



Land Reform in Relation to Landless Neo-Pentecostal Churches: Toward Sustainable Development in South African Cities

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Abstract: The current state of urban planning in South Africa excludes allocation for church land. In many South African cities, there is a temporary structure for church fellowship within neo-Pentecostalism. A literature review shows that many neo-Pentecostal churches still conduct fellowship in tents and shacks, which poses health hazards for congregants and followers of these churches. Furthermore, some of the neo-Pentecostal churches rent industrial or even community buildings for church services every week. These kinds of temporary structures, tents, and rentals make neo-Pentecostal churches to be very unmanageable in local governments. This article is a literature analysis that argues within the framework of land reform that landless neo-Pentecostal churches should be included in urban planning for the sustainable development of South African cities. This article found that when neo-Pentecostal churches are properly registered and given a portion of land to build proper church structures, local governments will be able to manage these churches.

Keywords: Land Reform, Landlessness, Urban Planning, Neo-Pentecostal Churches, Sustainable Development

Introduction

The South African Charter of Religious Rights and Freedoms (2010) is a religious legal document that seeks to promote the establishment and development of the freedoms, rights, responsibilities, and relationship between the governance of South Africa and the legal citizens concerning religious belief. This charter is supported by chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa, the Bill of Rights, which recognizes that every legal citizen in South Africa has the right to freedom of religion. In seeking to promote deeper establishment and development of the freedoms, rights, responsibilities, and relationships, Section 234 of the same constitution makes accommodations for charters of rights to be drawn up by civil organizations, which may then be authorized by parliament. In other words, this constitution says to us that all democratic communities are shaped by the role of the rule of law in maintaining governance and sustainable order. The rule of law (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996) supports the idea that freedom of religion must be enjoyed by individual citizens and religious associations or anyone belonging to a particular religious community/denomination to practice their religion. One may pose a question: How can some religious communities/denominations practice their religious freedom without having a proper space such as a recognized land? The main research question is how can land reform

be relevant to landless churches for the sustainable development of South African cities? In this article, our focus is on landless neo-Pentecostal churches in South Africa. In some places, these churches are known as “hloma o hlomolle” because of their unstable settlement. Today they put their tent “here,” and the following day the tent is somewhere else. To avoid the controversial role that the South African neo-Pentecostal churches undertook in the public sphere, this article suggests that these churches are properly registered and given a portion of land to build proper church structures. These suggestions will allow local governments to be lawfully able to manage these kinds of churches in local communities. To give valid salutation to this article, the discourse includes qualitative data that include sources such as research articles and Native Land Acts, which have been used to develop a peer-reviewed history of dispossession as well as a history of land reform in South Africa. In addition, concepts such as the intersectionality of religion and land, land reform, and love for the land will be explored in this article. These concepts are important as they demonstrate the relationship between the people and the land. The relationship will help us in understanding the reasons for advocating for land reform for landless churches. The next section looks at the literature review on the concept of land reform.

A Review of Land Reform in a South African Context

Borras (2006, 69) refers to the “transfer of ownership from the more powerful to the less powerful, such as from a relatively small number of wealthy or noble owners with extensive land holdings to individual ownership by those who work the land.” The land was one of the ways the colonialist venture as well as the Apartheid regime used to divide people. Therefore, land reform in the South African context should be understood in terms of land dispositions that happened during the apartheid era when the colonizers came to take the land that belonged to the Black people. Similarly, within the religious context, land reform should be understood in terms of returning the land to churches led by Black pastors who are landless as opposed to the churches led by White pastors in South Africa. Therefore, according to Mlambo (2020), land was used as a catalyst for superiority during the apartheid era. Thus, according to Resane (2019), land reform has turned into an emotive issue in post-apartheid South Africa. Butler and Philpott (2004) remind us that over hundreds of years, from the beginning of colonial rule until the end of Apartheid in 1994, the indigenous people of South Africa were dispossessed from the land. After the democratic elections of 1994, Churches in South Africa, including the Roman Catholic Church, embarked on setting declarations on land reform within their walls and ecumenically (Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference 2012). However, little information is available on the final reform measures churches have taken after several ecumenical meetings in the 1990s (Mlambo 2020). In addition, there is less development in South African theology circles on a theology of land justice, and praxis on land justice for churches has not been openly developed or discussed post-1994 (Lephoto 2018). The historical facts are narrated by Wright (2004, 81) when he writes that “land has become the focus of a constant struggle between the forces of

dispossession, greed, exploitation and land-grabbing.” Some of the reasons are that African people develop some form of spiritual and emotional attachment to their land(s). Africans in a way have the love for the land and working the land for the substance of their lives and livelihood. Vellem (2016, 1) states that “land is an integral part of the whole constellation of life, which cannot be separated into dichotomized compartments or spheres in the African ethical view of life.” This has also been substantiated by Ilgunas (2018, 213):

Ecosystems are made up of complex, interdependent relationships between environments and the organisms that live within those environments. When someone who doesn’t understand the land’s ecology manages the land, then the ecosystem and all of its inhabitants become threatened.

In the article presented in the *City Press* newspaper on June 3, 2018, Maxon (2018, 3) argued that “the debate of land in South Africa needs a radical shift and must be taken further by progressive forces to give it completeness by succinctly detailing a programmatic approach to meaningful land expropriation.”

Gordoncillo (2011) attests that the land reform question in South Africa has been dominated by policy, legal, and jurisprudential developments informed by the hegemonic market economy private property value systems and thinking. To validate the above attestation, Mlambo (2020) further attests that land occupation by White settlers and their descendants was not done only through conflict. Following this argumentation, Mlambo (2020) articulates further that land occupation was also legislated in the early government of the Union of South Africa, which left out indigenous peoples as active citizens. Resane (2015) highlights that the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Native Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 dispossessed indigenous Africans from the land through legislation. Resane (2015) makes it clear that the dispossession became worse between 1948 and 1990, when the apartheid government relocated millions of African people to Bantustan, also known as homelands or newly created townships. In this context, the purported “Black spots” were forcefully removed and resettled in these new racial zones, which were far from economic nodes (Resane 2015). From the above discussion of the South African Land Acts, it is undoubtedly clear that the effects of this Act were morally and practically wrong and unacceptable and that the Act had to be repealed to achieve a more equal distribution of land ownership.

As argued previously, it is important also to substantiate that land reformation has always been seen to play a role in the transformation of human livelihood, not only because it has existed as a concept embedded in every disadvantaged country due to political and socioeconomic circumstances of apartheid and colonialism but in that the debate about what constitutes the right of ownership is an ongoing one (Lephoto 2018). Buvton (2004) states that it is true that there are complaints that the delivery of land reform has not been entirely satisfactory. Thus, despite almost three decades of democracy, land reform issues remain as contentious in South Africa as they ever have been (Parker 2014 This is argued by Changuion and Steenkamp (2012) when they say that the right to own land has become a very emotional

matter for mankind, which has led to many problems and conflicts and still does. Therefore, one may also agree with Butler and Philpott (2004) that getting land reform right is fundamental to the broader project of healing South Africa and that the poor will have to be the focus of this healing process. In addition, leasing a portion of land(s) to neo-Pentecostal churches can be seen as an urgent matter in the land reform program. To strengthen the suggestions made earlier, the Freedom Charter of 1995, from which all the promises were made by the liberation movements, particularly about land and governance, will shed very important light on the cause of the frustrations that South Africans are having today. Three outstanding statements in the Freedom Charter (1995) are as follows:

- All national groups shall have equal rights.
- The land shall be shared among those who work it.
- All shall enjoy equal human rights.

Within the wording of the Freedom Charter, it is evident that the aim was to diminish territorial segregation based on race, where natives would not be prohibited from occupying or acquiring land. The aim of this section, within the context of land reform in South Africa, was to familiarize readers with the historical background that gave rise to the need for land reform in the new constitutional dispensation. The consideration of the historical context of land reform in South Africa and the land rights associated with it assist us in interpreting land reform within its textual context. Furthermore, this literature review on land reform shows a gap in terms of addressing land reform in the context of landless churches. This in our view is an important research gap in dealing with sustainable development as per the sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

The Current State of Urban Planning for Churches

We cannot speak of town planning without mentioning spatial justice. In this context, spatial (land) justice is referred to as occupational space in South Africa. To tell of the history and emergence of spatial justice in South Africa, one must start by looking at what space is (Mlambo 2020). The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2010, 1425) has several definitions for space, but this is what we will focus on “an amount of an area or of a place that is empty or that is available for use.” According to Mlambo (2020), space can therefore be defined as an area that can or cannot have something that occupies it and can stand independently of what occupies it. In South African history and context, space exists in different formations (houses, apartments, shopping centers, farms, churches or houses of worship, and so forth). However, history gives meaning to what these formations entail and continue to entail. The history of South Africa shows that space in South Africa has been contested for decades since colonial times, and this push and pull makes the reading of space.

After the democratic election of 1994, when many restrictive apartheid laws were repealed, many people were hoping to occupy their own respective and dignified space (land). However,

mushrooming informal settlements and mushrooming neo-Pentecostal churches bear witness to landlessness. To validate this, Ramantswana (2017, 79) points out that:

Landlessness is not an invisible characteristic of our society in the so-called postcolonial, post-apartheid South Africa unless one chooses to ignore it or turn a blind eye. Landlessness is apparent in the townships where the black masses have to share the limited space by opening up rooms for rental, building back rooms, or erecting shacks in the yard as a means of survival and a means of accommodation for the landless. Landlessness is also a visible reality in and around South African cities.

In addition to Ramantswana's argument, we attest that landlessness is apparent when we see churches erecting their own "unregistered tents" to preach the word of God. In our Historical context, the church has also been divided on the issue of the land. This reality happens because the church is made up of members of the colonizers and the colonized. Mainline Christianity to a certain degree joined the civil government in dispossessing people of their land. Some Christian denominations still own land that was given to them by the government after forced removals of the population, while mission stations acquired title deeds or were compensated for new developments on the land. Ramantswana (2017, 79) further addresses the issue of the reality of landlessness as follows:

The landlessness of the black masses is evidenced by the continuous mushrooming of informal settlements...To be landless in South African cities is to live in canals, under bridges, under trees, in parks, and open spaces in front of buildings or shops. Even worse, to be a landless female is to be prey to slave traders and sex traders and to be first in line for endless rape. Landlessness sets up our people for dehumanisation and exploitation.

The changing nature of society can be perceived to influence traditional land use definitions, permissibility, and assessment. There has been much controversy surrounding the issue of religion on both international and local levels for many years. More recently, however, there has been much media coverage surrounding Muslims and the Islamic faith due to key international events that are not limited to development for religious purposes. However, there is clear evidence that these issues have impacted how development for religious purposes is deemed as contentious development proposals. The question to be asked is whether the town planning system allows or confines the best approach to planning for and the assessment of development for religious purposes.

Throughout history, many people have attempted to create not only a utopian society but cities that reflect visions of a better urban existence, a new city, a better city, and a just city (Benesh 2015). The word "religion" originates from the Latin word *Religio* which refers to "bind together." Therefore, religion aids in the formation of a community when worshippers can undertake worship or other social activities (Mitchell 2006). Thus, religious

purposes can be explained as activities that create space for a group or individual to conduct worship and worship-related activities. As defined previously, religious purposes are strictly limited not only to worship but also to worship-related activities. This can be applied to religious purposes as land uses as they do not have to be strictly limited to a place of worship but a place where followers can undertake worship-related activities (Cheong 2015). Up-to-date, town planning for religious purposes in South Africa is not a term or definition that is evident in local government planning policies.

For migrants, in particular, religion represents a different social function. It is affirmed by Cheong (2015) that religion enables communities to unite around an institution or place of public worship and is a way for immigrants to retain their identity when they are part of a religious minority group. Developments for religious purposes allow ancillary activities that further contribute to maintaining tradition and culture in the form of education and leisure (Dunn et al. 2001).

The implication of the above statement indicates that the South African government must be clear in its review of places of worship town planning policies. In South Africa, the term town planning was adopted but, for many years, has only been concerned with urban land use control (Oakenfull 2015). Oakenfull (2015) further argues that later, the subject was expanded to include regional and even national planning and it was then considered more accurate to refer to physical planning and later spatial planning. The term development planning was subsequently added, which was never clearly defined. The social analysts, political commentators, and academics who have campaigned for the past two decades of democracy for a complete and radical reform of the system of urban planning in South Africa have not appreciated the practical scope and operation of urban planning (Oakenfull 2015). They understood that it required a new framework of planning legislation but when that came with Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), 16 of 2013, the drafters of the Act also did not understand the substance or system of urban planning in practice. As a result, the planning and management of land use in urban areas has hardly changed. Land use planning and the provisions of SPLUMA are not much more than a reformulation of the system of before, thus, says Oakenfull (2015).

The State of Landless Neo-Pentecostal Churches in South Africa

Neo-Pentecostal churches in South Africa are part of the broader Pentecostal movement in the country. According to Anderson (2005, 66), “At the beginning of the twenty-first century somewhere between 10–40% of South Africa’s population could be called Pentecostal but this classification varies depending on how the religion is defined.” Neo-Pentecostal churches are discussed in distinction with the classical Pentecostal churches such as the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, the Assemblies of God in South Africa, and the Full Gospel Church of Southern Africa (Watt 2001; Anderson 2005; Kgatle 2020). The neo-Pentecostal churches put more emphasis on the miraculous, the prosperity gospel, and some of them use anointed products such as anointed water and oil in healing and deliverance (Benyah 2018; Banda 2020,

2022). The newer form of the neo-Pentecostal churches is known as the New Prophetic Churches, which emphasizes the prophetic office and the use of prophetic titles (Kgatle and Anderson 2020). These are churches such as the Enlightened Christian Gathering of the famous and controversial prophet Shepherd Bushiri (Kgatle 2021). Other churches have emerged, such as the End-Time Disciplines Ministries of Penuel Mnguni, the Incredible Happenings Ministry of Pastor Paseka Motsoeneng, and Grace Living Hope Ministries of Pastor Light Monyeki. Most of these churches have been involved in one controversy after another including dangerous religious practices such as the eating of snakes, drinking of petrol, drinking of rat poison, and so forth (Resane 2017). In this article, we are not looking directly into these controversies but their landlessness. However, it is important to point out that dealing with the challenges of landlessness among these churches can become one of the solutions to addressing the abuse of religion as demonstrated by these dangerous controversies.

Most if not all the New Prophetic Churches highlighted previously are landless in terms of the place of fellowship every week. Although they might have a temporary place of fellowship, most of them do not have a permanent church structure with ablution facilities that they can confidently call their own. For example, the Enlightened Christian Gathering of Prophet Shepherd Bushiri used to fellowship in the Pretoria show ground which they rented from the City of Tshwane for many years (Gabela 2023). In addition, churches such as the End Times Disciples Ministries, the Incredible Happenings, and the Grace Living Hope use tents or temporary structures as places of fellowship. In one of the protests, the End Times Disciples Ministries, the protestors belonging to a political party, Economic Freedom Fighters, burned the church tent (Khanyile 2016). Furthermore, other numerous neo-Pentecostal churches are fellowshipping in tents and temporary structures in South Africa (Anderson 2005). This is not a unique South African phenomenon, but it happened in other regions on the African continents. Hence, some scholars such as White and Niemandt (2015, 241) have called this type of church “tent ministries.” This is one of the contributing factors to the proliferation of similar churches as they are easily started in almost every corner of the city without necessarily first obtaining permits or places of fellowship. This is not the same with, for example, missional churches that first obtained land and started churches later. The Western missionary churches in South Africa continue to have land even when their membership has decreased over the years.

This landlessness of the neo-Pentecostal churches has challenges such as health hazards, access to clean water and sanitation during church service, and so forth. In other words, when a church is fellowshipping in an open space where there is no proper access to clean water and sanitation can lead to serious health hazards for the church members and the community where the church is located (Adesanya 2011; Van der Merwe 2020). What about catching up dust during the church service in a tent? The big question is where do the church members go when, for example, they want to relieve themselves during a church service? It is for this reason that church fellowshipping in a temporary structure or tent can end up creating health problems in the cities. In addition, when a church fellowships in an untidy tent or temporary

structure, it affects the sustainability of the city in terms of cleanliness, neatness, and so forth (Walter and Mottram 2015). In addition, the landlessness of the neo-Pentecostal churches has other problems such as the lack of religious census in local municipalities. The CRL Rights Commission (2017) found out that in South Africa, there are many unregistered churches. At the time of writing this article, most local municipalities in South Africa do not know how neo-Pentecostal churches exist in their local governments. Most of the local municipalities do not know how pastors exist in their local governments, which creates problems for the management and administration of these churches. In other words, the local municipality is not able to know the physical location of the various churches that fellowship in city halls, tents, temporary structures, and open spaces in townships. Consequently, the city is not able to manage these churches when they commit controversial practices or even for administration such as the payment of tax or other levies.

Land Reform for Neo-Pentecostal Churches

As highlighted in the previous sections, there have been efforts by the South African government to return the land to the rightful owners. However, these discussions on the redistribution of land to the citizens have not focused on the landless churches in South Africa. The argument in this article is that land reform should include the landless neo-Pentecostal churches, many of which are currently fellowshipping in tents and other temporary structures. If land reform aims to look at the previously disadvantaged, then in this context, the landless churches are also part of the previously disadvantaged in one way or another (Baloyi 2022). In addition, land reform includes the Black people who are in the majority (Twala and Barnard 2006) and most of the neo-Pentecostal churches are led by Black pastors. Therefore, as much as land reform addresses the disadvantaged individuals, there is also a need to look at the disadvantaged organizations or churches; in this case, it is the neo-Pentecostal churches. One of how the government can do this is to request the Western missionary churches with big portions of land to share with neo-Pentecostal churches. In this way, there is going to be equality in South Africa in the context of land reform.

Second, when doing urban planning for major cities in South Africa, there is a need to include the church sites. The South African government, for example, cannot ignore the proliferation of neo-Pentecostal churches in South African cities. Instead of ignoring this phenomenon, the South African government can opt to include these churches in the spatial planning in different cities. This does not mean that the government should give every church land for free but ensure that urban planning includes churches as much as it includes hospitals, libraries, clinics, parks, and so forth (Mack 2019). In addition, it is very surprising that in most South African townships and cities, there is an urban plan that includes bottle stores, taverns, and other liquor stores (Parry and Bennetts 1999). However, there is no plan for churches, whereas the latter is meant for building families and society. Therefore, even if land is very scarce in a South African context, particularly in big cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, and Durban, there is still a need to plan the architecture of the cities

with churches in mind. As suggested earlier, the previously advantaged churches such as the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa with a large portion of land can share the land with the neo-Pentecostal churches.

Land Reform: Toward Sustainable Development

Land reform is one of the frameworks that can ensure adherence to the United Nations' sustainable development goals, particularly in a South African context, a developing country. Land reform for the landless neo-Pentecostal churches is aligned with sustainable development goal number 3, which advocates for health and well-being for all (Oerther and Rosa 2020). In other words, the more neo-Pentecostal churches are given land in which they should build church structure, and their church members will fellowship in a healthy environment. As highlighted in the preceding sections, most of the neo-Pentecostal churches do a fellowship in environments that pose health hazards, which is problematic for both the members of these churches and the communities in general. Therefore, by addressing the issue of land, the government will be moving toward sustainable development, particularly the health and well-being of the citizens. Although neo-Pentecostal churches are strong on divine healing (Hunt 2000), it is not a license to always expose their members to unhealthy environments. Therefore, the best option is to ensure that the citizens of the country who also happen to be members of these churches are exposed to a healthy environment.

As discussed previously, the challenge of fellowshiping in tents and temporary structures is also problematic in cases where there is no proper sanitation and clean water for the attendees. Some of these structures are pitched in bushes or far away from the communities and therefore with no access to clean water and ablution facilities. To deal with these challenges, the South African government should give the land that is serviced with clean water and sewage pipes to these churches. Therefore, land reform for the landless churches is aligned with sustainable development goal number 6, which ensures clean water and sanitation for all (Willis 2020). As much as there are people who still use bucket systems or pit toilets in South Africa, it means that there is no sustainable development (Nhamo, Nhemachena, and Nhamo 2019). As much as thousands are dying as was the case in Hammaskraal where people died of cholera by drinking unhealthy water, there is no sustainable development (Kotzé 2023). Land reform is one of how the South African government can address these issues, and neo-Pentecostal churches should be part of the discussions that want to address issues of land for the previously disadvantaged communities.

One of how a country can demonstrate sustainability is the infrastructure (Bhattacharya, Oppenheim, and Stern 2015). In addition, infrastructure is a contributing factor to the economic growth of a country (Sahoo and Dash 2012). Similarly, an investment infrastructure in a South African context ensures that the country is growing economically and otherwise. When churches fellowship in tents and shacks, this affects the infrastructure of the country. As much as the country can pride itself in having proper buildings for government offices, beautiful roads, railways, airports, and so forth, it should also strive to

have proper buildings for the churches as well because untidy tents and shacks can spoil the beautiful infrastructure that a country like South Africa has. Therefore, land reform for the landless churches is aligned with sustainable development goal number 9, which supports sustainable infrastructure and innovation (Amanor and Moyo 2008). There is nothing innovative about tents and shacks, and there is nothing innovative about fellowship in an untidy open space. Hence, there is a need to build proper infrastructure for the sustainability of Africa. This can be done by including churches in the discussions on land reform and by ensuring that urban planning includes plans for churches in South African cities.

Goal number 11 of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations seeks to ensure sustainable cities. Therefore, by including the neo-Pentecostal churches in the discussion on land and in urban planning, the government will be doing great work in moving toward sustainable cities. This means that the cities in South Africa should not have temporary structures let alone tents and shacks because these are not sustainable. What makes a city sustainable is when it has the proper infrastructure, not a temporary infrastructure as discussed earlier. Therefore, as long as the cities in South Africa still have temporary buildings, tents, and shacks, the country is far from having sustainable cities. To correct this, there is a need to move toward apportioning land to churches and ensure that such churches build proper structures. In this way, the land reform for the landless churches is aligned with sustainable development goal number 11 making cities sustainable. Another way to achieve this is by ensuring that the current buildings in many of the South African cities that are not utilized for any activity are renovated and refurbished for the occupation of neo-Pentecostal churches. Currently, some of the buildings are used by drug lords who are negatively influencing society; however, if such buildings are given to churches, then the cities will become sustainable in the long run.

Land Reform and Church Management in Local Governments

This section proposes leadership strategies aimed at harmonizing the relations between the local governance and the local church(s), to ensure sound collaboration and partnership among the stakeholders in the provision of service delivery and development, a partnership that is more likely to improve good governance and service delivery in the area of land distribution. An important goal of church planting in South (Africa) was to acquire land required for the provision of public goods such as schools, clinics, and church buildings (places of worship) or mission houses. This mandate made the church become the owner of some portion of land in communities across the continent. As would be expected, the increasing competition over land and the ensuing conflicts that became common in the continent have not left the church unaffected. Indeed, numerous conflicts over land between churches and host local municipalities are common in South Africa. As we have alluded to earlier, some of these conflicts are caused by so-called non-registered church churches (bo hlama o hlomolle). To avoid these conflicts, we argue that participation in a negotiated future with suitable alternatives is recommended.

The question of the church and its land is ultimately a theological one that needs to be worked out in a relationship and context. The Church has a responsibility to critically examine the use of its land, contribute to the debate, and lead by example, encouraging the local people to work out locally appropriate solutions (Pienaar 2023). Makgoba (2018) attests that the importance of place cannot be ignored. Place attachment can inform the practicalities and pragmatics of land reform, for example, taking time and listening to stories about land which can shape how land reform alternatives are explored (Pienaar 2023). The suggestion is that the affected people need to have a voice in the future of their land and be supported by either the local government or the local church with skills development to steward it well. In this manner, the local church may provide an advocacy role for those connected with church land and may facilitate dialogue, bilateral agreements, and consensus for all those affected by land issues (Resane 2019), especially the poor. Butler and Philpott (2004) transform this matter by arguing that the Christian Church in South Africa should assume a prophetic role and speak for the interests of the livelihood of the poor and their sustainable development. Therefore, church land management may present a unique opportunity to explore strategic and sustainable development on local level matters, not only spiritual matters as would other municipalities think.

Discussion/Conclusion

This article looked at the current policies of land reform in a South African context and found that the current spatial planning in most South African cities excludes churches. While this does not affect many of the missional churches in South Africa, it affects a lot of neo-Pentecostal churches. Therefore, this article proposed that any discussions on land reform should be done by including landless churches in a South African context. The inclusion of landless churches in land reform discussions is closely connected with the United Nations' sustainable development goals. In other words, by providing land for the landless churches, the government of South Africa will be contributing to the health and well-being of the citizens, ensuring clean water and sanitation for all, sustainable infrastructure, and sustainable cities. Furthermore, land reform in the context of landless churches will assist in ensuring that local governments in South Africa can manage the growing number of neo-Pentecostal churches. There are alternatives to land reform such as renting local buildings for neo-Pentecostal churches, but this is not a long-term solution, given the growth of Pentecostal churches. Therefore, land reform remains a relevant solution for the sustenance of South African cities in the context of landless neo-Pentecostal churches.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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