

# A Pentecostal theology of radical sharing: *Sam-Ae* and *ubuntu* as critical hermeneutics of engaged love

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## Abstract

The article argues that although Pentecostal churches in Africa have the potential to challenge and transform the reality of inequalities in Africa, instead, they are reproducing and perpetuating these inequalities by creating an inequality gap among themselves, especially, between the pastors and their fellow congregants. A closer look at some of these churches reveals that some of them are propagating social, political, and economic inequalities demonstrated in the gap that exists between the pastors and their ordinary members. In response, we construct a Pentecostal theology of radical sharing to argue for a balanced distribution of wealth between the rich and the poor to deal with the challenges of inequalities. It demonstrates that indigenous idioms such as *sam-ae* (Korea) and *ubuntu* (Africa) are critical hermeneutics from the margins for interpretative translation/contextualization of the Christian faith into a theology of radical sharing in the fight against inequalities within African Indigenous Pentecostalism.

## KEYWORDS

critical hermeneutics of engaged love, inequalities, Pentecostal theology of radical sharing, *sam-ae*, *ubuntu*

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Inequality is a concept that refers to the unequal sharing of resources, specifically wealth distribution including income, assets, property rights, and infrastructure in a church, community, country, or region. Magda Nico and Gary Pollock define inequalities as a process, “and not static measurable circumstances” Nico and Pollock (2021, p. 1) argue:

[inequalities] are *in the making* over the life course, interacting with each other, accumulating, attenuating, reproducing, or spinning off along the way. Inequalities are, in this sense, trajectories. They depart from certain origin or identity categories and positions and are produced within the interlocking of

different lives and institutions, in the interstices of the agentic capabilities, and cultural and historical constraints and possibilities of the individual lives. Inequalities are inherently individual trajectories, but they are also class trajectories, family trajectories, gender trajectories, ethnic trajectories, cohort or generation trajectories. The process of production and reproduction of inequalities occurs at different yet intertwined life course levels and principles.

In South Africa, inequalities are defined in the context of the ownership of the land which is currently owned by the selected few. Inequalities exist in the education system where the rich can send their children to better schools and the poor to non-performing public schools. They are

also a sign that economic growth does not benefit everyone and economic hardships such as poverty and unemployment do not affect everyone. The rich are getting richer during economic growth while the poor are getting poorer. Inequalities continue to grow around the world even with efforts by governments to reduce poverty levels. Put differently, the efforts by governments to deal with the challenges of poverty do not necessarily translate into a reduction in inequalities. On the contrary, inequalities continue to increase in developing economies despite poverty alleviation strategies. In South Africa, for example, policies such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) have worsened the gap between the black elite and poor blacks. This means that different measures need to be applied to specifically solve the challenge of inequalities in world economies. Hence, this article suggests the Pentecostal theology of radical sharing to deal with the challenges of inequality as they rise generally in African economies, particularly in African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches.

There is no doubt that inequalities exist between minority white people and most black people in Africa and other regions of the world such as the United States of America and Europe. In discussing inequalities between white and black people in South Africa, the former President Thabo Mbeki, an economist as well, observes:

Material conditions have divided our country into two nations, one black, and the other white. [The latter] is relatively prosperous and has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication, and other infrastructure. The second, and larger, nation of South Africa is black and poor, [and] lives under conditions of grossly underdeveloped infrastructure (quoted in Gelb, 2003, p. 1).

Mbeki is correct and if we want to be honest, it can be said that apartheid still exists in South Africa, particularly economic apartheid. If apartheid was over, there would not be rich schools for the minority and poor schools for the majority, nor would there be a difference between Sandton and Alexandra in terms of basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity. The argument made in this article is that African Indigenous Pentecostal churches have the potential to change this reality but instead, they are reproducing and perpetuating these inequalities by creating an inequality gap among themselves, especially, between the pastors and their fellow congregants. This gap is seen when observing the lifestyles of some of the pastors in African Indigenous Pentecostal churches. These pastors happen to live lavish lifestyles while most of their members are ravaged by poverty.

The challenge of inequalities in this article is addressed by contextualizing it within the African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches. This sub-tradition of Pentecostalism is used here to differentiate them from classical Pentecostal churches and other forms of Pentecostalism. However, the article does not aim to address the challenge in all these churches but highlights the inequalities that are created and perpetuated by some pastors. In arguing against inequalities in these churches, the article develops the theology of radical sharing embedded in the indigenous ideas of *sam-ae* and *ubuntu*. The article aims to demonstrate that *sam-ae* and *ubuntu* concepts of love and humanity respectively are relevant as both critical resources for constructing and implementing a theology of sharing that could help in the fight against inequalities. These concepts are applied to the challenge of inequalities in the African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches to demonstrate that wealth can be distributed equally in these churches. Second, the concepts are used to demonstrate the possibility of how indigenous knowledge systems can challenge inequalities in the church and society.

While the concept of *ubuntu* has previously been applied to an African Pentecostal context, there is a need to juxtapose this concept with *sam-ae* for two reasons. First, to learn from a context that translated faith into an indigenous idiom and pragmatically decolonized theology and minds. Through *sam-ae* colonization was resisted not by confrontation but by mind decolonization. Second, African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches have already rich indigenous resources in *ubuntu* but have not adequately translated or applied them as a tool for developing a Pentecostal theology of radical sharing. Thus, this article uses *ubuntu* and *sam-ae* beyond confrontation as a hermeneutical approach for constructing a Pentecostal theology of “radical” sharing.

## 2 | INEQUALITIES IN AFRICAN INDIGENOUS PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

In the post-colonial African contexts, inequalities do not only exist in society between whites and black people but are constantly reproduced and perpetuated between black elites and ordinary black people. This neo-colonial political model with its inherent dynamic of unequal power relations has been reproduced and exemplified among some African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches (Kaunda, 2021a). These churches have created an unequal relationship between some pastors and their members. While on the other hand, members in some of these churches are encouraged to give their tithes and offerings in the name of getting blessed, it is the pastors who are prospering on the other. This theology is an indigenized form of the

prosperity gospel that emerged with Essek William Kenyon of the New Covenant Baptist Church referred to as “the father of the Word of Faith Movement” also known as “the name it and claim it” movement (Mashau & Kgatle, 2019). This message has been embraced by many pastors in Africa who continue to preach the message of prosperity through giving and tithing in their churches. Some of them go to extent of preaching through the prosperity books of E.W. Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin, and others, quoting them verbatim. However, while the congregants are busy naming it, it is the pastors who are fundamentally claiming it as some of them are the sole beneficiaries of the collections in their churches.

Asonzeh Ukah (2013, p. 145) speaks of the Nigerian “pastorpreneur approach in which [pastors] use churches as an economic, financial, and entrepreneurial empire which are completely controlled by [the pastors and] their families.” Pastorpreneurship or “gosprenurship,” as Lovemore Togarasei (2011) classifies the practice in Zimbabwe, is common in Africa because churches are not exposed to external auditing where the financial statements of churches can be evaluated and criticized if possible (Wijaya & Heugens, 2018). Elsewhere, Chammah Kaunda (2021b, p. 324) speaks of the rise of “Christocapitalist theology,” a neoliberal capitalist theology that has commercialized the gospel and commodified the church in which Christ is clandestinely commodified into the capital good and the congregants as consumers of Christ. According to Kaunda (2021b, p.325), Christocapitalism “has contributed to increasing the gap between the rich (the pastor) and the poor (congregants). For example, Christocapitalist theology has given rise to insatiable and predatory consumerist pastors like Alph Lukau (South Africa), David Oyedepo (Nigeria), Shepherd Bushiri (Malawi), Ayo Ortisejafor (Nigeria), E.A. Adeboye (Nigeria), Uebert Angel (Zimbabwe), Chris Oyakhilome (Nigeria), and T.B. Joshua (Nigeria), just to name the few of those who top the list of the wealthiest pastors in Africa.”

As Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (2005, p. 106) observes in Ghana, “in most cases the only concrete evidence of the prosperity message are the lives of those who preach it themselves.” Consequently, pastors exploit the church funds by sponsoring their expensive lifestyles in different African regions as discussed below. The neo-colonial inequalities between pastors and their members are demonstrated by the opulent, extravagant, luxurious, and lavish lifestyles of some of the pastors while their members are living in poverty. Wijaya and Heugens give an example of this kind of lifestyle as “going on expensive holidays, indulging in high-class hobbies such as golf or haute cuisine, and exhibiting a lavish collection of fashion items, watches or cars” (Wijaya & Heugens, 2018, p. 500). While there is nothing wrong with having such

a lifestyle, the challenge is that sometimes church funds are used to sponsor these lifestyles which the members as argued here cannot even imagine or experience in their lifetime. It is inequalities because after receiving these contributions, these pastors and prophets do not contribute to the well-being of their members at times but only add to their poverty (Benyah, 2018). In East Africa in Kenya, MG Kimani (2007, unpaginated) speaks of pastors who live “opulent, conspicuous consumption lifestyles completely at odds with the gospel that they preach and the condition of the vast majority of their flock.” Some of these pastors, according to Gathogo, organize pyramid schemes in the name of a prosperity message that further impoverishes many black people. Again, this kind of scheme is the epitome of inequalities because the pastors are at the top of the pyramid while church members remain at the bottom.

In West Africa, in countries such as Ghana, Francis Benyah mentions pastors such as Christian Kwabena Andrews, popularly known as *Osofo Kyiri Abosom*, who would charge his members something closer to 100 USD for them to receive prayers and counseling (Benyah, 2018, p. 131). While many Pentecostal pastors in Africa are celebrated by their members, they have received huge criticism from the public who perceive them as neocolonial religious leaders who prey on the spirituality of a mystified mass and like corrupt politicians are exploiting and perpetuating inequalities among their members and consequently, the whole society. But both Nigeria and Ghana are caught up in dis/continuity when it comes to the inequalities in African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches. There are other churches such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God led by Enoch Adeboye who are doing the opposite by empowering their members through building schools and universities (Burgess, 2009).

Southern Africa is not different. There are prophets such as Shepherd Bushiri, Alph Lukau, and others who are not ashamed of posting their most expensive cars and private jets which are only a dream to their followers. The members of these churches might like and share these posts but most of them will never experience such a lifestyle. Most recently, a reality show called *amabishop*<sup>1</sup> has exposed most of these prophets and pastors who have been preying on their congregants through pyramid schemes and other money-making scams to their unsuspecting followers. While some of these pastors and prophets would claim private businesses as sources of their lavish lifestyles, the reality is that they use church funds contributed by their members to sponsor these lifestyles. In this way, private businesses are used to hide the practice of exploiting the members of these congregations. In some instances, private businesses are used as slush funds to perpetuate the illegal transfer of money from one country to

another. Hence, Prophet Shepherd Bushiri was charged with money laundering in South Africa (Kgatile, 2021, p. 126). In Zimbabwe, Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa, Founder of United Family International Church (UFIC), is one of the so-called men of God who has been involved in a lavish lifestyle as demonstrated by expensive holidays, the cars he drives, and where he lives. Kudzai Biri is careful not to put churches such as Zimbabwe Assemblies of God (ZAOGA) in the same category but points out that ZAOGA also does everything under the name of its leader demonstrated in Ezekiel Guti Training Center, Ezekiel Guti Evangelistic Association, Ezekiel Guti Farm and Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (Biri, 2012). This in a way presents some level of ownership at a leadership level which is not the same at a membership level, thus presenting some form of inequality. In the next section, the article discusses the theology of sharing in contrast to these inequalities.

### 3 | CRITICAL HERMENEUTICS OF ENGAGED LOVE: *UBUNTU* IN CONVERSATION WITH *SAM-AE*

Sharing is an authentic expression of God with us, the manifestation of God's nature among believers. Elsewhere in the biblical text, it is an expression of radical love for God (see John 3:16). God shared Godself through Christ (because God himself is the ultimate valuable thing God has). Love is an action, a verb. Hence in this article, the Pentecostal theology of radical sharing is made active in *ubuntu* and *sam-ae* spirit. *Ubuntu* was utilized as the power of the marginalized in the struggle for decolonization but remains underutilized in the contemporary struggle for expressive love, that is, socially conscious love. Therefore, the *sam-ae* spirit is a learning point for radical utilization of *ubuntu* in African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches for exemplification of God with us.

The *sam-ae* spirit according to Kaunda and Kim was "created by Rev. Pai Min-soo, a Presbyterian minister, during the Japanese colonization of Korea as a pragmatic approach to mind emancipation and rural transformation" (Kaunda & Kim, 2022). Park explains that:

Koreans experienced Japanese colonialism and mass economic, social, and cultural problems that resulted from the forces of modernity, [while] progressive Korean Christians battled with conservative Christians over the meaning and purpose of Christianity and the church's resources and institutions for the hope of realizing their respective visions of the nation-state (Park, 2016, p. 75).

Kaunda and Kim continue to say that the concept refers to a "threefold-love spirit classified as the love for God, the love for people/community, and the love for work" (Kaunda & Kim, 2022, p. 33). This means that for change to happen in the world first, there should be love for God, the creator of heaven and earth. And those who love God should demonstrate this love by loving their fellow human beings which is the second fold of *sam-ae*. One cannot claim to love God but still disregard the people of the same God. *Sam-ae* spirit is not only relevant in motivating the African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches to love God and one another, but it is also relevant for social action specifically in its third aspect of love for work.

The *sam-ae* spirit is relevant and applicable in an African context, particularly in addressing the challenge of inequalities. In this article, the concept of *sam-ae* is used together with the concept of *ubuntu* to illustrate that both concepts are relevant as both resources for the creation and implementation of a theology of sharing as it was practiced in the early church. *Ubuntu* is a sense of belonging captured in the Nguni language "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" and in Sotho languages "Motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe" which is loosely interpreted as "the person co-exists with others or because of others" or more accurately as "I am because you are." In a church setting, *ubuntu* means that the pastor cannot exist without the members of the church and that both the pastor and the congregants need to co-exist with one another. This means that churches such as African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches and others in the world can use the *ubuntu*-centered culture to increase the level of relationality and a sense of belonging. *ubuntu* as an African concept of belonging and as a theoretical framework within the church setting has got key qualities to enhance belonging such as caring, humanness, community, caring, sharing, and respect (Venter, 2004). In addition, the purpose of *ubuntu* according to Malone and Wilder is to "share a universal concern for one another" (Malone & Wilder, 2008). Therefore, *ubuntu* in the African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches is a tool that can be used for pastors to be concerned about the well-being of their members and followers. *Ubuntu* teaches leaders that they cannot only concentrate on the well-being of their own families and not care about other people.

When we talk about cultivating an *ubuntu* spirit in the African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches it has something to do with moving from "individualism" to the "community" because a church is not owned by an individual but by the whole community. In other words, *ubuntu* does not prioritize the gaining of one individual at the expense of the many people who are suffering because of various challenges in life. *Ubuntu* emphasizes the relationship between different individuals who form a community in a



communal identity. Woermann and Engelbrecht reiterate that the emphasis is on the various relationships within the organization and how these different parties relate to one another instead of being present for the sake of personal accumulation of wealth (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019). This explains the reason why relationships according to the *ubuntu* philosophy are important for the betterment of the church, in other words for such a church to move from one level to the other. Thus, *ubuntu* teaches pastors that it is better to prioritize relationships over and above personal gains in the church because having gains without relationships will not take the church anywhere. Therefore, to cultivate this philosophy, pastors need to be intentional about building and maintaining relationships regardless of the various challenges that might impede the cultivation of an *ubuntu* philosophy.

#### 4 | A PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY OF RADICAL SHARING

Constructing a Pentecostal theology of radical sharing from critical hermeneutics of socially engaged love embedded in *sam-ae* spirit and *ubuntu* is a political task, an exercise in moral and political imagination and an attempt to critique the reproduction and perpetuation of inequalities among African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches as sinful that require repentance. Repentance (*metanoia*) is a process of transformation that begins with the recognition of inequalities as evil or demonic.

The theology of radical sharing emerges through a critical interpretation of *sam-ae* spirit and *ubuntu* and is applied to African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches discussed above. It is a recognition of the various gifts and resources people have as liberally given by God for the flourishing of all human beings. Radical sharing is embedded in divine relationality which is not a matter of individual construction, but something that creates and shapes humanity in a radical inclusive difference. No one creates relations but rather constitutes a life constantly discovered and appropriated. The human is relational praxis of becoming and can only become in mutual existence for the other. Affirming life as an inherent reality that unfolds through a collective process of becoming for one another. Being human with others is the foundation of sharing. Radical sharing is the principle of participating in God's creative activity in the world. God through the incarnation is a radical self-sharing with the world (Kaunda, 2023). The concept of radical sharing is rooted in the pro-existence principle which holds that to be human is to be there for others. If, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (1990: 444) argues, "in God, [human] means relation. Relation, being related is not something superadded to the [human],

but it is the [human] itself," then radical sharing is participating in the common or universal humanity which is imperative for becoming human. In other words, *ubuntu* and *sam-ae* spirit suggest that the human actualizes its "humanness" in sharing humanness with other human beings. Radical sharing is a politics of recognition and solidarity of the presence of the self in all human beings. This means that the radical sharing of material resources is also participating in God's mission of prophetic resistance against inequalities. If applied correctly, the principle has the potential for the humanization of Pentecostals and societies in Africa. It is not how much one accumulates that makes them approved in the sight of God, but rather a human spirit of generosity of radical sharing with those who are in need or less privileged that makes their material gains holy unto God. As Saint Matthew (25:40) argues, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Radical sharing is participating in the nature of God. God is self-sharing. Sharing is an attribute of God. God eternally shares the self in the trinity.

A Pentecostal theology of radical sharing is grounded in the trinitarian principle that challenges inequalities in the church and society. In God, there are three "eternal co-sharers" which implies, according to the interpretation offered by theology, that sharing is an expression of relations, pure relatedness of human beings and all things. The presence of the poor and marginalized in the church says more about the problem of an individualistic capitalist economic framework through which the church is interpreted and organized than the poor and the marginalized communities themselves. The poor and marginalized are suffering because of the way the church functions in the world. It highlights the fundamental failure of the church to actualize itself as the Body of Christ. The church is ontologically the Body of Christ but existentially a life-giving community of Christ becoming the Body of Christ. The argument in this article is based on the functionality of the Body of Christ as the reality the church actualizes in the world. If it really was the Body of Christ, how come it cannot see and feel that some aspects of itself are dirty, marginalized, discriminated against, oppressed, exploited, and impoverished? The reason is simple, the church remains perpetually the potential Body of Christ, but she has failed to actualize herself as everyday or lived Body of Christ in the world.

The first social-ethical task of the church is to realize and actualize itself as the everyday Body of Christ—a community of mutual sharing of all things. Hence, Saint Luke argues, in Acts 2:44, "all the believers were together and had *everything in common*." The Body of Christ is not being but becoming. Becoming the Body of Christ is about searching for commoning life for all members

of the church. This is not about giving handouts, it is about constructing a critical framework of radical sharing of all things as a process of struggle for dignity and freedom. Giving handouts to people is not based on the principle of radical sharing but dehumanization and robbing the given the capacity to struggle alongside God in search of authentic and free life. God shared Jesus Christ through the incarnation as the infinite resource and source of power for godliness and becoming. Jesus is not a divine *handout* to humanity, but rather the divine locus for the struggle for emancipation, liberation, dignity, and freedom for becoming humans. This understanding is the ground for Saints Luke's observation in Acts 4:34-35 that "there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales, and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need." This is the realization of the Body of Christ-ness as mutual participation or radical co-sharing of God's relationality among God's people which is grounded in God's missional activity of liberation and restoration of freedom and dignity of all God's people, so that the church as it realizes itself as the Body of Christ, increasingly become the manifestation of God's infinite relationality or divine case of unconditional love that creates conditions of becoming for the people of God.

The theology of sharing in contrast to inequalities in African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches is that church income is not a personal income for the pastor but for radical participation in God's nature of eternal sharing of Being. The ethic of becoming the Body of Christ challenges the very idea that the church's focus on claiming to be transforming the world at the expense of realizing itself as the everyday Body of Christ. It is the principle of first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye' (Matthew 7:5). This means, first and foremost, that the ethical task of the church is to function as the Body of Christ. As Stanley Hauerwas (1983: 99) argues, "Such a claim may well sound self-serving until we remember what makes the church the church is its faithful manifestation" or becoming or self-realization as the Body of Christ in the world. To rework Hauerwas's famous argument, the church does not have any ethics; the church is the Body of Christ ethic. It has to take care of itself before it can take care of the world. If it does not know how to bathe or brush its teeth, it cannot teach the world the way of Christ. This is based on the parabolic principle of Jesus: "Can a blind person lead another blind person? No! Both of them will fall into a ditch" (Luke 6:39). In this way, *sam-ae* and *ubuntu* can accomplish the theology of sharing practiced by the early church.

Hence, radical sharing is grounded in God's agape love, the principle of unconditional love as the only condition

for sharing common existence. This means that church should not only be about the collection of offerings but where people are engaged in activities that will ultimately bridge the gap between the poor and the rich. This also includes the local Pentecostal pastor who need not depend on the collection of offerings which encourages a dependence mentality. But they should be able to work with their hands in the advancement of their own lives and also avoid competing with congregants for material things. This means that pastors should also encourage their congregants to work not just to pray in other tongues to receive a miracle but to support their faith through works of love. These acts of love are a social action because the church cannot limit itself to the four pillars of the church building which exposes the church to inequalities but should be involved in what is going on in society. This means that in the principle of love and work, people should not open churches because they want to make money from the church but because they want to add value to the church by doing things that add value to the people.

The values of *ubuntu* are equally important because in them the Pentecostal pastors realize that they cannot become pastors without the recognition of the people they are leading in African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches. *Ubuntu* encourages a sense of co-existence in mutual becoming because a pastor has become one with their congregants. They are in the congregation and the congregation is them. Therefore, sharing with others comes with an understanding that one does not exist apart from the congregation but with(in) them as them. *Ubuntu* makes the pastors think that being a leader in the church does not make them superior to fellow human beings. Because in *ubuntu* communal identity will always thrive above individual identity and achievements. Therefore, *ubuntu* becomes a response to inequalities in African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches for the very fact that a Pentecostal pastor can accomplish whatever they have because of the support of the people. Contrary to abusing the same people, Pentecostal pastors have the assignment to continue paying back the followers and church members who have contributed toward the upliftment of the same pastors, thus bringing balance to the relationship.

With the same principle of *ubuntu*, sharing becomes a theology of reaching out to the whole community at large not the congregation, or the faith community. *Ubuntu* is built on the principle of communal identity, meaning a person belongs to a community as it is said in Africa that takes a village to raise a child. When the Body of Christ learns to take care of itself like in the early church, there would be less crime and other negativities. This means that sharing as embraced by *ubuntu* is a tool of social cohesion in society. The Body of Christ as radical sharing in *ubuntu* resists traumatizing itself by racism, hatred, and other social ills.

It seeks peaceful co-existence and struggles against hunger because it has mastered the art of sharing with the people. In addition, becoming an everyday Body of Christ means that a local church is not only accountable to itself but in *ubuntu* accountable to the host community.

Therefore, through both *sam-ae* and *ubuntu* principles, both the pastor and the members of the church have access to the material blessing in the church as opposed to the mentality of the pastors that they alone should benefit from the church collections. The church becomes a place whereby everyone feels free and receives benefits regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, racism class, ability, and so forth. These principles ensure that both the pastor and the church members can grow not only in the spiritual sense but in the material blessings as well. The two spirits of *sam-ae* and *ubuntu* do not only see the one-sided relationship of a giver and a receiver between the pastor and the member but also see a relationship of sharing. Therefore, it does not help the church to collect huge amounts of money if the pastor is the only person benefiting from such collections. Hence, a need for the *sam-ae* and *ubuntu* principles that encourage equal sharing through love and humanity. In addition, it is bizarre for the pastors to be only interested in people of God making contributions to the church but not care about their well-being. Therefore, through *sam-ae* and *ubuntu*, there is also a balance between the spiritual and the material through unconditional love as the capacity to create mutual conditions of co-becoming humanity through radical sharing of all things as constitutive of relations of life. The church in the Epistle of Acts is presented as the church struggling to realize itself as the Body of Christ in which some members of the Jerusalem community refuse to share in God's nature (Acts 5) and fundamentally excluded themselves. This demonstrates that co-becoming and ongoing self-actualization of the church as the Body of Christ is not given, it is pulled out of ongoing wrestling against death-dealing forces of selfishness, greediness, envy, gluttony, materialism, and inequalities primarily within church's own ranks. She can never just claim to be the Body of Christ ontologically without developing a functional healthy lifestyle by prioritizing the care of the self or co-sharing of life among all the members. This is grounded in the radical Yahwehistic spirituality of Deuteronomy 15:4, "there will be no poor among you..." In short, to be the Body of Christ is to have the capacity for radical care of the self. The Body of Christ in its earthly becoming, like any earthly body, will always experience pain in some parts, the pain can also spread to others, shift, and expand, but as a living organism, it will always search for remedies, for healing and wholeness. The moment it stops caring for the members, it dies for it can only function as the Body of Christ through the radical relationality of co-sharing

everything that makes life livable and less burdensome for all its members.

## 5 | CONCLUSION

This article aimed to create a Pentecostal theology of radical sharing by utilizing critical hermeneutics of socially engaged love embedded in *sam-ae* spirit and *ubuntu*. It argues that inequalities continue to grow in different economies of the world including Africa. The gap is worsening even after many attempts by the governments of the world to strategize on the challenges of poverty alleviation. This article demonstrated that inequality in Africa does not only exist between the minority white and majority black but also exists between the wealthy blacks and the poor blacks specifically in the African Indigenous Pentecostal churches. A gap is widening between the very wealthy pastors and their poor church members. This article argues that a Pentecostal theology of radical sharing could function as a panacea to inequalities among African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches. The Pentecostal theology of radical sharing calls for socially engaged and radical love that translates into the radical sharing of resources as the manifestation of authentic passionate love of God. It calls for a theology radical of sharing—"they had all things in common" imagination. This love is not theoretical but engaged love. As Saint Luke argues, "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had" (Acts 4:32). This is *sam-ae* spirit and *ubuntu*ization of African Indigenous Pentecostal Churches by reclaiming indigenous imaginations as frameworks for new appropriations of the church as functional Body of Christ through radical pro-existential care of the members as the self.

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## ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup>Amabishop is a television show aimed at exposing the wrongdoings in church circles specifically as done by church leaders. <https://mojalove.co.za/portfolio/amabishop/>

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