

CONTEXTUALISING THE THEOLOGY OF COMPETITION: TOWARDS THE NEXUS OF PENTECOSTAL FAITH, POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Victorious living, the power to break poverty and stubborn spiritual vices are amongst the hallmarks for Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. However, the socio-economic decline in Zimbabwe inevitably calls Pentecostalism from a marginalised position in individual life to a central concern in the political, governance and developmental issues. Religion can reconstruct a holistic approach to the concept of development. There is a need to skilfully develop a theology which augments human dignity, freedom, and self-worth, for instance, a theology that emphasises the sanctity of work, materialism and a conducive habitat environment. Using the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) as a case study; this article explores how faith narratives in Pentecostalism can be a source of good governance, politics, development and a platform for social transformation that enhances the ethics of patriotic citizenry. This article concludes that the faith narratives nurture responsibility, accountability, and participation of Christians in politics and socio-economic activities.

Keywords: politicising, governance, Pentecostalism, faith, AFM

Introduction

Poor governance and lack of responsible leadership are a reiterated chorus in Zimbabwe, echoed within Southern Africa and beyond. Governance in Africa has various forms of anomalies, mismanagement and makes the lives of people an illusion (Oguwenu, 2011). The term ‘governance’ is broad; in this article, it refers to the processes of implementing or not implementing decisions. Sheng (2008) explains that good governance entails eight key facets such as transparency, accountability, participation, efficiency, consensus oriented, equitable, all-encompassing, rule of law and responsive to people’s needs. Komakoma (2008) argues that such social context can also be called the political society. Contrary to this, today the post-independent Zimbabwe, is shrouded with bad vices of economic decline, poor accountability, laxity of the rule of law and corruption. Considering recent events in Zimbabwe, it is becoming tough to ignore the existence of bad governance. In this

contemporary pluralistic society, a fundamental institution with good actors like the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM) becomes the source of hope, sanity, and restoration. Monye (2016) argues that the churches play a critical role in alleviating hunger, misery, endemic diseases, and ignorance. Statistics show that in Zimbabwe approximately eighty percent of the population are Christians. Because of this high population market share, the churches always play a significant role in the socio-economic issues whether actively or not and actively shaping and giving meaning to the lives of the people (Chitando, 2013). Thus, the Christian messages, ethics, and support for the emancipation of humanity are a critical heritage for good governance, politics and development in Zimbabwe. The AFM brings together all social classes from different social statuses such as families, the poor, the rich, professionals of all kinds, civil servants, and politicians. However, it is alarming that few Pentecostal consecrated leaders, and the laities are within strategic positions of governance in Zimbabwe. In the AFM Reverend Tedi Munemo, Reverend Blessing Muroyiwa have pledged their political interests and have registered interests in running to be members of parliament (MPs). Such decision has sparked mixed feelings within the church. Pentecostalism is a brand of Christianity which emphasises the works of the Holy Spirit, miracles and the divine. In Zimbabwe, leading groups include Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Zimbabwe Assemblies of God (ZAOGA), Hear the Word Ministries. So, it is possible in this article to hypothesize that these conditions are less likely to occur if real spiritual men and women are in leadership positions. The Church should partner with people who desire benefits of civilisation, quality of life and complete self-fulfilment. The church has always peddled faith narratives, spiritual guidance, and the promise of eternal heaven. The content of these messages plays a vital role in fostering love, truth, justice, and goodness in the lives of the believers. Ikachoi (2011) proposes that ‘faith’ guides Christians’ everyday life and behaviour in line with Jesus Christ. It is in this context that this article examines how faith narratives can be a source of good governance, a platform for the dynamics of social transformation and development of the ethics of patriotic citizenry in Zimbabwe.

Theoretical Framework, and Methodology

This article used the Pentecostal hermeneutics theory. Anderson defines Pentecostal hermeneutics as “a method of interpreting Scripture which addresses the same core issues to evangelicals but with emphasis on the miracles and works of the Holy Spirit unique to them (Gordon, 2016). Further, Pentecostals uniquely use the Bible, the historical narratives and

integrate with their personal experience, theological biases, AFM history, and other fundamentals in their hermeneutic (Togarasei, 2016). Co-opting Pentecostal hermeneutics in this article helped to understand the impact of ‘faith declarations’ to achieve material possessions. Herein, the Pentecostal beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape the public behaviour towards healthy citizenry.

The data for this article was through in-depth interviews. The total numbers of interviews were 16 participants using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique in which the researcher uses own judgment to choose the population (Quinn, 2005). The sample had all members of the AFM including one Professor, two Doctorates, and three Masters theologians. All the interviewees are AFM professionals serving in different capacities in the society; some are Professors at the University of Zimbabwe, Doctorate at the University of Botswana, Principal, and Lecturers at Living Waters Theological Seminary and Pastors within the AFM church. These were interviewed to reflect on the trajectories of faith and good governance in the Bible and how it may impact the contemporary society. The interviews with the Principal and three Lecturers from LWTS focused on how the curriculum of LWTS can mould graduates to contribute to social responsibility. Six pastors of the AFM who are graduates with LWTS were interviewed to understand how faith narratives can be used to motivate believers into the good citizenry. The following are a topical discussion with the findings from the interviews.

Politicising Religion and Christianizing Politics

To date, there has been little agreement about the relationship between the state and the AFM. The AFM has not defined well its space concerning the issues of politics and civic involvement. Simply put; the term politics refers to various activities the citizens relate to each other, state and its institutions. Nevertheless, there is a close relationship between politics and governance, and these have an overarching impact on faith-based organisations in Zimbabwe. Possenti (2011) argues that addressing issues of governance must be in a context, which has been deteriorated by some multiple crises. The Professor explained that politics must build up and not destroy the nation, but a common and most frequently asked questions are whether consecrated AFM leaders and the laities should be involved in political activism or not, to what extent, and with whose mandate? Apparently, these questions deal with the boundaries within which the clergy should operate in relationship to politics in Zimbabwe. One of the greatest challenges produced by this unclear position of this marriage,

the AFM has failed to create and define its space in politics effectively. It shows the need for urgency to address the safety problems caused by this different relationship. As such, this article attempts to describe the politicisation of religion and Christianization of politics in Zimbabwe. Politicisation of religion in this context is whereby the politicians or governments blame or hinder faith-based organisations from active participation in issues of politics. One Master theologian said, in Zimbabwe, there is a general perception that politicians say their game is dirty, and implore religious leaders to stay away or first hang their priestly garment before getting involved. He insisted that both politicians and some members of the AFM cling to such understanding leading to the decline in populations involved in politics. So, shedding more light, the Principal argued that, politics is not a dirty game as purported by many people, but it is a clean game played by dirty people with dirty minds. He suggested that sometimes room of involvement is open and the AFM leaders and members should join only when it has both Godly and national interests, never for personal gain.

One Doctorate theologian said that “the AFM boasts of having such great, sober minds.” He further explored that AFM must produce God fearing leaders who play as referees. A veteran pastor argued that history has it that initially, Israel was theocratic, the political and judicial power was in the hands of religious leaders, but this has changed with social evolutions. In fact, there is no doubt that historically when governance institutions conflated with the AFM, the results were disastrous. One Masters theologian opined that perhaps, the part which divides Christendom is how does the AFM confront unjust systems. He propounds that, it is popular in Zimbabwe, for politicians to silence the voice of the AFM by threatening to parade dirty laundry of the AFM if they challenge politicians. One Doctorate theologian argued that “The AFM infested itself with too greedy, too corrupt, and too tainted people that it does not have the moral influence to confront the evils outside, just a look within shows how we fight within and misappropriation of funds.” From these findings, I suggest that politics is an activity that is open to all citizens and Christians have the right to political belief and opinion. Therefore, the politicisation of religion reduces the interaction or involvement of faith-based organisation to spearhead good governance in any given society.

Now turning to the Christianisation of the politics, Musa (2009) blames the missionaries for not encouraging converts to enter politics and business. If Musa is correct, then this damaged the relationship between Christians and political involvement. However, in Pentecostalism a broader perspective has been adopted by some believers that Christians can take it as a

calling into politics if they want to serve people. Professor alluded that, relevant Scriptures are evoked, such as Proverbs 29:2 which says, *when the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.* He explored that, “As such Christians, should be part of politics not only to complain when things go wrong; instead, the man of God is an advisor, playing a prophetic role to political leaders.” Interestingly, in this context, the issue is not about throwing AFM doctrines and ideologies into the governance system. It is about presenting the best persons forward with ideas that take Zimbabwe forward, without forcing their belief system on everyone. As one Lecturer puts it, what pastors can do is to mentor such people and ground them on how to represent Christ in the echelons of power. He elaborates further that; the role of the AFM is to produce good leaders; most people belong to some AFM or other denominations. In fact, this is a critical issue for future research, especially how to groom/mentor leaders to help the government produce good and loyal citizens. Looking closely, the AFM haul couples, business, and youth seminars, then it is possible for the AFM to having political leadership workshops too. Thus, members who desire to venture into the political arena can be influenced to lead in God's way. Consequently, good, and righteous leaders are to be raised both in the AFM as well as government.

This article proposes that the AFM must be active in identifying and nurturing college students or work out a scholarship fund, nurture them and train them to be good leaders, be active at all levels of leadership, and nomination processes, monitoring elections, pray for leaders and meet them regularly for feedback meetings. It must also be the birthing place for God-fearing leadership and politicians. The Professor echoed that, the AFM cannot influence politics through prayer and fasting only, but she must be actively involved and participate in the primary decision-making on political issues. However, he warned that the AFM need not think that if all political leaders become Christians, they will become better leaders just like she has Christian leaders whose leadership is a cause for great concern. To this, Principal argued that the solution is continuous training, learning and relearning. It is the time that “The AFM leaders must have the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other; for the AFM to have a prophetic role in socio-political- economic issues.” Interpreting the word ‘prophetic’ here means speaking into policies, structures or on behalf of humanity under the anointing of God. Simply put, the AFM is the conscience and the moral barometer of a nation in all issues including governance. Thus, it must always be prepared to raise the red flag when there is an injustice, corruption.

Pulpit Rhetoric and Nation Building

Faith narratives within Pentecostalism are an excellent breeding ground for fighting, combating, resisting corruption, crime, hunger, and bad governance. Interesting findings show that most prophets in the Bible spoke to people in power. Looking at the prophetic schema up to John the Baptist, God's sensitivity towards the disadvantaged is evident. As such, the AFM has a moral obligation to speak the truth and stand for the oppressed. However, one pastor announced that the politics in Zimbabwe is untidy, so some leaders fear to voice in such a terrain. The complex is that "Others are feeding on the political gravy trough making them too compromised to say anything, most leaders owe favours to the system, and have skeletons of the system in their cupboards." In the same vein, the Principal remarked that it is tough to confront leadership systems outside; for instance, the AFM leadership systems are not measuring up to God's standards and corruption is being peddled within the AFM.

Given the preceding discussion, it is of paramount importance to understand how the AFM engages with social responsibility such as building hospitals and schools and how does this, in turn, relate to its mission work. The Professor endorsed that, the challenge is the fundamental approach which the Pentecostal use to interpret the Bible. As discussed by the Professor, how can the AFM build a hospital when they emphasise on the Holy Ghost to heal the sick, the lame walking and the blind seeing? However, most Pentecostals place emphasis on 'pulpit missions' yet depending on the social services of others' mainline or government schools, universities, hospitals, hotels for recreational facilities. Professor commented that it is a sign of being weak when one goes to these mainline or public institutions which the AFM view to be on a low level or 'carnal level' as compared to the Spirit which they emphasise. Commenting, one pastor said, a lot rests on the relationship between all the "support missions" to the Great Commission (Matt: 28: 19-20). Therefore, a renewed love in hospitals say something about the role of healing in the AFM or on how the Holy Spirit now works with hospital staff? One Doctorate theologian proposes that those medical doctors and specialists who are AFM members coming to Sunday Services and make confessions of faith must reciprocally check members of the congregation for BP, Diabetes, HIV, Diet, eyes free of charge as a way of spreading the social Gospel of Love. Perhaps the other professionals will follow suit like lawyers, mechanics, counsellors, business consultants all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Be as this may the Principal challenged that, there are ambivalent biblical passages which propel the ministers of religion in Pentecostalism rush into missions to the extent that they consider theological education as not even important. For example, when these pastors stand up in worship service and say that the causes of HIV and AIDS are demons or if you are overweight come for prayer for weight loss, the medical doctors present are puzzled as this is contrary to their profession. Such an understanding from the Principal shows that there is a need for dialogue between science and religion. Consequently, the AFM Pastors must have broader intellectual horizons having an overall appreciation to issues of the law, science, business, and medicine to shepherd sheep from various professional pastures. In fact, this article suggests that there is a need for a Pastors who can understand what scientists and technology especially nanotechnology is saying, but still relate and reconcile this to the Gospel of Christ. Gone are the days when preaching in the cities targeted domestic workers, and gardeners but need all races, classes, and professions. All vocations should find ways of spreading the Gospel with Pastors coordinating all efforts at one time invited to a lawyer's workshop, at another by medical doctors, or engineers' outreach or business retreat. As such, the pulpit can be a place of building good governance and God-fearing politicians for Zimbabwe.

Trajectories of Governance in Pentecostalism

There is no central human authority governing Pentecostalism; the main reason they do not want it is because the Holy Spirit is the central authority and he does auditing for everything. One pastor said, in the AFM, most leaders frown on human structures that call for accountability. The correlation between the Holy Spirit and governance is interesting because they evoke the order of Ephesians 1:22. In this scripture, Christ is the head and under Him are servants who are like the AFM leaders. The criteria for selecting this scripture need careful attention because all Christian movements have verses to support their actions, beliefs, and practices. In some examples, it is the Bible against the bible or forcing some scriptures to conform to what the leaders want to achieve. Ecclesiastical authority in Pentecostal churches in some cases is worse than what was criticised by Luther against the Papacy abusing the flock.

What makes it elusive in Zimbabwe is that the churches registered are personal properties, charities and or non-profit making organisations. Such provisions point to the fact that structures of accountability are not stable in most movements because anyone can start anything at any time. In the book of Acts or the first church, there was a council in Jerusalem

which dissected doctrinal issues. But nowadays anyone can just fly by night and say, 'God spoke to me, I had an encounter' and started something. That's the genesis of doctrinal chaos in Pentecostal movements and lack of accountability in Zimbabwe. They hide in what they term, 'an encounter with God.' If members question it, they label, and demonise them as 'Tobias' and Satanic agents according to Mathew 4 and Luke 4. It is the stance of many Pentecostal leaders to hide from being questioned by saying 'you were not there when I had an encounter or experience with God,' but that has opened a doorway to them being seduced and deceived by the devil; remembering that even the deceiving of the elect. Some questions are a matter of accountability which I believe are due to both God and man.

The AFM and Good Governance

Nowadays, the AFM has more Christians who are professionals than yesteryears. However, the professional component is thwarted by 'thus sayeth the Lord' which is the basis of the existence of the AFM. The impact of faith declarations like 'thus sayeth the Lord or God is saying this' has its consequences to good governance. Christian leadership should be all encompassing of the leadership systems and strategies. For example, the AFM is a mixed multitude organisation hence it cannot enforce one leadership system which is mainly hinged to faith narratives. Christian professionals become very useless when they are in the AFM failing to bring their expertise to the betterment of the organisation. One Doctorate theologian predicts that conceivably a probable reason is whether the "praying knees" are a form of Christian professionals which we can put at the same level with secular professions. The AFM is in dire need of Christians with skill or skilled professionals who are Spirit-filled? The point that Christian professionals must consider is that applying skills learnt in some secular setting in a spiritual set up requires some adjustments. The organisational ethos that drives a profit oriented business cannot always use in a spirit oriented structure like the AFM. To this, the Principal argued that "I have noticed that even some forms of the protocol employed in some AFM nowadays, you would think it is at some political rally."

The AFM should rebuke people who abuse power, mould character and inculcate moral values. The Christian faith believes that one's anointing brings progress to the nation, hope and opportunities to everybody. Accordingly, can the AFM not be at the helm of spearheading economic drive than the prophetic mantle. The AFM as an institution has become very diverse it is very easy for other servants of God to stand up and denounce those who take a stance against the government. Today the AFM may not be able to provide the

most needed sanity. The system which is currently taking place in any African nation where the ministers are richer than anyone else is the same situation in today's AFM where pastors are far more prosperous than the congregants. It is sad that some ministers of the world are abusing their office to enrich themselves. A man of God will tell you; you don't have because you don't want to give. And they talk of giving they mean giving to the man of God under the guise of 'collaborating with the ministry, seeding, appreciation, tithes.'

The AFM operates in a political environment, the political culture cascades into the AFM borrowed secular governance models. In Zimbabwe, what obtains in society is what finds in AFM, for example, eating on behalf of the poor. No accountability on public funds and no audits is leaving a black and profound hole. And when congregants probe, scriptures are immediately unleashed on them. The Pentecostal movement is too fragmented, and it does not have a single figurehead. So, aspects of accountability and integrity will continue to depend on the individual leadership ethos of the splinter groups. Politicians serve people, and politicians go, and people remain. If AFM leaders can not access political leaders, how accessible are such people to the ordinary citizens? Pentecostal churches have various or no positions on most issues. The fragmentary nature of the AFM and its schismatic inclinations make it fail to commit to any standard position.

A Working Theology in Political Landscape

Apart from designing a theology to navigate the political landscape of the day, the AFM itself must live up to the values that are set for it. In that way, it will earn respect and have a voice in Zimbabwe. One pastor said, "I believe that even if Christ did not set a precedent of any political manoeuvre, politicians felt the impact of what He configured to do during His time. John the Baptist would make Herod insecure just by the spiritual stature he possessed not even the soldiers could stand him." Consequently, leadership structures and processes must be exemplary, and this is how the AFM can be a credible, authoritative voice. In the words of the Professor:

Our mistake has been to allow our churches to be political battlefields among ourselves, and political playgrounds for politicians in government. I assure us that the AFM is the most powerful institution. But the voice to speak to power and be heard must be earned. When a politician comes to AFM, we are too quick to give them positions of prominence in sacred matters of the AFM. Whereas that may put us in good financial position, it weakens our systems. And

politicians do not take us seriously. So, before we master political theory, or venture into strategies of penetrating the political space, we must know that integrity is our greatest weapon.

Based on the above analysis from the Professor, the question that comes to mind is whether the AFM measures up or not. Doctorate theologian proffered that the sophisticated political system is no joke. He explored that, people hardly hear what the AFM say they look to what it does; that is the meaning of being a light to the world, churches are the only epistle they may ever read. It would seem obvious that the AFM is a redemptive body that preaches the message of redemption when itself is still in the process of redemption. One pastor alluded that, there is a need to make continuous strive to amend our negative ways seen in the AFM and take measures to correct the wrongs, but they ought not to stop to speak against injustice or allow ourselves to be silenced by the State because we are also not yet there.

One senior Lecturer affirmed that the AFM ought to have the courage to denounce evil not only basing on the integrity and authority of the imperfect AFM which we all know is a human organisation with a divine mandate but we ought to base on the unchanging word of God and the solid teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ who is our point of departure. In this line of thought, another Lecturer echoed that there are pastors and clergy who are politicians putting on white collars and let's not mistake them with the models of Jesus and Paul who did not explicitly stand in the line of politics. He further pointed that, the most important thing is that the AFM must contribute towards ensuring that there is a balance of powers in the State. He elaborated using biblical examples:

Using faith narrative, surely that's what God did in the biblical times raise an individual of the moment tailor-made to deal with a situation. But I think we need not lose sight of the fact that we are not fighting a mere war but an insurgence as such it is important that although we have our appointed who have the credibility in the eyes of the powers that be who is championing our causes like Esther for the Israelites, it is imperative that we mobilise the masses so that they are also vigilant with prayers. Hold the hands of the men of the moment like Aaron did to Moses, lest they end up becoming weary and run away like Elijah saying I am the only one left when there are thousands of others.

An approach such as above, one Doctorate theologians called it a ‘the multi-track approach’ which involves not just the top level but also the middle level and the grassroots. As such, the AFM must be mobilised about good governance at all levels and not wait to sing after David defeats Goliath. What remains uncertain is whether the commanders are ready or not. But one thing is evident if the interests of both the people and the commanders are similar as the norm in most liberation wars cannot doubt the readiness of the commanders. The only problem comes when the commanders have their interests to protect, or there is the reason for them to wine and dine with the commanders on the other side. That is why God, gave some men and women the stature and privilege to speak on behalf of the masses. To an extent, the AFM has felt betrayed they were muzzled either by money, power, fear, or both. Maybe Sande (2017) was correct when he blamed the AFM for hiding in 'spiritual warfare when it comes to significant issues like HIV and AIDS, sexuality and euthanasia.

The central problem as given by the Professor is that the influence of the AFM is not in starting fights at the limelight but at the grassroots because we are not fighting individuals but an entrenched system that has vestiges in every house. Thus, the power of the AFM lies at the grassroots; it is not at the top, and this explains why over the years’ leaders have failed to make headway. Agreeing the Principal said, this is also partly to blame because some of the people who make it to the upper part in the AFM today do so through hook and crook, and they are not entirely legitimate not only in the eyes of those they lead, but they know it just as their counterparts on the other side know it. Hence as much as we teach them to stand up, they might lack the moral courage that is frequently called for when engaging in do or die battles of this nature and magnitude especially when their standing is questionable, and they are standing on slippery ground legitimate wise. Therefore, they do not entirely represent the AFM as such, but they just constitute a handful of elites who smuggled them into power. Recent developments according to one Lecturer are that there are contemporary versions of elitism and commodification of the AFM, but what is commendable is to have someone who is not part of the centre in the AFM to take a stand against evil. Perhaps, this demonstrates that leadership is not only at the top but it at every level. Mainly, as one Masters theologian argued that:

Just like Jesus Christ had no fixed abode here on earth, so he had no material possessions to lose, so he was prepared to confront evil head-on. Hence his advice to the rich young man, ' sell all your property and follow me.' So, we

need a new theology, such as the theology of voluntary dispossession for the sake of the kingdom of God. It is a kind of theology that which characterised early monasticism before Pachomius introduced manual labour. That is the way we can get credible voices because if we want to accumulate and speak against injustice chances simultaneously are that of being silenced or silencing yourself.

The African myth of thinking that being in authority over someone is synonymous with being right, the myth that the leader is unquestionable. What Professor observed is somewhat true that “I think it's time we do away with fundamentalist approach to the Bible which advocates uncritical and blind following or respecting of leadership that has become toxic be it in AFM or elsewhere.” This position shows that guard must be put to the Christian faith heritage all the way and at every turn making sure that to do the right things and critiques are done to sift through alternatives and make correctional measures. Then, the balance of power allows for independence of arms like that of the government Legislature, Judiciary, and the Executive. Each must play its part, the civil society; mainly the AFM must play the prophetic role.

One Lecturer's approach is helpful when he said:

God called pastors to lead the flock, and the same way they changed our mindsets to know that not 'tithing' is stealing from God is the same way they should use the pulpit to point the wrongs. It is so disheartening how there is side-lining of the real bread and butter issues.

I think it is because the leaders and the led are living in different worlds. One pastor said that the most unfortunate thing is not only that such cruelty and insensitivity have become the norm in our country but the cause for great concern is such cruel tendencies are slowly creeping into the AFM. I think the judgement should begin in the house of God and once the AFM aligns itself with the values of the kingdom of God, like justice, mercy, love of neighbour the world will follow suit. A kind of homework for the churches not to shelve the noble idea of ecumenism because the state will always target those rifts and use them as a smokescreen, for example, they know that if they label the initiative as pseudo- Pentecostal some churches will distance themselves away and blame Pentecostals. It's sheer cheap propaganda that should be treated with the contempt it deserves.

The Theology of Competition in Context: A Pentecostal Schema for Politics in Zimbabwe

This article proposes that the Pentecostals in Zimbabwe can utilise the theology of competition to create space within politics in Zimbabwe. Again, a fundamental question which questions whether Christianity allows competition which is paraded in the political campaigns? Political campaigns by nature induce enmity some of which is costly to the values of the Kingdom of God because politicians want to win at whatever cost. The AFM uses the election to select its leadership, and this presupposes competition. Several scriptures like 1 Corinthians 9²⁴, Hebrews 12¹⁻², 2 Timothy 4⁷ and Philippians 3¹⁴ denotes a theology of competition. Therefore, competition is a double-edged reality which can also manifest in humility and serve God; everyone wants to outshine the other, there are always ranking in the church. Perhaps, the theology of competition is a godly principle which needs teachings on how to win fairly or lose gracefully. This article proposes that elections on their own are not a good indicator of democracy because they are other unspecified forces at play.

The teachings of the Church predict a competition, for instance, there are five crowns to be won;

1. Imperishable Crown 2 Corinthians 9²⁴⁻²⁵
2. Crown of Rejoicing 1 Thessalonians 2¹⁹
3. Crown of Glory 1 Peter 5⁴
4. Crown of life Revelation 2¹⁰
5. Crown of Righteousness 2 Timothy 4⁸

Thus, the work towards the crown makes Christians at an advantage for politics in Zimbabwe. Thus, the Bible is not explicit but assumes that competition exists in society. Competition is a condition of striving by being superior over others. In this case, this article creates the theology of competition as a victory without a victim. They have a winning mentality in competitions. I think the reason why there are gimmicks in church politics in Pentecostalism is that ‘competition’ in the church is viewed as a carnal act. The church must realise that if some people are eyeing for the church positions, there is competition. Competition can be a game, with one winner at the end. However, it is difficult in church when competition requires pulling down a brother. Smith et al.(2012) argue that what is worrisome in competition is the idea of pride, judgement, rivalry, and idolatry. Although the Christian race calls for the race to love, a race of faith and race of perseverance; the

Pentecostals must harness the theology of competition and enter into meaning political campaigning in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

The findings of this article have some practical implications, which can influence systems of governance. The religious institutions have a rich heritage for altering values of good governance and responsible citizenry. The capability of the AFM to interact with people of differing professionals and social status is a strategic place to influence good governance. However, faith claims such as relying on the supernatural for control, love, and justice are positive attributes which can contribute to good governance in Zimbabwe. There is a need for moving from the politicising religions and centre on the Christianisation of politics whereby the believers can be at the centre stage of politics. It is at this nexus that the followers can influence their ethos on good governance in Zimbabwe. The theology of competition is a building block for allowing Pentecostals to participate in politics and build good citizenry.

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