of a non-neo-Pentecostal church affiliation were often considered to have obtained their wealth by way of practicing satanism. But when asked further there was no factual explanation to such claims. Paradoxically, whites were seldom deemed to have acquired their wealth by malevolent methods. This paradoxical situation can be better be clarified by James Cone's interpretation. Cone (1975: 215-218) argues that Europeans imposed their racist value system on black people and, in doing so, forced them to think that the only way to be human and civilised was for black people to behave as Whites and Christian. Hopkins & Antonio (2012:144) puts it blatantly that this conditioning has stopped many black people from worshipping a white God and a blond-haired Jesus with blue eyes, singing, "Wash me and I will be whiter than snow".

We observe here the psychological impact of internalized racism imprinted, onto some black African neo-Pentecostal adherents. For some still perceive themselves differently, as having something of a lesser human status compared to white Europeans, or to any

other person of a European ancestry in their spiritual consciousness. Biko (1978:110-111) considered by many as the father of the Black Consciousness Movement, articulated it concisely by saying that the propensity to always equating White individuals as that which epitomises goodness emanates from psychological oppression, because the black subjects alienate themselves from their true humanity through self-hate.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.1 Proposing Scientific Framework and Critical Thinking in Neo-Pentecostal Theological Reflection and Witness.

The reality of science and technology permeates most of our lives today, irrespective of whether one is a Christian, an atheist, agnostic or has any other religious orientation for that matter. It is not surprising that the influence exerted by science and technology on human lives shows no signs of declining. Modern medicine, mobile cell phones and computers technology are just some of the many feats of science and technology that have enhance human lives today (Polkinghorne 1998:4).

Nevertheless, this study found out that some pastors exhibited some misgivings on the amalgamation of science and technological methods in their theological reflection. They were mainly concerned about the negative aspects and the misuse of science. Such a concern and to some extent hold true, because some Western scholars in the past did not only use religion to subjugate and debase indigenous African cultures and norms (Ben-Jochannan 1989: xiv); but they as well used science. To strengthen this argument, Washington (2006:389) says:

The United States, like Europe, has long used its non-white colonies and territory as its laboratories.

According to Washington (2006:390), American scientists and medical researchers escape very strict medical scrutiny at home to go and conduct questionable research in Africa. She, therefore, asserts that in 2002, for example, the hormones of the San people were extracted for possible weight loss therapies. The human growth factor was first tested on Africans before it could be used on Western children. Additionally, Washington mentions that Depo-Provera, though proven to be a carcinogen, was tested on Zimbabwean women by American scientists before it was used as a reproductive injection in America. Lastly, Washington remarks about artificial blood that was tested



on unsuspecting black South Africans patients causing 20 deaths (Washington 2006:390). In light of the aforesaid facts, these pastors were probably justifiably being cautious of some of the way's science has been applied in the past, particularly on black Africans. The past reality of scientific racism and the savage ethnic perception (2009:16-20) of black people, is an incriminatory element of the history of Western nations towards black Africans, we cannot escape. The equating of black people's facial angles, hair texture and stature to primate animal creatures such as monkeys and chimpanzees to substantiate Darwin's theory of biological evolution is well documented in the archives of history (Washington 2006:78).

It was not only Western scientists who affirmed scientific racism but some Western church ministers as well. One such example, cited by Washington (2006:75-81) was of an ordained Presbyterian minister Samuel Phillips Verner, who perceived black African people of the Congo as lower primate beings deserving of Western scientific scrutiny because of their skin colour, body features and stature.

In September of 2011, the author of this thesis attended the solemn ceremony handover of the repatriation of the 20 human remains skulls of the Nama and Ova Hereros people of Namibia. They were brutally massacred in a genocide by the German colonial occupiers. These skulls kept at the renowned Berlin Charite Hospital, mostly came from the Herero's who died in prison camps and whose remains were sent to Germany for supposedly scientific studies intended to reinforce the doctrine of racial superiority of Europeans over Africans.<sup>64</sup> Most people are very familiar about Hitler's scientific gas chambers and the Jewish holocaust museums that have been built in many countries around the world, to remind the world of this event and its past horrors. They show what an evil human mind can do to another human, and therefore billions of U.S dollars have been paid as reparations. However, just one example, the same countries who acknowledge the Jewish holocaust have opted to ignore the German-led genocide in

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<sup>64</sup> Knight, D. (2011). Skulls of Colonial Victims Returned to Namibia. *Spiegel International*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/there-was-injustice-skulls-of-colonial-victims-returned-to-namibia-a-788601.html> [Accessed on 3 September 2017].

Namibia and the grotesque transatlantic slave trade<sup>65</sup> in which millions perished enrooted to the Americas. Seldom does one see documentary films in Western media machine about the black genocide committed in Africa.

There will always be someone attempting to misuse the good innovations of science and technology for his or her own warped ideas. But that does not mean that Christians should not make use of the positive attributes of scientific and technological advancements. In recent times, particularly in Europe there have been incidences of people with a depraved mind using motor vehicles as weapons of terror to commit mass killings. For example, the story of the Berlin truck killer Anis Amri that drove into a crowded Christmas market indiscriminately killing 12 persons in 2016.<sup>66</sup> Such despicable acts do not, however, necessitate the rejection of using motor vehicles by Christians just because they are a scientific innovation.

Pentecostalism and science seem like two radically different, even bitterly opposed worldviews (Smith 2012:36). However, some neo-Pentecostal churches are beginning to acknowledge the very critical role brought about by the ingenuity of modern science. The advent of the World Wide Web, the Internet and the marvel of cell-phone connection are a testimony to the realism of scientific knowledge and technological conceptions. Additionally, there are discoveries of antiretroviral medicines, space explorations, advancements in prosthetic limb creation and the creation of vaccines against diseases such as polio, smallpox and influenza. All these inventions have completely transformed the world today.

Walls *et.al.* (2008: xiv) point out that, the mandate of the Christian faith should also aim to undo unjust social structures while embracing life enhancing knowledge, which

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<sup>65</sup> The writer of this thesis rejects the usage of the term “trade” in reference to slavery or any other imperialistic projects because in the English language, the word trade has to do with the commercialization of buying and selling of goods (Oxford English Dictionary 2006:775). Even though black people were commercialized by European imperialists, they were not goods, but humans created in God’s image (*imago Dei*). It is important to emphasize this because often words and semantics have the psychological potent of unconsciously desensitizing a person’s awareness of horror.

<sup>66</sup> BBC News. (2017). Berlin truck killer Amri ‘had 14 identities’ in Germany. [online]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38516691> [Accessed on 3 September 2017].

does not necessarily have to be spiritual or biblical based. With this awareness, the author, is of the view that, neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone should be encouraged to include scientific and technological methods in their theological reflection and witness. For example, there have been claims of some church members of having been cured of HIV/AIDS. In our modern world, however, such claims need to be authenticated by qualified medical personnel in order to be perceived as legitimate. Essentially, medical verification would be potentially an impactful Christian witness to non-believers.

Fundamentally, neo-Pentecostals premise their spiritual views on the Holy Spirit within the theological framework of the Trinity (God, Son Spirit) (Lederle 2010:4), as being the paramount enabler in their spiritual experience. Within neo-Pentecostalism the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit like speaking in other tongues (glossolalia) healing, prophecy and miracles are highly regarded. However, it was observed that, there was a lack of openly acknowledging that the same Spirit who empowers Christian believers with the Charismata (spiritual gifts); potentially also empowers engineers, molecular biologists, medical doctors, astronauts, mathematicians, astrophysicists, pharmacists, computer programmers, et cetera. This goes to affirm the argument in this study that neo-Pentecostalism's understanding of the power of God's creative Spirit ought not to be only confined to the metaphysical or supernatural experiences of life alone but should also encompass all the other facets of life, both in the human and non-human realms.

God's nature has the incomparable ability to fathom profound things not yet understood by finite mortal beings (Daniel 2:22). With this in mind, one can assertively say God dispenses diverse and in-depth knowledge, not only to spiritual leaders and theologians but also to scientists and technological specialists. It was observed that, in most but not all neo-Pentecostal congregations in Livingstone critical thinking in theological and biblical reflection was not prioritized. Fundamentally, critical thinking is not just about arguing abstractly on issues, but it is about contemplating on complex problems and then constructing a more relevant, workable and solution (Cohen 2015:20). It was

observed that church members instinctively, irrationally and uncritically accepted everything preachers said as gospel truth and as being direct instructions from God.

The phraseology *God told me to tell you...* was used time and again by preachers, this then legitimized their spiritual authority to any would-be critic. What was striking to the researcher, nonetheless, was that, very few followers dared to question why there was no noticeable moral and economic elevation reflected in Zambian society, despite the profusion of spirituality. Very few questioned why it was that there was still a lot of poverty in Livingstone, in spite of casting out “demons of poverty” (Angel 2016). To question certain elements on the dogma of divine miracles and blessing would be regarded as showing insolence to spiritual authority. Another observation made was what the author calls the culture of spiritual appeasement in Zambia and personality elevation, which was noticeable in many congregations. There was little reflection on quantifying the actual tangible results emitting from prayers for spiritual deliverance to acquire employment, material success and poverty alleviation. Although blessings were supernaturally dispensed by prophets and prophetesses, the veracity of abject poverty, high unemployment and the absence of significant economic growth was still prevalent.

Virkler (1993:3) makes a compelling argument that, Christians very often do not engage in critical thinking about certain processes on how one reaches the decision of whether something is true or false. Instead, many Christians will accept conclusions without any valid and credible basis. Furthermore, Virkler (1993:7-8) points out that many believers have become discouraged, even reaching the point of wanting to do away with their faith, as they realised that things they were taught as being certainties turned out to be illusions. According to Virkler, the problem lays in the faulty biblical hermeneutics that is taught in some of the Pentecostal congregations today, which is not premised on sound biblical principles. To this end, Virkler (1993:6-7) designed a “problem solving process” technique.

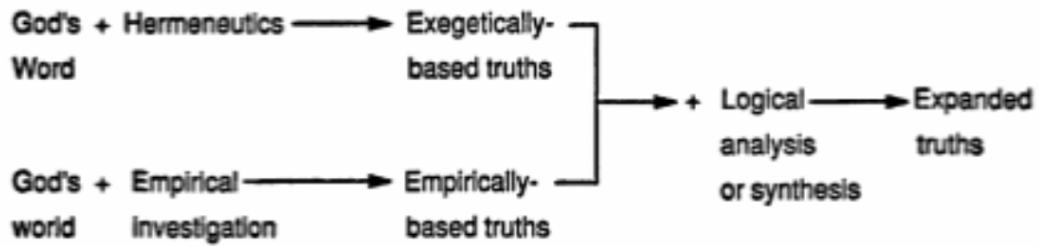


Figure 2: Problem solving process

Going by Virkler’s process of critical thinking. We observe that the reason that some neo-Pentecostal believers in Livingstone accept every teaching they hear from the church pulpit was that they do not make use of logical synthesis to make sense of the supposed truths they hear. The reason for this is that they do not exegetically examine biblical teachings, nor do they base their grasp of reality on empirical investigation. To be fair, one cannot entirely blame the Christian masses for not fully engaging critical awareness on spiritual matters, because in order for a person to be able to adopt critical thinking they would need to be systematically taught on how to contemplate and articulate complex spiritual peculiarities.

The researcher contends that, the term *secular professions* –meaning, for example, medical doctors, nurses, engineers, architects, environmentalist, dieticians, school teachers, et cetera<sup>67</sup>– should be avoided in church settings, as doing so gives an impression that such professions are less-spiritual compared to spiritual oriented professions. Nonetheless, these professions are just as spiritual as that of five the fold ministerial offices in Ephesians 4:11. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to call them *parachurch life-enhancing ministries*.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> The phrase ‘secular profession’ is often used within neo-Pentecostal churches to imply those professional careers outside the church. The implication advanced by subtle insinuation is that the five-fold ministerial gifts in Ephesians 4:11 of apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor and evangelist are more superior than say an engineer or a nurse because the former are considered to be more spiritual oriented.

<sup>68</sup> Parachurch life-Parachurch life-enhancing ministries is a term coined by the author of the thesis. It refers to professional skills and gifts commonly called secular professions. They are not spiritual gifts but are used to serve early needs of a community.

The task of a pastor is to give spiritual life to church members, but the responsibility of a medical doctor is to preserve physical life by any moral and appropriate means available. In this case, neither the pastor nor the medical doctor is superior to the other, they are simply operating uniquely in their God-given abilities to enhance human life. This, however, does not imply that a pastor cannot hold two positions or professions at once. In other terms, it is possible to be a pastor and a medical doctor at the same time or a pastor and an accountant or even a lawyer, a plumber, a carpenter, et cetera. For instance, the Ghanaian pastor and evangelist Dag Heward-Mills best known for his international healing crusades and conferences, is a trained medical doctor.<sup>69</sup>

The point the researcher is at pain to labour is that every profession and skill that improves human life in a moral and economically sustainable manner is important to society. The function of a church bishops is just as important as that of the person who cleans church toilets every Sunday morning. This is because *true leaders do not seek power but rather are driven by passion to achieve a noble cause* (Munroe 2005:16). Authentic Christian witness requires a servant-like approach, desiring to reflect the character and grace of Jesus to the communities been saved. The late Munroe (2005:16-17) in his book entitled *Spirit of Leadership: Cultivation the Attributes that Influence Human Action* affirms that the true spirit of service is not about manipulating people, capitalising on their fears and needs, but it is a product of inspiration.

The observation made is that neo-Pentecostal pastors, evangelists, bishops, prophets and prophetesses in Livingstone are highly revered by their followers. During Christian seminars and church crusades a number of them are driven around by chauffeurs in relatively luxurious motor vehicles. Their Bibles are carried for them by assistants. To recognize their spiritual oversight their followers distinctively call them papa (father) or mama (mother). In illustrating the aspect of humility in service, Jesus said:

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<sup>69</sup> DAG HEWARD-MILLS MINISTRIES. (2019). [online]. Available at: <https://www.daghewardmills.org/en/index.php/about-us/about-dag-heward-mills> [Accessed on 25 September 2019].

Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:43-45).

The aforementioned Bible text is a model for Christians to follow. Jesus was the example par excellence because during his earthly life, his approach to ministry was informed by humility in service. Nonetheless, the researcher observed that at times it was difficult to reconcile the extreme reverence accorded to preachers in congregations with the spirit of humility in Christian witness as exemplified by Christ.

Moreover, it was as well difficult in certain times to make sense of whether the preacher was a secular megastar celebrity, or a humble servant of Christ functioning under the model exemplified by Jesus, when he washed his disciple's feet (John 13:1:17). Of course, humility for a Christian does not mean one should be a docile individual. It simply means that a person has to constantly remind him or herself of the indwelling Spirit of God manifested through the temperament of humility, kindness, self-control, faithfulness, love, patience and gentleness (Galatians 5:22-23).

To illustrate this point there was young preacher who publicly relished and bragged about the fact that his chauffeur and arm-bearer was a medical doctor by profession. The manner in which he spoke and interacted with the listeners in the congregation did not seem to exhibit a Christ-like approach to the Christian witness. When asked why an accomplished old medical doctor would carry the Bible and open the car door for the him, he responded by saying a preacher was a much higher calling than any other secular vocation. Thus, the medical doctor was simply acknowledging this truth by virtue of his humility to serve the man of God. Some scholars caution against such an approach to Christian ministry. Purves (2001:118) contends that church ministers should take their own conversion and sanctification seriously to avoid the peril of self-deceit and establishing one's pastoral ministry on personal needs.

What the young preacher did not recognize was that as much as the medical doctor learned spiritual matters from him. He too, as a preacher could have learned some things from the doctor which he could then incorporate in his evangelistic campaigns. Things such as: working with empirical evidence, service to the least deserving patients, working with facts and not only with abstract, subjective and at times mystical spiritual theories.

In the month of August, a renowned evangelist from Ghana (name withheld) visited the town of Livingstone and the main slogan for this mass crusade was salvation. He stated that the blind persons would receive their sight, the lame would walk, lepers would be cleansed, the deaf would hear and the dead would be raised back to life. Such slogans, in the researcher's view necessitate empirical investigation to substantiate their claims of supernatural occurrences. This is where scientific engagement should collaborate with faith in order to dispel any doubts from critiques. Although, "Divine healing practices are an essential marker of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity as a global phenomenon." (Brown 2011:3-4). However, at this mass Christian crusade, there were no dead persons raised from death or paralytic individuals completely restored as it was initially claimed in the slogans.

If miracles are not empirically examined and documented, it becomes a big challenge and an impediment to the propagation of the Christian gospel. Particularly when attempting to reach out to a broader audience outside a traditional church setting. Because the unconverted do not necessarily always subscribe to concept of nor do they fully acknowledge the laws of the Christian faith. That is the more reason, as earlier mentioned that science and neo-Pentecostal supernaturalism should inform each other. Neo-Pentecostalism can then adopt more rigorous statistical analysis and methods because scholars like Work (in Smith & Yong 2010) argue that miracles are much rarer than most preachers would want people to believe.



## 6.2 Economic Development and Scientific Imagination.

A complex problem such as poverty has no single solution. Neither is the idea of establishing more churches and Bible schools, nor having more pastors and prophets the solution to dealing with poverty. If spirituality alone were the remedy to problem of poverty, the town of Livingstone would have been one of the most developed towns in the world. There are many causes of poverty in Livingstone, some of which shall be discussed in Chapter seven, as confirmed by the views of the pastors who participated in the study. One of the indubitable modes by which nations develop economically is through industrialisation. To do this, however, the nation's citizenry needs to grasp cutting-age trends and developments and adopt an innovation culture premised purposely on scientific rationality and technological imagination. The Pew Research Centre conducted a fascinating survey that revealed that poor nations tend to be very religious compared to wealthy countries with an exception of the U.S.A.<sup>70</sup>

Often it is implied by neo-Pentecostal dogmatists in Livingstone that having more Christian spirituality or religious experience is the remedy to poverty alleviation. Middelmann (2007:16) has audaciously argued that poverty is not always alleviated by religion, but it is often the logical and practical result of religion. Many a scholar would vehemently counter argue Middelmann's view. Yet, Middelmann (2007:16) puts it that the phenomenon of poverty does not only stem from the inequitable distribution of wealth and resources, but it also comes from the dearth of ideas about life, meaning and indeed work ethic. This dearth of ideas can be extrapolated to the Livingstone context. Because there is a lack of robust scientific and technological ideas that can be converted into sources of industrialisation, and in doing so putting a dent on poverty.

Religion and spirituality form part of the cultural morals and norms of many nations. But to achieve sustainable economic development the aspect of industrialization has to

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<sup>70</sup> Pew Research Center. Global Attitudes & Trends. (2002). Among Wealthy Nations. U.S. Stands Alone In Its Embrace of Religion. [online]. Available at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2002/12/19/among-wealthy-nations/> [Accessed on 4 September 2017].

be part of the matrix. Arguably, Germany, Britain, Japan, and China as an example, each of these countries has its own religious history, however, industrialization has economically transformed them. Contentiously asserted, it is not much the religious and spiritual aspects that have made these nations a force to reckon with. What has made them the envy of many sub-Saharan nations is scientific ingenuity and technological innovations, coupled with strategic planning. More importantly, these countries fully understand the pivotal role that scientific and technological approaches play in transforming their societies from being less developed to highly developed and industrialised nations.

One of the things Cypher (2014:21) mentions in constructing resilient economies, particularly for third-world economies, is the need for “qualitative structural change” that embraces a rapid increase in industrialisation. This is what has made the West the envy of the rest of other nations, which are at the lower margins of modern economic development.

A town saturated with more religiosity and spirituality such as Livingstone has given rise to the conception that more religion impedes on people’s self-criticism, self-evaluation and critical thinking. As a result, it can be argued that the aforementioned realities could have exacerbated the phenomenon of poverty. Woefully so, more religious minds have adopted a worldview of denialism of this reality. To this effect, all the social-economic and political mischiefs that happen are construed as the sovereign unavoidable acts of God (Middelmann 2007:11). Surprisingly, even when it is evident that the nature and character of God cannot tolerate economic injustice and the widening gap of inequality, some sectors of neo-Pentecostal spirituality have a way of explaining away such critical reflection. The counter argument usually is that some Christians have more faith than others, and those with more faith experience an abundance of material blessings. Three of the most common Bible texts that were used to support this reasoning in the church congregations visited in Livingstone were as follows:

If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land (Isaiah 1:19).

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands, I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 28:1-12).

However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees, I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you (Deuteronomy 28:15-20).

The above texts were used as an inference to the reason why some in the church are very successful and others not so well off. What was observed in the interpretation of these texts was that the hermeneutical principles of biblical interpretation, or the historicity of the texts were not considered. If poverty was truly the result of the curse of disobedience against God, it would then imply that all Westerners and North Americans, who are generally relatively better off economically than most Zambians, have more faith and are very obedient to biblical norms and values. However, we know for a fact that North Americans and West Europeans are superior economically to Zambians not necessarily because of compliance with God's laws but due to many factors. Cardinal to this is innovation in scientific research and modernisation of information technology.

To illustrate just how vital modern technologies are to human development this example will suffice. The town of Livingstone lays close to the border line of three nations: Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. So, the potential for farmers to export their fresh produce to these countries is there. But due to the deplorable road infrastructure it takes most small and medium scale farmers many hours to transport their produce to nearest markets. With no modern facilities at his or her disposal, a typical rural Zambian farmer entrepreneur is made to do with archaic ways of conducting business. Because he or she has no access to refrigeration mechanisms to be able to transport perishable food products like fresh fish to the markets in temperatures of close to 40 degrees Celsius. Contrasting this reality in Zambia to that in Germany, for example, is

fascinating. It takes a fraction of time to transport products and passengers by rail on many routes using the modern ICE (InterCity Express) sprinter train, which has the following modern technological benefits available on board:<sup>71</sup>

- Comfort and convenience
- More legroom than on a plane
- Socket at your seat
- Free state-of-the-art WiFi in first and second class
- On-board mobile phone reception
- Quiet zones and mobile phone zones for business travellers

So, whilst a Zambian small-scale farmer might need to rely on prayer to prevent his fresh fish from going to waste and badly affecting his or her livelihood, a Germany farmer has no such worries because his or her fellow countrymen and women have made good use of their God-given abilities to design facilities that make life and conducting business a joy not a burden.

The lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6) and its wrong application causes God's people to perish. It also ushers in the spirit of hopelessness for future generations. Fundamentally, Zambians are trapped in the archives of inferior infrastructure, yet esteem religious experience to such an extent that under the second Zambian president the late Frederick Chiluba's regime, the Zambia government had a ministry of religious affairs and, even under the current administration this ministry has resurfaced. It can be argued that, it would have been more logical to invest the country's resources in what one would call the ministry of scientific-technological invention, research and implementation in order to mitigate some of Zambia's economic problems.

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<sup>71</sup> DB. (2017). ICE-travel on board a high-speed train. [online]. Available at: <https://www.bahn.com/en/view/trains/long-distance/ice-ice-sprinter.shtml> [Accessed on 5 September 2017].

Neo-Pentecostal churches in Zambia should be proposing for building very strong institutions that are very independent from the influence of the executive branch of government, both at governmental and non-government levels. This would create a strong foundation for checks and balances in the manner that government revenues are disbursed for economic development. Once such a culture is inculcated in the moral consciousness of the citizenry, it would become plausible to strategize for economic plans that are premised on scientific thought and information communication technology (ICT). Once government institutions are genuinely independent in their functions, they are then free to engage in productive national discourse without fear of coercion or reprisal from those who hold the reins of power.

Ntlha (in Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:287) has pointed out that many scholars and academic specialists have deliberated on the fact that despite the abundance of natural resources in Africa, economic stability has eluded the continent. While there might be many reasons for the absence of robust economic development in Zambia, the lack of resilient, unrestricted and strong government institutions is one of the major reasons. It is astonishing that Yoweri Museveni, the president of Uganda and a man who has been in power for many years, some years ago authored a book entitled *What is Africa's Problem?* One chapter in the book is titled *When is Africa's Industrial Revolution?* (2000:188). This simply goes to show that there is a lot of rhetoric in Africa, but very little implementation of policy is carried out.

Africa's great economic evolution and industrialisation will come when Africans themselves realise that it takes more than religion and spirituality to develop a nation. In this day and age Livingstone has more churches than hospitals, schools, pharmacies and skill training centres. Arguably, a nation cannot achieve development by only spiritual and political means. What can potentially propel economic development is learning from the progress of other nations, contextually implementing the lessons learned and making the necessary changes as opposed perhaps only praying, fasting and conducting Bible seminars.

## 6.3 A Wholistic Approach to Theological Training

In the words of one of the finest pan-Africanist minds of the 20th-century Marcus Mosiah Garvey Jr:

You must never stop learning. The world's greatest men and women were people who educated themselves outside of the university with all the education that the university gives (Garvey 1986:1).

Garvey emphasises the importance of learning that is not only confined to high institutions of learning but an education that incorporates theoretical and academic concepts with real life situations.

Maxwell (2011:4), who is regarded as an authority in the field of leadership, says:

Leaders deal with people and their dynamics, which are continually changing. They are never static. The challenge of leadership is to create change and facilitate growth.

The growth Maxwell is talking about can only be facilitated to create the necessary change in an advanced mode, when preachers integrate formal and non-formal training in both theological matters and in other bodies of knowledge. Probably this would then equip neo-Pentecostal exponents with relevant skills to be able to render effective solutions to people's economic needs. Jesus was not of this world, nor did he encourage his disciples to do so (John 17:16). Nevertheless, he was very knowledgeable and practical concerning providing tangible solutions to people around him. When the five thousand were hungry, he did not only pray for them, he fed them (Matthew 14:13-21). When he cleansed the man who had leprosy, he did not only heal him but told him to go and present himself to the priest in keeping with the ceremonial rituals and the rules of hygiene of the time (Mark 1.40-45).

The kind of training church ministers receive has an impact on how they view the churches' role and that of Christian believers in society. For instance, one respondent,

when asked whether science and neo-Pentecostal religious experience were compatible, he categorically stated:

I would say science should be proved wrong and Christianity proved right because one has to bend the knee to the other. You cannot have two streams running parallel together.

If a pastor regards science as being in a superiority contest with theology, it makes it hard to imagine how one can constructively engage with it. Particularly when seeking to promote some of the most-needed contributions of scientific and technological methods within a church setting. Agriculture, for instance, is one of the most common ways by which the majority of Zambians earn a living. But many of the small-scale farmers do it unsophisticatedly, hence, need to educate them about intensive farming methods. A pastor with a favourable view of modern science will not hesitate to engage a horticulturalist or an agriculturalist to teach his or her congregation modern methods of farming. The importance of integrating theological knowledge with other bodies of knowledge (Cahalan et al. 2017:3) is becoming more pivotal in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Especially when dealing with societal challenges such as poverty and high unemployment.

The researcher of this thesis knows of one church in Livingstone with a number of very qualified individuals who are professions in various fields. In particular, this church has medical doctors, accomplished businesses entrepreneurs, nurses, house builders, carpenters and metal fabricators. These professionals could be used to share their vocational skills to other church members, for instance. This church could also engage these professionals to conduct skill-sharing seminars for the youths. What became apparent, though, was that this particular church was not cognizant of the potential possibility of utilising, for example, an accomplished businesses entrepreneur to train others in the congregation who might have been interested in starting their own business venture.

It is important to mention that some study participants (namely the pastors) were already engaged in various communal ventures of that nature. One pastor mentioned that his church had adopted a local school, which they were financially assisting by providing school fees to poor school learners whose parents could not afford tuition fees. Another pastor's church was running a small farming holding, where they were growing vegetables to sell to the community. He stated that they were intending to expand the project to the status of a commercial farm. The third pastor was involved in a small communal poultry project, where they were rearing broiler and layer chickens. They also were offering training to members of the community giving them the skills to be able to run their own poultry farms.

When dealing with abject poverty a multi-dimensional approach has to be taken because there are many causes of poverty. Ehlig and Payne (1999:5) contend that for the Church to be successful in dealing with the poor, there is a need to realise that the foremost reasons why people are poor are the lack of educational accomplishment and the breakdown of family and community bonds. Johnson (2009:28) articulates the importance of having a clear understanding of the concept of “business as mission” (BAM) in the Church. He argues that the concept of business as mission should be a Christian profit-making business venture that should be adopted as *missio Dei* (mission of God) in the world. But at the same time remaining true to its rootedness in Christian ministry. In most cases, people’s skills and proficiencies in these churches was not used because the spiritual leader was somewhat regarded to be a jack of all trades. The Church is referred to as a body with hands, arms, legs, feet, eyes and ears (1 Corinthians 12:27), et cetera, and each individual member should be encouraged to take on his or her individual role by empowering other members not only in spiritual matters but also in all other areas of life. Such as: economics, small-business ventures, diet for healthy eating, sensitising communities to desist from stigmatizing people with disabilities and offering literacy adult programmes.

The challenge some neo-Pentecostal churches encounter when it comes to ecclesiastical leadership methods is the one-man or one-woman approach. In today's complex world the one-man/woman approach method may not yield big and sustainable economic



results when dealing with poverty. This is the result of sophisticated socio-economic systems, scientific trends and information technologies that have become so intertwined into human society. That is why the Church is often referred to as the *body of Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:27) to signify the importance of each member utilising their own gift, calling and vocation. In order to demonstrate the importance of how God esteems diversity of gifts and abilities in the Church, two biblical texts will suffice:

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness (Romans 12: 4-8).

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4: 11-13).

Warren (1995:14) brings forth the importance of having the correct skills and right equipment within the church ministries in order to build a healthy church. If a church becomes skilled in recognising and utilising the opportunities, or *waves* as Warren refers to them, by using technology, for example, God can then expand the growth of the Church. This can only be realised when theological training has an integrated approach across disciplines, whereby theology synthesises with other disciplines or bodies of knowledge, like information technology, economics and business entrepreneurship.

The problem of human poverty is a complex reality for theology alone to remedy. Especially for a continent such as Africa that has received over 1 trillion U. S dollars in aid money but has not achieved meaningful sustainable economic development to reduce poverty (Lupton 2012:3). It takes an integrated method to value the importance

of a wholistic approach to one's theological training. This awareness can be crucial in correctly contextualizing concepts and correctly reading the reality of modern times, just like the children of Issachar understood their time and Israel's plan of action (1 Chronicles 12:32).

One of the ways of modernizing communities is by a constantly re-examining the interplay of theory and praxis. It would be very difficult, therefore, to alleviate extreme poverty in Livingstone, if neo-Pentecostal churches remain fixated on the idea that theological training alone without other forms of secular skills empowerment training can adequately deal with the phenomenon of poverty. According to the well-known economist, who at times is perceived as controversial by other academics, Sachs (2015:20) says extreme poverty means households are not able to meet their basic human needs. As a result, they are chronically hungry, do not have access to health care, do not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation, cannot afford education and lack basic shelter and clothing. Sachs's definition of extreme poverty makes the task of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone a mammoth one to achieve due to rampant poverty. Certainly, breakthrough prayers of binding and loosening may have results, arguably, though, with a limited effect. A multi-disciplinary approach and a full awareness that practical theology should address peoples' existential challenges, in a practical and sustainable manner might be the approach that gives far-ranging results.

It can be argued that Jesus was the best practical theologian to have walked the earth because he was constantly addressing people's needs in concrete ways. He did this in ways that communities of the day could relate to his salvific message. He fed the hungry (Matthew 14: 13-21), provided hope to the downtrodden (Luke 4: 18), healed those who had diseases (Matthew 9: 35; Mark 2: 9-12; Luke 17: 12-16; John 9: 6-7) and spoke against socio-economic injustice (Luke 4: 18; Matthew 25: 41-46). More importantly, Jesus demonstrated simplicity and humility and yet, remained authoritative in his spirituality (Matthew 7: 29).

## 6.4 Social-Economics and Racism

Anderson (2001:3) author of *Powernomics*, argues that blacks have not understood the game of real monopoly in a capitalist world because they fail to comprehend the direct interplay between race and racism on the one side and wealth on the other. The sad reality is that the psychological damage caused by racism to black people has had far-reaching ramifications.

*A man [sic] without the knowledge of where he has been, knows not where he is, or where he is going* (Ben-Jochannan 1989: xiv), cherished by many as a master teacher but regarded by some as deeply controversial scholar. As a people group black Africans have been robbed of their true self-awareness, this loss of true self-identity has an effect on the social-economic standing of black Africans. Due to the loss of self-identity some find no problem in decolourising their rich melanised skin with hazardous skin-lightening products. Not being cognizant to the fact that the creator purposefully gave them more melanin than another people group. Ben-Jochannan (1989: xiii) writes:

Moreover, when a man's history is written by his master's religion or economic philosophy, such history is always distorted to suit the master-slave relationship, which is the only possible result from such enforced union. There mere fact of the relationship's existence forces one to feel, in fact superior to the other.

It is this distortion of economic philosophy mentioned by Ben-Jochannan that would cause some black women spend their meagre income on beautifying themselves with imported straightened-hair wigs.

This same economic philosophy, which is rooted in the master-slave colonial history makes Africa's political and civic leaders to have no sense of shame. They continually go with a begging bowl to the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, the European Union, and now to the Chinese asking for financial assistance in terms of loans, ironically their very countries are endowed with numerous natural resources.

Sadly, the reality of all this is that the interest accruing on these huge loans that Zambia is for receiving for example, from these international lending organisations will be passed on to the next generation of young Zambians, thus perpetuating the economic servitude status of Zambia. *Just as the rich rule over the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender.* (Proverbs 22:7). Kilomba (2008:40) puts it this way:

*Racism is a violent reality which has been central to the making of European politics for centuries, beginning with the European scheme of slavery, colonialism and today's Europe.*

Extrapolating the distortion of religious history mentioned by Ben-Jochannan (1989: xiii), makes neo-Pentecostal church leaders in Zambia no different either. They teach about self-reliance to members but at the same time, their theological disposition clearly reflects an imitation of the European and American contexts. In recent times, however, the Nigerian form of worship has permeated the spiritual landscape of Zambia. Names such as Enoch Adejare Adeboye, general overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (2008: 15,70) that was initially led by Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi (Ukah 2008: 15,70), David Oyedepo, founder of the Living Faith Church Worldwide that is often known as the “Winners’ Chapel”, and Chris Oyakhilome of the Christ Embassy Church (Gifford 1998:26,71) have become household names in Livingstone. These men are regarded as ultra-spiritual humans. As one church member reckoned: *when papa Oyedepo declares it, heavens open.*

The internalised black inferiority complex is rooted in the diabolic doctrine of racism. As a result of that internalized racism the black self perceives himself or herself economically inferior. With such a dented black conscious one is not able to economically compete at a global scale. Arguably, internalized human perception is pivotal to how African nations perform economically. *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he* (Proverbs 23: 7). Black Africans have repeatedly subjected themselves to this perverted racial ideology to the extent that, in some Zambian tribes’ whiteness has been internalised as the standard for economic success, beauty and excellence. Thus, even in some local languages, the etymology of self-effacement is obvious. For instance, the term “muzungu” or “mukuwa” in the Zambian local languages of chi Nyanja, si Lozi

and chi Tonga means “white person”, but it can also be attributed to a person’s high standard of impeccability, beauty, well-ordered and a non-mediocre approach to life and often it is used as a compliment.

Biko (1978:53) in his theorisation of Black Consciousness maintained that when black people seek to distance themselves from their blackness by emulating the whites, they are essentially *insulting the intelligence of whomever created them black*. Furthermore, Biko adds that it was God’s thoughtful plan to create black people. Perhaps more importantly, Biko (1978:52) contends that being black is a reflection of one’s mental attitude not an issue of one’s skin colour. With the above mentioned in mind, it becomes a big challenge for Zambia to fully develop when the very subconscious of its citizenry has a self-image of being inferior to whites. It is, therefore, very essential for black people to deprogram their mind from the white saviour syndrome.<sup>72</sup> The term white saviour is not advocacy for rejecting the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, after all, no one knows exactly the skin colour of Jesus. The expression white saviour is often used as an admonition to black Zambians (and other black Africans as a whole) to not always look to whites and Western nations to develop their continent when it ought to be them doing it for themselves.

The subliminal effect of racial semantics has been that black Africans have been conditioned to not seek solutions to their problems by themselves. They would rather fix their hopes on Europe and the United States of America to build their economies. Consequently, in Zambia, phrases such as Western donors, donor nations, church sponsors and American Church-affiliation are not uncommon. Surprisingly, even among the very educated people they see no wrong in romanticising such deprecatory language.

One of the points Ashimolowos (2007:251) highlights in reference to the deplorable conditions on much of the African continent is that of the economic *dependency*

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<sup>72</sup> The branding of Jesus as white, according to Burrell (2008:129), is an example of the power of propaganda, because when black persons worship a European-looking man with blond hair and blue eyes, it strengthens the senseless theory of black inferiority.

syndrome, which, according to him has made African nations become beggar states to Western nations. Ashimolowo (2007:252) is of the view that the colonial effect of only running industries that benefit the former colonial masters or planting and growing only those crops that serve wishes of the former imperialists is still very much entrenched in the African psyche.

Fanon & Philcox (1961:2-3) state that by construct all colonised people, who have internalised the inferiority complex and whose cultural genesis has been destroyed locate themselves very close to the culture and language of the colonialist. Therefore, some have argued that black people should be very cautious of accepting everything written or said by Westerners without first critically examining it (Garvey 1986: xvii). Garvey (1986: xvii-xix) reckoned:

As other people were willing to sacrifice their time and even their lives to Christianize our race, so we must exercise patience and time to civilize our people.

Garvey makes an interesting argument of civilizing the black self. Particularly, to a people whose minds have constantly been bombarded for centuries with images of white as being superior. Even the purported portrait of Jesus Christ is depicted as white. The very semantics of white and black are masked in the divide between good and evil, purity and dirtiness. When someone tells a minute lie, it is called a white lie. Equally, some Bible translations equate white with righteousness or with angels. At the same time black is perceived as evil, demonic and threatening: *Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow* (Psalms 51 :7). In this regard, Asante (2007:164) points out that the notion of blackness conjures up negativity and chaos. Ironically, the colour black is sometimes depicted as elegant and with high-value importance. This makes perfect sense because in a racist society black bodies are either idolised or despised but can never be neutral.

From a biblical perspective all human beings are created *imago Dei* (in God's image) (Middleton 2005: 9) irrespective of their economic status. Hence, to internalise racial inferiority or externalise racial superiority on the basis of one's skin colour is to be

sinful in God's framework. It is sinful because attributes of racial bigotry are then attributed to God. Essentially, characterizing God's nature with racial bigotry. This is where the task of Black liberation theology in practical theology comes in, which is an attempt to interpret and analyse the gospel in such a way that it renders applicative justice to the social-economic realities of oppressed black communities (Cone 1986: 4-6). Interpolating Cone's elucidation to the Livingstone context, one observes that the psychosomatic impact of white American and European theology is still deeply entrenched in the minds of some of the neo-Pentecostal adherents.

To use Cone's language, white theology has not been fully involved in the emancipation of black people because by its very construct it is a theology of the oppressor (Cone 1986:4). Therefore, for many neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone, getting affiliated or partnering with some white American and European church ministry is seen as some sort of high achievement and favour from God.

Zambia is still servitude to the economic, scientific and technological potency of America, Europe, China and now even South Africa. Because even though colonialism is gone, its effects will still remain for a very time in Africa. Burrell (2010:10) emphasises the argument that the propaganda of branding blacks as inferior was responsible for the black holocaust. It programmatically stripped black people of their cultural identity and brainwashed them into a mentality of inferiority, not only culture but in economics too.

There are many things neo-Pentecostals adherents could do to reverse some of these negative social-economic effects on black people. First, there is a need to candidly address the subject of racial inferiority and superiority complex in local churches, by juxtaposing it with social-economic realities. The prophetic words in the Psalms talks about Alkebu-lan<sup>73</sup> (Africa) looking unto God for sustenance (Ben-Jochannan 1989: 75): *Nobles shall come from Egypt; Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God (Psalms 68: 31).*

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<sup>73</sup> Alkebu-lan is the original and ancient name of Africa given by the Moors and Ethiopians.

Black Zambians need to stretch their hands to God in order to acquire great wisdom and be able to create, innovate and design their own very high-quality products for their own economic development. Presently, though, Zambia is stretching its hands for economic development to China, Europe, U. S. A and to South Africa. It was Bonhoeffer (1953:13) who stated that nobility comes from and exists by sacrifice, courage and by one's sense of duty to himself or herself for the common good of the community. This courage and sense of duty to truly believe in the African self for the economic emancipation of Zambian, was not something that frequently featured in the homilies of neo-Pentecostal congregations visited. Ngong (2010:128-129) asserts that Africans are encouraged to turn their churches into hospitals by neo-Pentecostal preachers, whilst the West focuses on scientific and technological research. So, instead of reforming the social-economic framework within neo-Pentecostalism, in order to adapt to global modern trends for economic development, the theology of spiritual deliverance was what was taught in most congregations.

Basically, the idea of deliverance is framed around the belief that even though an individual might be born again and achieve his or her success in life, both financially and health-wise, this can be hampered by Satanist curses because of one's ancestors, which also result in negative consequences in a person's life (Gifford 1998:85-86). Therefore, this situation requires spiritual ministers who are very skilled to be able to exorcise the demonic powers that are allegedly behind the lack of progress in a Christian's life.

Otabil (in Gifford 2001:88) poignantly critiques black African against the dependency syndrome on Western nations. He emphasises that Africans have to produce their own blacksmiths, a phrase that epitomises Otabil's ministerial focus. In Otabil's reckoning, the axiom *blacksmith*<sup>74</sup> is basically a metaphor for those black Africans who seek to achieve scientific, technological and economic emancipation from European nations to make Africa's national economies self-reliant. It must be pointed out that not everything

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<sup>74</sup> Otabil borrowed the phrase *blacksmiths* from a bible passage in 1 Samuel (13:16-22). Just as ancient Israel relied on the Philistine blacksmiths for their economic progress (Gifford 1998:88-89), African nations, too, are heavily relying on Western nations to boost their economies. This situation according to Otabil's theology can only be reversed if Africans adopt a different mind-set on developing Africa by themselves. Two of Otabil's books highlight this metaphor of blacksmith, the other being *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia* and "Four Laws of Productivity".



in economies of sub-Saharan African is negative. According to Ncube and Lufumpa (2015:1-2), during the 2009/2008 global recession, when Europe and the United States of America were in panic mode, African economies proved resilient and Africa's purchasing power parity (PPP) moved from US\$1.2 trillion to US\$1.6 trillion in 2011 (Ncube & Lufumpa 2015:1-2). Such broad statistics look appealing at first glance, however, for a massive continent the size of Africa, they hide the reality of poverty. In a relatively small town like Livingstone in Zambia, for example, one does not need to be a Harvard economist scholar to observe the reality of abject poverty. A person only needs to take a tour of the shanty residential area of Malota to witness for themselves the sheer scale of people's economic suffering and despondency. Definitely, the middle-class economic upward trajectory mentioned by Ncube may not be what people in Malota experience.<sup>75</sup> For most of them life is undeniably a daily struggle for food and for clean drinking water, and even substandard sanitary conditions are difficult to achieve for many residents of Malota.

That is not to say Otabil does not teach the prosperity doctrine, but the way that he communicates it is fairly different from a typical neo-Pentecostal pastor. Otabil (2002:105-106) teaches that one of the ways to combat poverty is to have a dedicated attitude towards the principle of work and for there to be integrity in the employer-employee relationship. Otabil does not shy away from expressing his strong stance that poverty in Africa is not the result of a curse or the result of the skin pigmentation of black Africans. Rather, it is an outcome of what he calls the *effects of self-negation and alienation that have plagued Africans and people of African descent over the years* (1993:15).

Furthermore, Otabil (1993:15-17) says the bigger problem causing Africa's plight is that black people have assented to the *misinformation apparatus* that Africa is the land of Tarzan and lions. He adds that Western nations portray themselves as the apex of

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<sup>75</sup> Malota is an informal residential Settlement on periphery of the town of Livingstone. It is an extremely poor area with no running water and no proper sanitation facilities. Many of the residents of this compound are extremely poor. Yet, these people remain resilient in trying to earn a living in the harsh economic conditions in Zambia by selling whatever merchandises they produce ranging from home-made foods to furniture and second-hand clothes.

human civilization, but the reality, however, is that they hide the existence of vices such as murder, rape and human destitution in their societies.

In his other book *Four Laws of Productivity*, Otabil outlines four principles which he calls God's foundation for livings. He draws these four principles from Genesis 1:26-28:

Then God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And God said, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

From these verses, Otabil (1991:11, 45, 67 & 101) draws out the following principles: productivity, multiplication, replenishing and subduing the earth by appropriating what he calls "God's economic system". To a large extent, Otabil is justified in his explanation, especially on the aspect of productivity. However, the truth of the matter is that productivity alone, without the production of finished goods, is not sufficient. Africa has been exporting raw materials to the rest of the world for a very long time without any value addition to them, and to this day, nothing much has changed.

Onyeani (2000:4) reprimands black Africans for the propensity of persistently blaming European nations for why Africa still remains at the lower margins of economic development compared to the rest of the world. Onyeani (2000:4, 43-46) states that *blacks are economic slaves*. Because they produce very few value-added goods and mainly consume what is produced outside of the African content, but at the same time, black people blame whites and slavery for their failure to develop the continent.

Furthermore, Onyeani (2000:4-6) asserts that black people have the tendency of basking in past glory by always referring to the greatness of past African empires such

as Kemet or Egypt and Timbuktu in Mali. Yet, today black Africans have very little major inventions to show to the rest of the world in terms of what is organically developed on the continent. But Ashimolowo (2007) takes a different view, he states that in order to reverse the psychological damage committed against black people, Africans will have to internalise the awareness that at the time when Europe was regarded as a uncivilized land, Africa was already the architect of the first civilizations during the first 3,000-4,000 years of human existence (Ashimolowo 2007).

A number of scholars were cited in this thesis, who propose a social-economic transformation in Africa: late Diop, Ben-Jochannan, Ashimolowo, Williams and Asante. Nonetheless, it should be argued that this transformation has to focus on creating tangible results in bettering the lives living in extreme abject poverty. Arguing as the British historian Basil Davidson did:

That the attack on African productive and expressive arts and modes of inquiry had to do with the inability of Europeans to admit that Africans had far exceeded Europe at the very beginning of civilization (in Asante 2007:67).

Does not address the current economic problems that much of sub-Saharan Africa faces. In Zambia for example, 53 years after becoming independent from the British colonial government, Zambia still has no actual industries that can stimulate economic growth.

Consequently, it is very difficult for poor Zambians to internalise the truth of being created in God's image (Genesis 1: 26), or to say to them that God treats all peoples equally (Acts 10: 34) Romans 9:14) because these people live in the squalor of abject poverty with no assurance of a good future for their children. Hence the rhetoric that African is rising becomes problematic, unless there is bona fide action plan combined with a real implementation of economic policies, value addition to natural resources, adherence to the rule of law and stringent comprehensive economic strategies.

In his attempt to inspire the conscious of black people, Price (2001: 301-304) outlines discoveries and inventions by black persons. He says that the first automatic traffic light

was created by Garret A. Morgan, the first plasma bank at a Presbyterian Hospital in the U. S. A that was set up by a researcher from Columbia University by the name of Dr. Charles R. Drew. The first telegraphic rail system was created by Granville T. Woods. The medical team, which for the first time in history separated Siamese twins was led by Dr. Benjamin S. Carson. The first ever open-heart surgery was performed by a black person, Daniel Hale Williams in 1893. The ironing board, which is so instrumental in most households today was invented and patented by a black woman by the name of Sara Boone in 1892.

One is cognizant of the probable fact that some scholars might argue that all the above inventions were created by African Americans not Africans. This might be a valid argument; however, it reinforces the initial argument that blacks seldom get perceived in neutrality. They are idolized when they make great achievements. But are alienated into the domain of negative perceptions, when they do not suite standards normalized by western interpretation of reality.

In *Principles and Benefits of Change: Fulfilling your Purpose in Unsettled Times*, Munroe (2009:121-122) mentions:

That we can become overly satisfied with our past successes. We can become so mesmerized by the history we have created that we stop making history. Sadly, our complacency often undermines our potential for present and future progress.

So, what has happened is that blacks as a people have become less conscious of their past achievements. This has resulted in the failure to build on the accomplishments of the past. As a result, whites have immeasurably surpassed blacks in the contest for scientific, technological and economic dominance on the world stage. Indisputably, even national and geopolitical dominance is controlled by Western economics. In all probability, this could be the reason that Africa, a continent of over a billion people has no permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council.

The current situation is such that most but not all, of the outstanding scientific and technological discoveries and foundations of the last two centuries which have revolutionised the world were invented or at least connected to people of a European ancestry. A few examples here will suffice. The light bulb by Edison and Swan, the airplanes by Wilbur and Orville Wright, Apple Computers by the late Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, Microsoft Bill by Gates and the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) by John Adrian Shepherd-Barron. Even the battery powered motor vehicle, electricity, the printing press machine, the World Wide Web by Tim Berners-Lee, the telephone by Alexander Bell, the radio and the television.<sup>76</sup>

This is not implying that people of a European ancestry are intellectually superior to black Africans. Neither should certain historical facts be forgotten. Such as the atrocious historical accounts of colonialism, apartheid and the black African holocaust and the transatlantic slavery project that brought about indescribable human suffering. Rather, the essence of the argument is that a massive continent as Africa should not stand at the margins whilst the rest of the world vigorously seeks for technologies, innovations, scientific and mechanical skills to better their economic development. Although Walker (2016: 5-6) argues that Africa gave the world its first scholarly learning institution at Timbuktu, such awareness may not achieve much if it's not contextualized to practically redress Africa's economical needs.

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<sup>76</sup> Interesting Engineering. (2016). 35 Inventions That Changed The World. [online]. Available at: <https://interestingengineering.com/35-inventions-that-changed-the-world/> [Accessed on 6 September 2017].

# CHAPTER 7

## 7.1 Findings: Analysis and Discussion of Results

In this chapter the researcher reports and analyses in detail the results from empirical data. Firstly, by comparing and contrasting the different concepts and ideas from data using some aspects of the grounded theory (GT) and the start list analysis (SA) (Yale University 2015). Secondly, the idea here was not only to contrast and compare the different theoretical concepts that emerged from the data. But to also analyse data in view of relevant literature through the ambit of neo-Pentecostalism. As well as to examine this data in relation to scientific and technological development. By analysing documented data, one is able to come to some sort of conclusion on the topic of inquiry within a specific body of knowledge (Machi *et al.* 2016:3).

Dr Leslie of Yale University explains that in qualitative research analysis, one can use *an integrated* approach of a mixture of grounded theory and a start-list (Yale University 2015). She maintains that the benefits of this approach are that it retains fundamental benefits of grounded theory, but at the same time it starts with a guiding framework which begins with broad themes and then develops sub-themes from data (Yale University 2015).

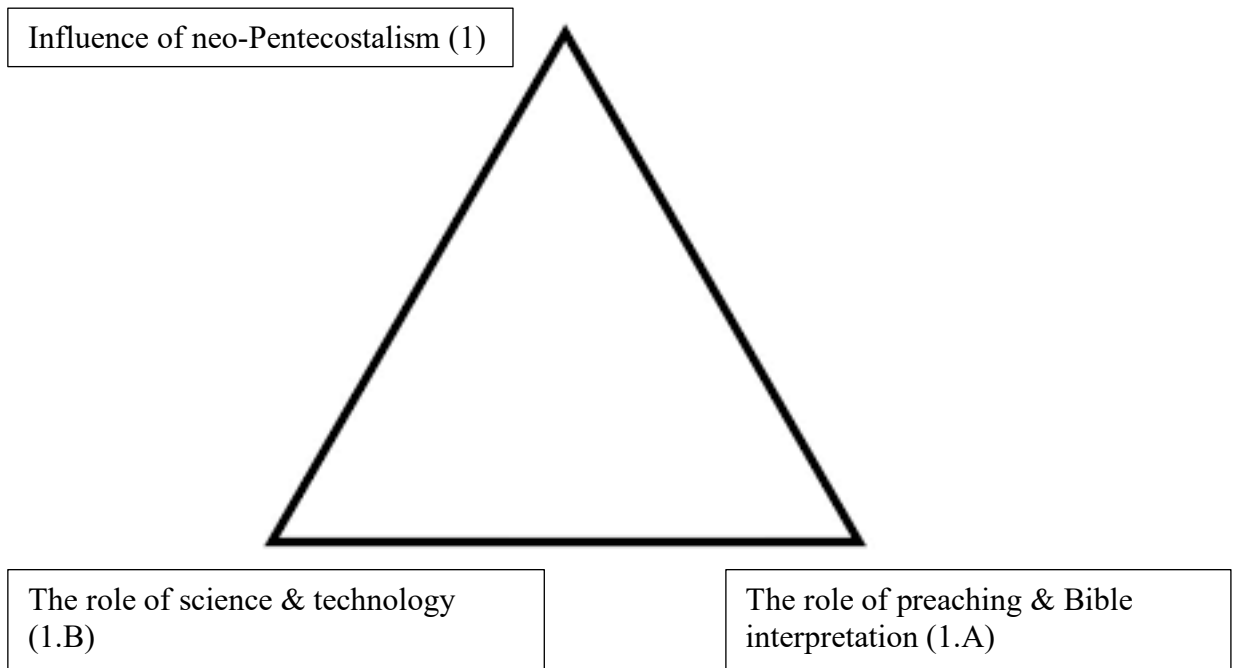
Gleaning from Dr Leslie's explanation above, the researcher categorised the ideas and theoretical concepts from the interviews into four categories. The main headings of these categories were constructed from a summarised version of the main research question and the two sub-research question. One observes that the first two headings are representative of the main research question. The other two deal with the two sub-research questions.

These four headings are a synthesized structure of all the sixteen interview questions that were put forward to the twenty participants. But the core substance of concepts, ideas, themes and principles discussed under these headings were extracted from

empirical data, by means of the grounded (GT) theory and start-list approach (SA). Aspects such as, allowing the bulk of theoretical frameworks to be grounded in data through experiences and narratives of study participants formed part of the framework. It was necessary to do this because *it allows for identification of general concepts and the development of theoretical concepts that reach beyond the known...*(Corbin & Strauss 2015:6). Other intellectuals might critique this approach by saying purely grounded theory derives the totality of its theoretical concepts from data collected during the research process (Corbin & Strauss 2015:7). However, it was already mentioned that the established academic guideline for analysing data in this research are an integrated approach combining grounded theory and start-list as opposed a purely grounded theory approach. In essence, the analysing of data in this study has elements from both an inductive and deductive method (Charmaz 2014:1-2).

There are similarities between grounded theory and thematic method, for example they both involve more engagement and interpretation from the researcher. However, ... *analysis move beyond counting explicit words and phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is themes* (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012:10).

In seeking to understand neo-Pentecostalism's influence on the economy in Livingstone, the researcher conceptualized a framework characterizing the main research question and two sub-questions by using a triangular diagram below as an illustration. The first sub-question relates to the role of preaching and Bible interpretation as it relates to economic success or the lack thereof. The second sub-question deals with the role played by science and technology as it relates to economic development.



*Figure 3: Framework of the dissertation*

This diagram depicts a summarised version of the research question and its two sub-questions.

So, the four (4) dimensions synthesised from the main research question and two sub-questions were constructed as foundation instruments for categorizing empirical data. These instruments were: poverty and economic development, re-examining prosperity theology, neo-Pentecostal theological reflection and, science and modern technologies.

### 7.1.1 Poverty and Economic Development

Poverty being a multifaceted and complex phenomenon, the researcher wanted to find out from the study participants the influence played by neo-Pentecostalism, when seeking to understand the causes of poverty and economic development, and the remedy thereof. The phenomenon of poverty and economic development in Livingstone, and certainly in Zambia is a huge challenge. Bearing in mind that poverty has many causes some which are very complex due to the macro-economic influences of external global factors.



In the last decade there has been a boom in the construction sector in Livingstone. For example, the building of many new residential houses, the refurbishing of the Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airport and the construction of many private schools. In addition, there are lodges and hotels being constructed both in the inner city, and on the periphery areas. One would, therefore, logically assume this signifies some level of economic development because jobs are created through these activities. Astonishingly, some participants perceived this reality differently, so their perspectives were more nuanced than identical. When answering questions dealing with economic development in particular question 15, some participants like P 12 said lack of economic development was due to a number of factors such as: *laziness, lack of industries, job scarcity, and manifestation of poverty in the other places*. P 12 gives us insight to how he perceived poverty and economic development:

Material poverty is a manifestation of poverty in other places, so many times where material poverty exist, intellectual poverty for example exist, where material poverty exist, they might be moral poverty as well.

P 12's explanation to question 10 seemed to suggest that poverty is usually interconnected to a deeper underlying issue. Therefore, going by P 12's explanation it implies that when dealing with material poverty one has to take a multi-dimensional approach by examining things that might not necessarily be perceptible by casual observation. Hence, P 12 suggest that:

So, they need to be development, which is all-round development, so we want to see social development happening, spiritual development happening, people moving forward intellectually as well. So, when that happens material poverty can be addressed very quickly.

In answering question 14, P 12 used the word *all-rounded development* to signify the importance of first, developing other areas of human development like social, intellectual and spiritual dimensions before addressing material poverty. So, P 12 explanation correlates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which states the

importance of human physiological needs such as water, shelter and food before moving to other hierarchies (Maslow 2015): At the same time P 12's reasoning seemed to be agreeable with Haar and Ellis's article entitled *The Role of Religion in Development: Towards a New Relationship between the European Union and Africa*. The authors propose that in order to have sustainable development people ought to be encouraged to build on their intellectual, social and spiritual resources as well<sup>77</sup>.

P 12 perspective was a contrast to that of P 5 whose view was that:

The cause of poverty, people is [sic] too lazy, they do not want to go and look for jobs.

The theme of laziness as being one of the major causes of poverty and the lack of economic development was mentioned by at least four (4) participants. However, P 6, observed this reality differently:

The major contributor to poverty is one: lack of industries. There are no more employers in terms of maybe job-creating; it's actually on the reduction than it was before. Many industries that were here in Livingstone that were doing clothing factory, most of them have closed down, and these were major employer.

When answering question 10 and 13 through 15, P 6's perspective was that *lack of industries* was the main cause of poverty. One would concur with this assertion because usually industries tend to be large enterprises that employ a large number of workers, consequently reducing poverty levels by remunerating its workforce. Conversely, it can also be contended that it is not simply offering employment that can put a dent on poverty; rather it's about aiming for sustainable economic equality in the levels of salaries offered to employs. Nonetheless, P 6's explanation of *lack of industries* was agreeable with that of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), that human

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<sup>77</sup> Haar & Ellis (2006). The Role of Religion in Development: Towards a New Relationship between the European Union and Africa, *The European Journal of Development Research*, 18:3, pp. 351-367.

development is about creating an environment whereby people are able to develop their potential, live productive and creative lives<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, P 6 said:

Tourism has a larger percentage in terms of employment but still jobs are scarce to get.

By saying jobs *are scarce* in spite of the tourism employing a bigger percentage in Livingstone; reasonably P 6 affirmed his earlier assertion that the cause of economic malaise was the lack of industries. Among the industries mentioned by P 6 that were once a major source of employment are: the Livingstone motor assembly, clothing factory, radio assembly and the Livingstone Sawmills that specialized in the cutting of timber.

In their paper entitled *Tourism, Development and Corporate Social Responsibility in Livingstone, Zambia*, McLachlan and Binns posit that the town of Livingstone has experienced economic growth in the last 20 years due to government diversifying its economy from being a mineral driven economy to other sectors like tourism. As a result, the tourism sector in Livingstone does provide jobs to locals<sup>79</sup>. Nguira, however, in his paper: *Lessons from Africa: Social-economic impacts of enclave tourism in Livingstone, Zambia*, takes a different perspective. He argues that the tourism sector in Livingstone is dominated by foreign investors resulting in what he calls *the dependency paradigm tourism* and contributing very little to the social-economic development of the town<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> Haar, G. T. & Ellis, S. (2006). The Role of Religion in Development: Towards a New Relationship between the European Union and Africa, *The European Journal of Development Research*, 18:3, pp. 351-367.

<sup>79</sup> McLachlan, S. & Binns, J. M. (2014). *Tourism, Development and corporate social responsibility in Livingstone, Zambia*. University of Otago. [online]. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260392035\\_Tourism\\_development\\_and\\_corporate\\_social\\_responsibility\\_in\\_Livingstone\\_Zambia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260392035_Tourism_development_and_corporate_social_responsibility_in_Livingstone_Zambia) [Accessed on 12 July 2019].

<sup>80</sup> Nguira, P. M. (2018). Lessons from Africa: Social-economic impacts of enclave tourism in Livingstone, Zambia [online] *Revista de Ciencias de la Administración y Economía* | Print ISSN: 1390-6291; electronic ISSN: 1390-8618. Percy Mabvuto Ngwira is First Secretary for Tourism and Zambia's Liaison Officer to the World Tourism Organisation UNWTO (Paris, France) (tngwira@gmail.com) (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9616-5245>) [Accessed on 12 July 2019].

So, that lack of economic development mentioned in Nguira's paper was echoed by a broad number of the interviewees.

Participant, P 6's perspective was somewhat similar to that of P 1 when he answered question 10:

I would say the challenge that we have in Livingstone that created the situation of material poverty is that there is only one major industry...

The *only one major industry* being referred to here by P 1 is the tourism sector. Livingstone being the home to the popular Victoria Falls attracts a lot of tourists both locally and internationally.<sup>81</sup>

When answering question 10, P 2, however, had a very different viewpoint compared to P 1 and P 6, according to him the situation of drought and infertile land was the main reasons hampering economic development. He said:

We do not have much rain here, which makes it very difficult for people to grow food. The ground itself is so sandy to run a farm here is a great challenge.

Interestingly, P 11 had a totally different standpoint on the situation of poverty and economic development when responding to question 10, 13 and 15:

The problem of poverty, for example youth unemployment, here in Livingstone, it stems from government policies that are in place. Of course, government may want to implement this or that idea but at the end of the day, there is little pretesting what these ideas would result in.

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<sup>81</sup> The Victoria Falls is a colonial name. Named after Queen Victoria of England. It was David Livingstone (1813-1873) the Scottish missionary who named it and named the town of Livingstone of himself. The actual name in one of Zambia's local languages is Musi-O-tunya meaning "The smoke that thunders". [online]. Available at: <https://victoriafallstourism.org/> [Accessed on 13 July 2019].

Additionally, P 11 questioned the privatization of many companies in the 1990s by the Zambia government which then led to the closure of many companies:

For example, privatization was of those ideas that came about, and it did not meet the need that they thought it would meet, in this sense that it saw a lot of companies close.

So, in P 11's own observation Livingstone had a number of manufacturing industries and companies until the 1990s when massive privatization program took place. P 11's observation was confirmed by P 1 who gave an in-depth analysis to question 10:

They were a lot of industries, Livingstone had a lot of industries, we had motor assembly the Italians were here. We had the Indians who were assembling TV sets of Vodacom. We had a lot of textiles that were making clothes like children's clothes... we had a lot small business that were a spill of the other industries I'm talking of. The railway also had a lot of employees. But after the privatization there was a decline, the investors sort of withdraw.

Here P 1 linked privatization with decline in economic activities. He explained the difficult economic history of the privatization of Zambia's industries as it relates to Livingstone. He then, P 1 connects the complex matrix of the dynamics of privatization, economic decline and investment. A Harvard business review by Goodman and Loveman: *Does Privatization Serve the Public Interest?* Contend that developing nations often than not have been too quick to *jump on the bandwagon* of privatization, usually for political and economic ideology.<sup>82</sup> Goodman and Loveman further explain that critiques of widespread privatization claim that privatization ownership does not necessarily result into improved efficiency.

From the researcher's standpoint it was evident that the respondents understood very well the social-economic situation in Livingstone, the causes for lack of sustainable

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<sup>82</sup> Goodman, J. B. & Loveman, G. W. (1991). Does Privatization Serve the Public Interest? [online]. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/1991/11/does-privatization-serve-the-public-interest> [Accessed on 14 July 2019].

development and the remedy to creating economic success. These are just some of the terms and phrases they used that illustrating this point:

Government policies, youth unemployment, jobs are scarce, privatization, investors, small business, no enabling environment, and poorly industrialized, lack of industries, look for jobs, percentage in terms of employment,

Deducing from the aforementioned one notices the importance of actively engaging pastors as active players in economic development. Because not only do they understand social-economic issues, but they are as well close to the people affected as spiritual guides.

P 15 had a contrastive perspective on situation of poverty and economic development in Livingstone. He attributed the social economic challenges to HIV/AIDS. She attributed the high HIV/AIDS situation to tourism:

You know Livingstone is a tourist capital, and there are a lot of tourist that are coming and then you find that the epidemic like HIV is so high. And when the parents die the children will live in poverty.

P 15's assessment was significant in that she was one of only three female participants, that is not say the other perspectives were not important. Rather, it was essential to have female perspectives on this study from persons who also happened to be a minister of the gospel. In terms of HIV/AIDS, Ramjee in her paper, *Women and HIV in sub-Saharan Africa* points out that Southern Africa remains the most affected region globally. According Ramjee women are the most affected, a few years ago 92% of all pregnant women infected were from sub-Saharan Africa<sup>83</sup>. P 1 who were cited earlier he too, acknowledged the big challenged paused by the HIV/AIDS situation in Livingstone:

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<sup>83</sup> Ramjee, G. (2013). *Women and HIV in sub-Saharan Africa*. Article in AIDS research and Therapy. [online]. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259315895\\_Women\\_and\\_HIV\\_in\\_sub-Saharan\\_Africa](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259315895_Women_and_HIV_in_sub-Saharan_Africa) [Accessed on 14 July 2019].

One of the big one [sic] may be which has been a big challenge is HIV and AIDS.

The issue of HIV/AIDS shall be analysed later within the context of neo-Pentecostal theological reflection and scientific technology.

### 7.1.2 Critical Reflection of Prosperity Theology

In this section the researcher was interested in getting a deeper understanding from the study participants (the local pastors) concerning prosperity theology, particularly as it concerns preaching about money, material possession and healing. The motif of those who argue that neo-Pentecostalism has brought about a number of positive aspects as it relates to economic development has already been discussed. But there are also those who critique the prosperity theology.

There were both anticipated and unexpected perspectives. However, what was evident from the majority of responses was the re-occurring theme of going back to *fundamental biblical principles* and *doctrines* in order to reform prosperity theology. A number of interviewees expressed some serious concerns with the contemporary way of preaching and bible interpretation within the neo-Pentecostal church practice. P 16 expressed it this way:

But my concern is the content represented in the so-called neo-Pentecostal churches, I think they tend to drift from biblical principles of Pentecostalism to what we are reducing it to especially today.

By using the phrase *so-called neo-Pentecostal churches* P 16 was expressing some level of discontentment or even disapproval. He uses this term because of his concern about the sort of questionable present-day preaching, which was promising instant blessings and results. He characterized it as follows:

God will bless your gospel, with a new car, bless a woman looking for a husband will be married next week.

When asked further as to why he raised such concerns, he explained it this way:

I think it goes back to the Bible, the idea of say Pentecostalism takes place the first day of the coming of the Holy Spirit, it was for the sake of taking the gospel the kingdom [sic] to the ends of the earth, today is bless me.

It was observed here that P 16 attaches the functionality of Pentecostalism to propagating the gospel as opposed to seeking blessings, which he inferred to be material and physical things. The functionality of Pentecostalism as empowered by the advent of the Holy Spirit has been misappropriated by what P 16 termed *a drift of biblical principles of Pentecostalism*. P 1 reasons along a similar pattern he, however, elucidates it by looking at the spiritual aspect and as well as the physical dimension:

You cannot say I'm only going to use faith so that I will be praying, and money will fall from heaven in my wallet, I mean that is ridiculous. You pray yes, seeking God's favour, God's guidance so that you know the areas where you need to invest or the areas where you need to apply your energy and then you go and take advantage of those areas and apply your energy.

Here P 1's was attempting to strike a balance between appropriating the spiritual correctly. But at the same time taking personal responsibility to develop oneself. Interestingly, in discussing about faith, prayer and money, P 1 used very key terms: *invest, apply your energy* and *take advantage*. This is indicative of the fact that as a pastor and theologian, P 1 was conscious of the complexity of human needs and of the fact that they cannot be resolved from a prosperity theological construct alone. Religious scholars like Tonghou (2010: 128) contend that it's not so much the emphasis on miracles that is problematic within neo-Pentecostal congregations, but the obsession with miracles even regarding things that people can do for themselves.

P 18 acknowledged the positive aspects of prosperity theology, but he also mentioned the importance of striking a balance between *prayer with action* to avoid what he called *extremes* happening today in churches. He mentioned the issue of HIV/AIDS which was raised by at least four other interviewees, whereby immediately after being prayed



for, some of those infected believed they were healed and stopped taking their medication. So, P 18 explained that these sorts of extremes needed to be discouraged and re-examined.

P 3's explanation was to some extent similar to that of P 16, but he went further by suggesting ways of safeguarding church members against incorrect bible teachings on prosperity:

I think there is a way that things can be done to protect the congregants. One is to go back to the basics of the Bible and begin to teach the major doctrines of the Bible.

The notion of *go back to the basics of the Bible* was similar to that of P 16. He argued that the church has drifted from biblical principles. It is important to note that P 3 and P 16's did not precisely explain what was meant by biblical principles and major doctrines of the Bible. In any case, to do so, would entail going beyond the bounds of this study. But the core of P 3's perceptive was to:

Alert people not only to be hearers but also to be participants in the study of the word of God themselves just like the Berean Christians in Acts 17. When they heard Paul, they went to do research for themselves. I think that will be very helpful.

P 3's explanation suggested that in view of some questionable prosperity doctrines of financial blessings currently being taught in Zambia, Christians have to adopt a more critical awareness of issues regarding money, faith and God

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17: 11).

P 10 was not entirely opposed to the theology of prosperity, for he said that there is some good as well as some bad aspects to this particular theology. He cited Malachi 3:10-12, by saying if church members fail to give their tithes, God will not be in a

position to rebuke the devour on their behalf. Because according to him, these are biblical principles that must be obeyed in order to prosper. However, P 1 questioned and cautioned against over-emphasizing prosperity theology when preaching about God, money, faith:

So, when you talk about the issues of faith, yes faith we are looking at having favour from God, God stepping in to bless the labour of your hands. So, if you take away the aspect of work and only apply faith, I think even James compliments the two, it talks about faith without work is dead.

In analysing the above, it seemed that P 1 was essentially aiming at pointing out questionable hermeneutics of neo-Pentecostal theology when dealing with issues of the neo-Pentecostalism economics. He cautioned against the falsification of true biblical faith when he referred to the attitude of undervaluing the component of work, good stewardship and due diligence to one's own roles in life. To substantiate his stance, he made reference to Adam in the creation narrative:

Adam was created and placed in the garden where he was told you have to work the soil, you have to tender the garden, and you have to apply yourself so that you can be able to survive.

P 1 highlighted the critical component of work, that so often is over-looked and at times not so much emphasized in prosperity theology, and also of having the right attitude towards it. What P 1's logical thinking highlighted, in my view, is the understanding that God's blessings are not always invoked by prayer through miraculous occurrences alone, often the divine (God) uses human creativity, intelligence, strong work-ethic and accurate strategic planning to bless people economically.

Ellington's article (in Kroesbergen 2014:29) *Is the Prosperity Gospel Biblical? A Critique in Light of Literacy Context and Union with Christ* commences by stating that:

The gospel of health and wealth proclaims that God promises physical healing, financial prosperity in this life time to those who trust and follow God's ways.

To this effect, Ellington advances the argument that the most credible remedy for believers is to read the Bible in its literary context in order to perceive main themes and lines of thought in it. Believers are then able to see the weaknesses in the prosperity gospel (in Kroesbergen 2014:29).

The challenge with Ellington's argument in light of the experiences and stories of the study participants themselves is that, in Livingstone there is a lot of stigmatization of churches with less emphasis on miracles. Therefore, the phrase *dead church* was often used to make reference to those churches that do not stress the aspects of miracles and do not put great emphasis on. Prophecy.

P 20 pointed out that because of the euphoria of prosperity theology around miracles, many church members were leaving their local churches for more radical neo-Pentecostal congregations that emphasized the working of miracles, prophecy and who had revelation-centred preaching. These were not members leaving the traditional mainline churches, but neo-Pentecostal believers who were joining other more *powerful* neo-Pentecostal churches.

P 20: Of course, we have new Pentecostal churches mushrooming and hence making an influx of members leaving to join new Pentecostals, I may call it movement. People are looking for things that are like instant and the issues of miracles that are happening right now.

P 20's viewpoint was that, the current faction of the burgeoning neo-Pentecostal churches was as a result of wanting quick success and not wanting to stick to the Bible basics, like tarrying in prayer, fasting, reading and studying the Bible. It is this that has caused what P 20 called:

A shift of concentration from a deeper understanding of the word.

When P 20 used the term *deeper understanding of the word* (the Bible), one perceives here the re-occurring theme and pattern of interviewees expressing desire to revisit the prosperity theology because in their view there has been a deviation from sound doctrine. Along a similar pattern, P 11 characterized the teaching of prosperity theology as being *out of context preaching*:

P 20: When a person is trained in skills and empowered then you can talk about prosperity. So, prosperity like which is been taught I think it is out of context

The usage of the phrases *trained, skills* and *empowered* by P 20 are critical in bringing about some sort of theological equilibrium to the prosperity theology. Because when people are thoroughly trained and equipped with certain competencies, they have an opportunity to earn a living by utilizing their skills. This unburdens the spiritual encumbrance on the preacher, of having to constantly invoke prosperity prayers on a daily basis for economic sustenance.

According the researcher's observation on the ground, there was great emphasis on exorcism in neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone, particularly when dealing with what is referred to as *demons of poverty*. Nevertheless, despite this emphasis, poverty has not been eradicated. It is within this situation of poverty that the divine health theology, which claims to have the cure for HIV/AIDS, mental illnesses and tuberculosis has become prevalent.

Prominent thinkers in the field like Brown (2011:9) explain that most Pentecostals today, do not deny the use of modern-day medicine. What they are saying rather, is that even when contemporary medicinal efforts fail to heal, faith can. However, finding verifiable data on the actual people healed from various chronic illnesses was not possible. One pastor narrated about how some churches were discouraging HIV/AIDS patients from taking their anti-retro viral medicines as a way of demonstrating their faith, even before they were medically examined. That maybe the reason why some observers and scholars question claim of healing because of lack of proper investigation. Since counterfeit assertions of miracles have the potential of harming

those who suffer from illness, economic hardships and social marginalization (Brown 2011: 6).

In researcher's own analysis, often neo-Pentecostals have been critiqued for not adequately applying analytic skills to their biblical hermeneutics, which take cognizant of the main aims, lateral context and themes of the Bible (Kroesbergen 2014:32-35). Subsequently, standard norms of biblical exegesis are seldom applied due to the belief that God gives constant new revelations. So, criterion like the third-party perspective in the text, the cultural gap and the original language in which the text was written are not considered (Hayes & Holladay 2007:5-6).

Zulu a local Zambian theologian critiques the prosperity theology. According to him, at the core of neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics of economics is that, if a person is born-again and has a new relationship with God, and if they have sufficient faith and are able to give money to the church or the preacher, they will have plenty to be able to live in good health and have dominion over satanic powers (in Kroesbergen 2014:26). Some, however, might argue that if taken to extremes such a theology overlooks the laws of cause and effect, which are very fundamental to sustainable economic development. Others might contend that with such a theological framework, one's faith and spirituality might become equated to how much material possession a person owns (Luke 12: 15).

My own observation on prosperity theology based on the interviews and what was observed in churches was that church pastors do not dislike prosperity theology per se but were simply expressing a genuine concern about issues of wrong doctrine infiltrating their churches.

### 7.1.3 Neo-Pentecostal Theological Reflection and Science

The rationale here was to find out from the interviewees how they thought religious and scientific concepts could engage with neo-Pentecostal spirituality when dealing with

economic development. The aim was to find out how, if at all, science and neo-Pentecostalism can enter into a constructive dialogue.

The way that science is perceived and the way that it permeates human lives is understood differently within neo-Pentecostal church tradition. So, this has created an impression that Pentecostalism and science have two radically distinctive worldviews that are opposed to each other (Smith 2012:36). Usually, the Pentecostal church tradition is often regarded as having a fixed view regarding salvation, as well as having an anti-intellectual outlook when dealing with matters of science (Work in Smith & Yong 2010: 28). But as it shall be observed from the participants perspective a number of them have a favourable view of science, regardless of diversity in interpretation.

These are just some of the main phrases that stood out, which the participants used to explain their thoughts on the theme of neo-Pentecostal theological reflection and science:

A way of life, proved theories, something that affects our day to day living, mitigating challenges, better way of doing things, improves one's life, science and religion meet, bend the knee to the other is it science or Christianity, spiritual attack, science compliments in [sic] the issue of faith, two streams running parallel, they do not contradict each other per se.

In analysing these phrases, it became apparent that there was both some regularity and divergence in the way that the respondents explained their orientations. When P 1 used the phrase *better way of doing things* and P 5 said *they do not contradict each other per se* they are agreeable to some degree, because in P 1's explanation there are certain aspects of science that can enhance development in a community. Therefore, P 5 compliments this reasoning by dispelling the argument that science is disagreeable with neo-Pentecostal theological contemplation.

P 1 and P 5's position was contrasted to that of P 2 who said:

I do not know whether we can merge Christianity – that is okay you call it neo-Pentecostalism, whatever – with scientific beliefs. At the end of the day, I think I would ask the question that should bend the knee to the other is it science or is it Christianity? Because the two to me seem to run sort of parallel when you look at them argumentatively. But from a Christian perspective I would say science should be proved wrong and Christianity proved right because one has to bend the knee to the other. You cannot have two streams running parallel together.

P 2's use of the words *who should bend the knee to the other* or *the two to me seem to run sort of parallel* indicated that he regarded science and the Christian faith as being in a contest of some sort or rather antagonistic to each other. By saying:

But from a Christian perspective I would say science should be proved wrong and Christianity proved right

P 2 reaffirmed his initial idea of the supremacy of Christianity over science. Therefore, implying that the two cannot not find common areas of interest, whereby Christianity compliments scientific thought and vice-verse. The advantage of P 2's view is that Christianity keeps its own domain categorically separated from science and thus leaving no room for potential confusion when attempting to link the two. The disadvantage on the other hand for such as position is that, it creates compartmentalization of human realities in a world that is becoming more integrated than before.

The view held by P 2 is what Barbour (2000: 2-3) calls the conflict typology, which is the view that science and faith are in fact enemies. According to Barbour (2000: 2-3), people who subscribe to a literalistic view of the Bible predominantly hold this typology. According to Stump (2017: 160), the view that theology *trumps science* is a common one among certain quotas of the Christian Church. Furthermore, Stump explains that such a view bases its stance on the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* as opposed to *creatio continua* and consequently thrusts forward the cynicism of science and sadly isolates Christian theology.

Contrasting P 2's stance to that P 1, one observes a clear distinction of patterns in viewpoints:

P 1: I would say science, I know many people have looked at science as the classroom kind of set-up, but I think in my own understanding I'm looking at science it's a way of life.

By explaining science as:

A way of life.

P 1 was putting forth the notion that science affects our daily lives because it permeates every facet of human life. So, the logical progression of P 1's rational would be that, if science is indeed *a way of life* then neo-Pentecostal theological reflection has to seek for ways of engaging it and not disassociate from it. For this reason, P 1's point of view was congenial to the philosophical notion that all of life is permeated by the ingenuity of science (Jewell 2004: 15). That is the reason P 1 said:

But beyond the subject in the classroom, science is affecting life. It is something that affects our day-to-day living and how we can be able to live better.

By using the phrase *better our lives* P 1 regarded the idea of scientific thought in a positive light. This integration typology approach by P 1, one might argue has the potency of mitigating issues of economical poverty, if applied correctly (Barbour 2000: 2-3, 8).

P 7 seemed to have echoed views of both P 1 and P 2:

In these groupings there are others that are on the far right extreme and on the far left extreme, but other, they tow the middle line. And those who are actually at the far right will deny people things, like if you're sick, they should not take medication because that means if they took medication that means they have no faith at all.



P 7 highlighted three categories of how neo-Pentecostal perceive scientific outlook of reality. First, those who view all of reality as only being a spiritual construct (he called this category *far right*). Second, those who regard all of life as being scientific (he called this category as *far left*) and those who adopt a balanced view (he called this category *those who tow the middle*). By mentioning these three categories of perspectives, P 7 was aware of variations of human realism by mentioning that:

The far right will deny people things, like if you're sick, they should not take medication because that means if they took medication that means they have no faith at all.

Here P 7 highlighted an element that was shared by four other respondents. It is interesting to note that P 7 did not want to express which category among the tree, he belonged to, rather he only stated the dominant ways in which neo-Pentecostal believers engaged with scientific thought patterns. In this case, those at the far-right category, their faith is authenticated denying medical science. Such an extreme view can be counter-productive in the sense that, it negatively profiles and stigmatizes those who do not get healed miraculously as lacking faith. Such believers have then the choice to keep hoping in faith or to take modern scientific medicines. This *far right* neo-Pentecostal extreme approach, subscribed to by a small number of churches has had people ridiculing neo-Pentecostals according to P 7:

It has actually caused people to call Pentecostalism names, which actually is a few people who do such things, not the majority.

The Bible is replete with narratives of supernatural happenings. And so, the idea of wholly trusting God for miraculous healing has a biblical precedence. But others might also postulate that there are as well healing instances in the Bible where evidence or proof was required. Jesus at one time told the ten men who had leprosy to go and present themselves to priests for thorough examination (Luke 17: 11-19). This was in keeping with the Leviticus traditions concerning the laws of purity and hygiene. Since priests in those days were the ones qualified to examine a person to see whether he or she had been cured or not (Leviticus 14: 1).

Due to certain theories of science that are regarded as negative, some neo-Pentecostal believers regard scientific disciplines as something that has no potential to better human lives. But merely a purely academic exercise shrouded in complex theoretical processes and analytic assumptions, which are detached from the everyday community life. One respondent mentioned the theory of human evolution in schools as a very negative aspect of science since it contradicts the biblical creation narrative (Graffin and Olson 2010:56-60; Dembski 1998: 17). It can be argued that just like they are many different fields of theology, science too, though often used as a generic term encompasses many fields not only evolution. Some scientific views and theories that minimize the existence of the divine made P 7's concerns valid ones. One such a theory is that of Hawkins's and Mlodinow's M-theory (2010:8), which is that multiple universes were created *out of nothing* and they did not require a supernatural entity or a divine entity for their existence. For they have their peculiar histories, a state of existence and time resulting naturally from physical laws. Hawkins further states that in order to understand the universe, we need not only explore the question of *how* but also the question of *why* (Hawkins & Mlodinow 2010:9).

P 14 explained that neo-Pentecostal theological reflection differs from a scientific method of perceiving reality. But they are not necessarily antithetical, there are certain aspects of science that might relate to, or even engage with, neo-Pentecostal spirituality. To echo the words of Albert Einstein: *science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind* (Guillen 2015: 119). P 14 maintained that since science is guided by rules and principles of empirical evidence, there are existential human phenomena that are unexplained by scientific thinking processes. P 1 cited two examples whereby he prayed for two church members, who had illnesses that had no medical remedy. According to him, these illnesses whereas a result of *African magic* and could only be dealt with by a spiritual formula. In an African context spiritual ailment are just as real as medically diagnosed sicknesses. So, P 1's claims whilst might not resonate much to a typical western mindset to a traditional African outlook such a claim is very authentic and unquestionable. But one can also analyse this differently, by saying that this could have been misdiagnosis due inadequate modern medical equipment and the lack specialized medical personnel dealing various illness like cancer, as an example.

P 8 was the first respondent to have mentioned that the current movement of Pentecostal churches is very different from the old one. Hence, she made a distinction between the classical Pentecostal type of churches and what she referred to as:

Mushrooming churches, these mushrooming pastors.

In her view, these churches and their pastors might not have the capabilities of understanding the complexities of relating science to the new kind of Pentecostal faith. It was this lack of understanding, in her view, that has caused some of these churches to be characterized by scandals. The word *mushrooming* according to Webster English Dictionary has something to do with rapid expansion or growth of something. It is this rapid growth (mushrooming) which P 8 questioned:

These mushrooming pastors who may not even be able to understand the phenomenon of science of how science works and how to relate science with the new Pentecostalism. As a result, there is a lot of messing up.

So, P 8 associated the issue of moral scandals (*messing up*) by neo-Pentecostal churches (*mushrooming churches*) to a lack of understanding of the scientific phenomenon and how the same relates neo-Pentecostalism. Whilst it is factual to say that there has been a lot of questions raised about the behaviour of some neo-Pentecostals in Livingstone, nevertheless, what was unclear in P 8 elucidation was how a better understanding of science is able to curtail moral failure.

P 8: In my own view, it's possible we can have science actually infiltrate or being infiltrated into the new Pentecostalism where people fail to understand the theory behind science, and where like I mentioned you have mushrooming Pentecostal pastors who may not have a proper ground of understanding what is embedded in theology

P 8 puts a great emphasis on the importance of education and proper training to enable pastors to appreciate how to practice theology in a better way. Another observation P 8 made was that because of this lack of proper formal training, some pastors end up

confused about how to harmonize scientific concepts with theology. Moreover, P 8 pointed out that neo-Pentecostal pastors who have not had formal training may have challenges of *harmonizing* and *separating* scientific theoretical concepts to theological ones. This explanation by P 8 stems from her definition that:

The concept of science is just a phenomenon that gives us an overview on how things are done in the environment and in the space.

The use of term *phenomenon* in this case is interesting because it relates to a reality that is remarkably difficult to fully comprehend and explain (Webster Dictionary). Some academicians might concur with such an assertion because science, more often than not, is knowledge that is based on observable facts of that which can be seen, touched and heard (Chalmers 2013:1-2). Going by the use of the word *phenomenon* by P 8, one then might say theology too, is a phenomenon for it deals with *an effort of to make definitive statements about God and his [sic] implications in an accurate, coherent, relevant way, based on God's self-revelations.*<sup>84</sup>

P 9 shared slightly a similar view to that of P 8, to say neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone – or as he also termed them *mushrooming Pentecostal churches*, cannot absorb a scientific mode of imagination, because in his view, their primary agenda is for rapid numerical growth and personal pomp. There might be churches whose main agenda is to increase church membership. The challenge with such a broad rendering, nevertheless, is that it gives an impression that all neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone are a homogeneous spiritual entity. But actually, these churches are very diverse both in their theological construct, praxis and mission.

P 17 worked for a well-known company in Zambia and took early retirement to run his own business. He was of the view that the words used in science like *principles* and *mechanisms* that guide the tradition of science, should be extrapolated and applied to neo-Pentecostal church praxis, in order to evaluate the validity claims of healing,

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<sup>84</sup> Thoennes, R. (2015). What is Theology? *Crossway*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-is-theology/> [accessed on 23 August 2019]

financial success and material wealth acquisition. Interestingly, science inquiry too, is guided laws and mechanisms (Whitehead 2011:1-5)

P 17 expressed a complementary view of adopting a dialogue approach. In P 17's vantage point, denying the reality of science was like living in a *vacuum*. A vacuum is an area or space void of matter. By way of implication, the meaning derived was that some facets of neo-Pentecostalism should not be in denialism of scientific verifiable facts. Denialists, according to Specter (2010:4) eschew nuanced philosophical ideas and dread complexity of science. Hence instead of searching for ways in which science can better human life, paradoxically they reject this reality even where proven data and a powerful consensus do exist.

P 19 is one of the pastors that has served in Livingstone for quite a long time, both as a local church minister and also as an overseer and a trainer of pastors. The difficulty in his view regarding neo-Pentecostal theology, or as he referred to them *those newcomers*, was the absence of comprehensive and all-encompassing teachings that can reformulate these same questionable doctrines. He also raised the issue of knowledge and zeal, pointing out that in these particular churches there was a lot of exciting of congregants, but very little sound biblical doctrine was taught.

P 4 said the following:

For me, I will say as long as I'm concerned, science has nothing to do with what I have seen. Everything that is created under this earth is all about God because you are able to imagine saying these things when you look upon them, how did this thing come about you just see the hand of God.

For P 4 scientific thought had nothing to do with neo-Pentecostal theological reflection. This view is what Barbour (2000: 1-3, 8) calls the conflict typology.

P 20 too, denied the role of science her perception of reality was informed by an inclination to natural theology<sup>85</sup>, attributing to the fact that God's hand sustains nature through moral principle (The Bible, Creation & Ecology 2010:114). In her frame of reasoning, it was only *the mighty hand of God* sustaining all things. She did not share the conceptual idea that the divine (God) may reveal the God-self through science:

For me, I will say as long as I'm concerned, science has nothing to do with what I have seen.

Attributing every existential reality in the cosmos to the divine, or as P 4 put it: *the hand of God* is often attributed to the *God of the gaps* theory, which is that when something cannot be explained logically or scientifically, then God is involved directly (Dembski 1998:313-314).

P 13 acknowledge the virtuousness of science from the outset. But then sounded fairly sceptical about the negative aspects of science, since according to him, people become misled in life when they adopt a purely scientific way of life as opposed to abiding by *the word of God*. It, therefore, seemed that P 13's guiding approach here was that of an independent typology. This approach holds the view that science and religion can indeed coexist provided they keep their separate safe domains (Barbour 2000: 2-3).

P 13's main concern was the blurring of the lines between science, magic and miracles from God. He thought that *a clear distinction* between that which is human and that which is godly has to be categorical. The cognitive factor about P 13's standpoint is on deciding the differentiation on that which is regard as a miracle on the one hand, and on the other, what someone might consider as scientific human effort as opposed to something being orchestrated by the God of the Bible.

It was apparent P 13 seemed to have some reservation of people embracing scientific reflexivity at the expense of the Bible. This concern was informed by his belief that

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<sup>85</sup> Natural theology is based on the idea that humans are capable of discerning God's presence by observing moral principles embedded in the beauty and order of nature. The challenge that natural theologies are confronted with is that of theodicy, which is: why does a perfect God permit so much suffering, pain and untold cruelty? For further reading consult William Paley's book Natural Theology.

the Bible provides real clarifications and solutions to life's situations. Subsequently, adopting a scientific mode of thinking could impede this. P 13's rendering here differs with that of P 4 who said that science is *a way of life*, which permeates all the fabric of human life and activities. Nevertheless, P 13's concern should not be minimized because there might be some negative components to how scientific ideas are manipulated, interpreted and implemented. This has the possibility of causing detrimental effects. One such as example would be atomic and nuclear energy which can be also manipulated to make a bomb.<sup>86</sup>

P 3 critiqued science concerning some of the appalling undertakings of neo-Pentecostal pastors. He mentioned about some neo-Pentecostal pastors who were: spraying doom (doom is an insecticide used in households) on their congregants. As a result, he did not share the view that science is something that could be used to curtail these negative characterizations by way of critical scrutiny of certain religious undertakings. It has been observed in these responses how the respondents often mentioned science and magic in the same vein. This predisposition could be attributed to what Freeman (2012:71) says is the magical approach in Pentecostal churches. All the same, P 3 mentioned that science has the potential of broadening congregants' understanding and by making distinctions between spiritual and scientific facts.

P 6 suggested that the absence of distinct analytic skills by neo-Pentecostals renders their approach not agreeable to a scientific way of interpreting reality. He, nonetheless, was aware of the importance of understanding the different scientific fields. He mentioned medical and social sciences. Although not entirely so, P 10's explanation seemed correlative with P 6 for he maintained that science is not opposed to the *word of God* (the Bible). Initially, P 10 said that *science and other fields do not contradict the word of God*. But he later seemed to have change this view by saying: *well the Bible may not agree* with science. For P 10 authentic scientific thinking has to be agreeable with the Bible. Wickmann (2014:5) points out that the science and religion dialogue

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<sup>86</sup> Wilkerson, J. (2016). *Reconsidering the Risks of Nuclear Power*. [online]. Available at: <http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2016/reconsidering-risks-nuclear-power/> [Accessed on 22 August 2019].

has been jeopardized by the misconception of a conflict between them. This is because people have long held belief system of reality, and the way to change that is by willing to critically reflect on the subject matter. The belief that theological reflection and scientific ideas ought not to engage was shared by P 16 who said science was *the human invented teaching*. The challenge with this position is that one could argue that religion too is a human invented spiritual ideology. But according P 16 religion is way different because its genesis is rooted in the infallibility of the divine. The basis of P 16's argument was that science subscribes to the evolution theory, which is contradictory to the biblical narrative of creation.

In describing nexus of theological and scientific contemplation P 18 used a metaphor of a *tool*. A tool is something that can be used either for good or to do harm. It all depends on the knowledge of the person using that particular tool. According to P 18 science and the Bible can be collaborate. This assertion put her in the same category as those who subscribe to idea that, religion can enter into an extensive integration with scientific ideas. The relationship between theology and science, however, could be construed as an old one and it is likely to continue for a very long time. This interaction has been called by different axioms such as: *duet* or *duel* and *old couple marched for life* to capture the delicate and complexity of this relationship (Veldsman 2001:104-105).

P 5's response brought out two pertinent elements. First, he acknowledged the possible areas of collaboration between science and neo-Pentecostal religious experience. To be precise he used the expression *co-working* in reference to how science and the Christian faith could engage constructively. He affirmed the importance of scientific cognition in the context of his congregation. He said that there were times when Christian believers would need the insight of medical science to be properly diagnosed and to confirm, if healing claims have indeed taken place after being prayed for.

Second, he admitted that as a church minister his knowledge of certain realities was limited:



I cannot tell this is malaria until the hospital and experts diagnose this malaria.

This was an important acknowledgment to note, because often neo-Pentecostal ministers do not want to admit their limitations publicly, especially when praying for people to receive healing. When P 5 says *I cannot tell this is malaria...* He is in essence acknowledging his finite human nature and limited spiritual capability. To illustrate the illimitable nature of faith the following verse were cited: *what is impossible with man [sic] is possible with God (Luke 18:27); Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours (Mark 11: 24)*. So, it's often believed within neo-Pentecostal congregations that with faith a believer can achieve anything they desire. But what is not accentuated is the sovereignty of the divine, when despite one's faith certain petitions go unanswered by God (Deuteronomy 24:24); (Hebrews 11: 13).

Below is a framework that was designed by the researcher to represent how the participants engaged with a scientific worldview. Let it be noted that the diagram design is exclusively the work of the researcher. But the idea of the four typologies has been adopted from Barbour (2000:2-3) except for the (S.I) Scientific Imagination and the (U.T) Undecided Typology, which was solely the invention of the researcher.

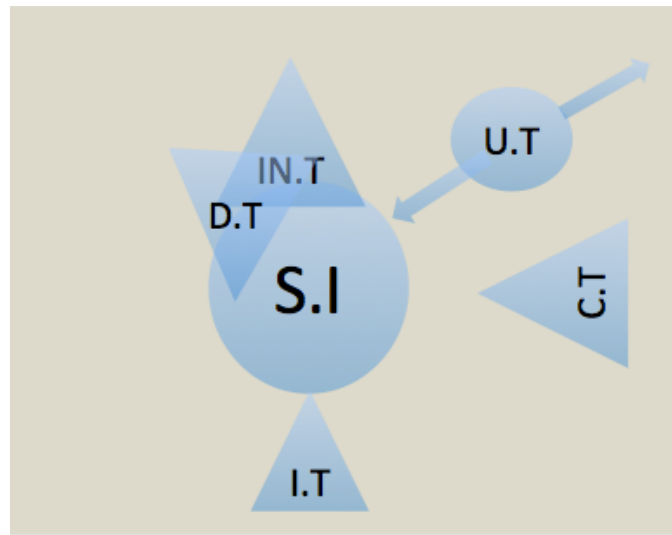


Figure 4: Scientific Imagination Formulation

<b>Typology (short)</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>(S.I)</b>	Represents Scientific Imagination (all the five classifications are concerned with this Imagination).
<b>(D.T)</b>	Dialogue Typology.
<b>(C.T)</b>	Conflict Typology.
<b>(I.T)</b>	Independent Typology.
<b>(IN.T)</b>	Integration Typology.
<b>(U.T)</b>	Undecided Typology

*Table 1: Conception Typology of Scientific Imagination Formulation*

The above diagram explains the conception of scientific imagination (S. I) at the centre. Followed by the five (5) different worldviews in which the twenty (20) participants viewed scientific imagination. One observes that the Integration (IN. T) and Dialogue Typology (D. T) interlinks at a much greater level than the rest of the typologies in their engagement with Scientific Imagination a (S. I). Whereas the Conflict Typology (C. T) represents those participants who regarded science as being in an ideological rivalry, the Independent Typology (I. T) on the hand characterizes those participants who thought that science and theology had to maintain their separate domains. Surprisingly, as the researcher engaged more with the participants, it became apparent that some of them they did not necessarily have an exclusive outlook on scientific imagination. But only exhibited ideological doubts about certain aspects of scientific contemplation. This is why the independent typology touches a bit the periphery of the cycle representing Scientific Imagination (S. I). The Undecided Typology (U. T) has two arrows pointing to two opposite directions. The arrows were constructed to indicate the idea that this group of interviewees could adopt any of the four typologies, once it leaves the undecided dimension.

## 7.1.4 Neo-Pentecostal Theological Reflection and Modern Technologies

The objective here was to analyse participants' the conceptual ideas of engaging modern technologies in theological praxis and how this has a bearing on the issue of economic development. Bearing in mind that:

Developments in modern medicine, expansion of communications technologies, and the arrival of the digital age – all combine to disenchant the 21<sup>st</sup>-century world Pentecostals inhabit (Smith & Yong 2010:50).

Whilst most of the pastors expressed a favourable view of modern technologies in their theological reflection, three, however, expressed some concerns about the negative side of technology, particularly when misused. One pastor mentioned that some people can use their computer gadgets to access pornographic materials. Another one stated that technology made people be lazy. It cannot be denied that there are both merits and demerits when using technology. One of these disadvantages according to Challies (2015:22, 26-27) is the idolization of gadgets such as mobile phones, which can draw the hearts of Christians away from God. Unquestionably, Christians could be susceptible to exalting the usage of technology above the presence of God in their lives, to such an extent that it makes them spend more of their time and energy with these innovations thus making them a priority above anything else.

The concerns about the abuse of modern technologies are legitimate in whichever way one looks at it. But because human beings are free moral agents in terms of what they permit in their thinking process, they can choose to do good or commit a vice by using the same technology. Every major development is susceptible to abuse by persons who may lack the moral conscious to make informed decisions based on goodness.

Cheek (in Smith & Yong 2010:96). esteemed writer on neo-Pentecostalism, asserts that neo-Pentecostals should understand that technology and religion are siblings. They are entrenched in human endeavour to shape and re-shape our world in order to meet human

needs. Furthermore, Cheek explains that technology focuses itself on providing comfort and desire but religion, on the other hand, is focused on veneration and the transcendent encounter with the divine.

In discussing about modern technologies with interviewees two main observations emerged. First, some of them but not all, categorized modern technologies to be mainly about computer gadgets, information broadcasting and visual digital presentation. But modern technology has such a broad reach, today, because it's the ability of human beings to take raw materials from their environment and combine them and reshape them with a definite purpose of serving the needs of human beings (Cheek in Smith and Yong 2010:194).

Second, the majority of the interviewees who expressed a more acceptance approach with very little reservations towards modern technologies, acknowledged the importance of integrating technology in their theological praxis. P 15 said:

I strongly believe that our new pastors our new churches that are coming up in our town of Livingstone need to be enlightened in the fields of science and technology for them to be able work and demonstrate the power of God effectively.

By using the word *enlightened* as a precondition of being *able to demonstrate the power of God*. P 15 is essentially acknowledging that neo-Pentecostal church needed to do more in familiarizing themselves with new mechanization of how technology operates within their churches. Additionally, P 15 seemed not to regard technology as a threat to her theological praxis, but as a tool that is capable of assisting her to demonstrate God's presence in a more effective manner. Therefore, P 15's assertion is critical because technology creates economies, it creates wealth and it shapes our humanity because our very world is shaped by it (Arthur 2009:10).

P 7 was of the view that:

Knowledge is dynamic and we need to move with what is in the changing world and even in the way we do things as Christians.

P 7 brought forth three very important elements, these were: knowledge, change and *move* [sic]. As such, she was cognizant of the fact that as a church leader she needed to use knowledge in a conversant mode in order to adapt well to *the changing world*. By adapting well to change P 7 is demonstrating her ability of awareness that human beings are subject to change as it is the very essence of how humans experience life (Munroe 2009:74). Equally important is that she mentioned the dimension of the transcendent dynamism behind technology. The inference, therefore, is that if God is indeed the one orchestrating the wonders and miracles of scientific technologies, then science must be a good thing because *every perfect and good gift is from God the progenitor of light* (James 1: 17).

P 12's stance was somewhat different from the rest of respondents. He raised a point of caution when making a comparison between Zambia and Western nations. His argument was that, the reason Zambia lagged behind in terms of technological progression was because it received the gospel and biblical knowledge much later than Europe and the U. S. A. Hence, he connects Western technological advancement to the Protestant Reformation. Some scholars share a similar view to P 12's argument. One such scholar is Stark (2005: 233) who posits that without Western Christianity and theology, which was committed to the values of reasoning, progress and moral quality the world would have remained in the dark eras. According to Stark (2005: 233), *Christianity created Western civilization*. Bauval who has researched and written widely on Ancient African civilization would rebuff the notion that technological and scientific civilization are a new occurrence to the Africa continent. In fact, Bauval maintains that a Black race from Sub-Saharan Africa was at the foundation of much of today's civilization, albeit questioned by many Western scholars (Bauval & Brophy 2011: 156-157).

## 7.2 Summary

Chapter seven dealt with the analysis of the empirical data. In most cases the researcher quoted the participants verbatim in order to let their perceptions, theoretical concepts and narratives speak for themselves without fusing in external ideas to what was originally stated. The researcher then categorized the data collected and its analysis thereof into four classifications. These were: poverty and economic development, critical reflection of prosperity theology, neo-Pentecostal theological reflection and science and neo-Pentecostal theological reflection and modern technologies. It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that Dr Leslie of Yale university explains that in qualitative research analysis it is possible to use *an integrated* approach of a mixture of grounded theory and a start-list (Yale University 2015). The benefits of this approach, she argues are that it retains fundamental benefits of grounded theory.

Although most of the pastors interviewed for this study acknowledged the positive aspects of integrating scientific and technological concepts to Christian theological reflection, others, however, expressed deep concerns about the negative aspects of scientific engagement. There was a unanimous consensus from study participants that poverty is rampant and a big challenge in Livingstone and certainly in Zambia. Nevertheless, it was apparent from the responses of the study participants that poverty was a complex phenomenon that required a multifaceted solution. Against this backdrop the researcher is of the view that additional research by other scholars might be necessary to possibly explore further the matrix of poverty and economic development in Zambia, within the context of scientific and modern technologies engagement.

# CHAPTER 8

## 8.1 Reflection and Conclusion.

This study found out that there was not necessarily a consensus or uniformity of ideology, based on the responses from participants. The local pastors were fully aware of the seriousness of poverty in Livingstone, and a number of them had set up community developmental projects. But their efforts to mitigate poverty were not broad enough due to limited resource. What was apparent, though, was that most of the participants expressed a genuine concern about some of the doctrines that were exposed by neo-Pentecostal preachers. On scientific engagement nuanced ideologies emerged, they ranged from a favourable view, to an antagonistic approach. From a more oblivious outlook to a wait and see approach. Another surprising fact that emerged was that, neo-Pentecostals have a wide variety of diverse theological orientations, as opposed to a homogenous identity people make them to be. All not entirely, majority of the pastors interviewed were agreeable to the idea of church ministers having basic educational training in the fields of science and technology in order for them to be abreast with the changes of the post-modern era of the 21st-century.

The first (1) chapter was an introductory segment to this study. The chapter primarily dealt with the aspects of the problem statement and the relevance, objectivity, structural background of the interviews, literature review and methodology of the study. It is important to mention that this study took a qualitative approach. The theoretical framework for data analysis was an integrated method of a grounded theory (G.T) analysis and a start-list approach (S.A) drawn from insight of Dr Leslie of Yale university. There were sixteen (16) research questions in this study. It must be noted that these questions were not seeking a yes or no response but were framed on soliciting more detailed qualitative responses from participants. The aspects of confidentiality and ethical consideration were as well discussed. This study did not use the actual names of the interviewees, instead the researcher used the *P* letter (participant) to represent is each interviewee together with a particular number, for instance *P 12*.

Chapter two (2) explored the role of practical theology in this study. It was necessary to articulate the meaning and importance of practical theology for this study, primarily for the purpose of laying a foundation on why the study advocated the integration of a scientific and technological imagination into the hermeneutical practice of neo-Pentecostal churches in Livingstone. The hypothesis was that such an integration has the potential to remedy the abject economic poverty that a majority of Zambians are confronted with today.

The third (3) Chapter looked at the aspect of the economic and sociological situation in Zambia, especially Livingstone. The idea here was to highlight the actual statistics on the social-economic situation in Livingstone and Zambia as whole. This gave a better contextual awareness on the situation of poverty. And how local pastors were dealing with it, both in their practical engagement and their preaching.

Chapter four (4) concerned itself with the influence of neo-Pentecostalism in sub-Saharan Africa. Although, there a lot of questions of sound doctrine surrounding current neo-Pentecostals today, it was necessary to point out to actual positive elements and developments that have come about due to these same churches. Aspects such as: the building of schools and universities, the establishing of broadcasting stations, housing construction projects for the poor, conducting of business seminars for upcoming entrepreneurs, care and counselling facilities for those affected and infected with HIV/AIDS, et cetera. To substantiate these developments a number of scholars who take this view were cited.

The fifth (5) chapter was a discourse on the African ontological and epistemological construct and how it informs neo-Pentecostal theologies. Among other things discussed were the African cosmology and salvific process, Zambian cultural identity in a post-modern epoch, a critical review of Christian spirituality and ancient African civilization. The subject of the economics of neo-Pentecostal and their hermeneutics was discussed too. Probably what is worth re-stating is the fact that, much of neo-Pentecostal theologies today, particularly on demonology has conceptual parallels drawn from African cosmological construct and salvific processes.



In chapter six (6). the discussion was centred on the subject of proposing a scientific framework and critical thinking within the theological witness of neo-Pentecostalism. Two very important of interest here were: economic development and scientific imagination and social-economics and racial inferiority complex. In the last segment of this chapter, it was observed how internalized racism in black people impacts them psychologically, and how racism has a bearing on their economic development and performance. It was pointed out that despite having given the world the first ever known civilization through the ingenuity of chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, medical science and the first ever alphabet, black Africans' innovation capabilities have stalled in this modern era. People of a European ancestry on the other hand have completely surpassed the rest of the world through their extensive desire to innovate and to develop their economies.

The seventh (7) chapter dealt with the analysis and discussing of the findings. An integrated method of data analysis was used. Which was a combination of a grounded theory, and a start-list approach. (Charmaz 2014 :1), (Strauss & Corbin). The start-list approach was instrumental in giving a guiding framework to where the interviewees' concepts and ideas were categorized according to the subheadings. So, the main research question and two sub-questions were rephrased to give focus to the topic of inquiry. The first sub-question dealt with the role of preaching and Bible interpretation in relation to economic development. The second sub-question dealt with the role played by science and technology in sustainable development. The researcher expanded on Barbour's (2000:2-3) four typologies by designing a diagram that illustrated how the respondents interacted or rather viewed scientific thought processes.

The study found out that the local neo-Pentecostal pastors in Livingstone were very concerned about the dire economic conditions within their local churches and community. It was also evident that they were not only concerned participants but they actively seeking solutions within their respective communities. One pastor had a carpentry training project where their church trained the local youths with carpentry skills. Another pastor said that his local church had acquired a big portion of farmland outside Livingstone where they planned to construct a big poultry project and a piggery.

One of the highlights of this research was that a number of these study participants were very educated pastors that were able to skillfully articulate economic issues. This was contrary to the assumption that neo-Pentecostal pastors are often more spiritual oriented than being actively involved in economic matters of the country. For example, P 1 and P 12 were able to expertly articulate the reasons why the town of Livingstone which was once economically vibrant in Zambia had retrogressed economically. One of the reasons they cited was the privatization of many government owned companies that happened in the early 1990s, which was popularly known as Structural Adjustments Programme (SAP).

Another assumption that was debunked during this research was that neo-Pentecostal pastors in Livingstone do not all subscribe a homogeneous spiritual doctrine on how they dealt with poverty in their individual communities. Four categories emerged from this: the first category was of the view that material poverty is symptomatic of poverty in other areas of human existence, such as intellectual poverty and poverty in lack of necessary skills. This category was of the view that in order to deal with economic poverty one would have to first deal with the other forms of poverty like the ones mentioned above. The second category pointed out that economic poverty was the result of poor work ethics; here issues of laziness, unreliability and lack of creativity were mentioned. The third category was of the view that the solution to economic poverty was divine intervention through prayer, consistent tithing and spiritual deliverance. The fourth category was what the researcher would term the neutral category. This group acknowledged the importance of invoking the divine when dealing with economic poverty but at the same time was mindful of the importance of understanding macro and micro economic factors.

During the interviews it became apparent that the local neo-Pentecostal pastors in Livingstone had myriad ideas of dealing with poverty, but often these ideas were hampered by limited financial resources, this was both a challenge and some cases a frustration to these local pastors. Another observation was that these pastors were very committed and passionate about serving their communities; this was evident in the many years of serving their local churches at times without remuneration. So, the researcher is of the view that government, non-profit organizations and multinationals

working in Zambia should actively engage local pastors as partners in seeking locally initiated solutions in dealing with poverty. These pastors have considerable experience due to the many years of working with communities and interacting with the local people. For example, there was one pastor that has served the same church for more than 25 years, another one 19 years and two of them had been pastors for over 15 years. Regardless of how one looks at this reality this time frame gives these pastors tremendous experience of working with people, which is vital to understanding the dynamics of human needs and economic development.

However, on the aspect of the integration of scientific and technological elements to enhance economic development there was not so much a deliberate comprehensive awareness of its importance. Though there was an acknowledgment by a number of these pastors on the importance of scientific and technological developments of our modern times, a few were very sceptical and even dismissive to the idea of integrating science to human life. The reasons for this ranged from science being anti-God to technology being something that devalues Christian morals. For example, evolution in biology (rejecting the creation biblical narrative) and cell phone technology (viewing of illicit immoral content online) were cited as elements that could be miss-used.

Overall this study revealed that neo-Pentecostalism in Livingstone is far from being a homogenous Christian tradition as it is often perceived by outsiders. Rather, it imaged that it is just as diverse as its exponents in way that it explains and understands economic issues. This in part maybe attributed to the fact that within neo-Pentecostal pastors interviewed in Livingstone there was a mixture of a clergy that ranged from averagely educated to highly educated from prestigious theological schools. To give context to this fact, two of the pastors hold PhDs from very reputable learning institutions, two hold master's degrees, five hold bachelor's degrees in various fields not only in theology and eleven hold diplomas and certificate in theological studies. In addition, these pastors ranged from those that were relatively well off to others who were living below the poverty line. In other terms the ideas, thoughts and responses to the study questions came from people that were experienced ministers of the gospel but also persons that had a diverse spectrum of individual differences. Some of these differences were literacy levels, economic status and place of residence. Regardless of

how one looks at these facts such as the diversity in education, gender, age, economic status and work experience the fact is that they all enriched this study in one way or the other. The researcher, however, proposes that further studies should be done on how neo-Pentecostal economics and scientific integration and engagement impacts (whether positively or negatively) on its exponents statistically in Livingstone.

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# Appendix A: INTRODUCTION

## LETTER

Department of Philosophy, Practical and  
Systematic Theology.

University of South Africa

PO Box 392

UNISA

0003

20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/ Madam

As supervisor of the Doctorate of Theology in Practical Theology degree thesis on the project of Paul Simandala Mapani; I hereby affirm that he is a bona fide postgraduate student of the University of South Africa, who is doing a research project entitled: *Neo-Pentecostalism and a Scientific Rationality: A Critical Reflection of Imagining a Better Pentecostal Theology in Livingstone*.

In his research he aims to examine why the subject of neo-Pentecostalism in relationship to a scientific thought is relevant for neo-Pentecostal adherents. I commend him to you, with the request that you assist him in pursuing this important research topic. His contact email details are: [35903287@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:35903287@mylife.unisa.ac.za). If you have any questions about this research project, you are welcome to contact me at the departmental address above or by telephone at +27 (12) 429 3705 [baloye@unisa.ac.za](mailto:baloye@unisa.ac.za)

Yours sincerely

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Prof M E Baloyi (Supervisor)



## Appendix B: LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear Respondent

Thank you for choosing to participate in my Doctoral research study. The focus of the study is on neo-Pentecostal theological practice in relation to scientific imagination in Livingstone. In order to attain information that is relevant, I would like to explore your experience and views on neo-Pentecostalism as an adherent of this Christian faith tradition. I would like to find out, weather in your view, your faith can engage constructively with science and technology. I am interested in your perspective on this topic and I'm hopeful that your insight will shed more light on the study. Your participation in the research will take a form of taking part in a semi-structured interview schedule questions consisting of 16 open-ended questions, where you will be able to discuss in detail your thoughts and views. These interview schedules will last approximately between 1 to 2 hours. Each interview will be transcribed using an IC recorder. You will also be given the opportunity to hear what has been transcribed, if you so desire.

Please note that:

- (1) You are under no financial obligation.
- (2) All information will be treated with the strictest confidence. Your name will not be reflected in the thesis, nor will I reveal your name to anyone.
- (3) You can withdraw from the study at any time that you choose. However, it is hoped that you will find the conversations beneficial and that they will be helpful in your understanding of neo-Pentecostal praxis being enriched by science approach, and vice versa.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel #: \_\_\_\_\_