

Chapter 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.0 Introduction

The rise of African Initiated Churches (AICs) has ushered diverse understandings and approaches to theology. The traditional understanding to theology has been heavily criticized as inapplicable to the African context. The proponents of this argument who are mainly Pentecostal leaders move a motion that the biblical offices of prophets in the Old Testament and apostles in the New Testament should be upheld in the modern church. In this regard most Pentecostal leaders are tagged with the titles Prophet or Apostle more than they use the ecclesiastical title of Bishop which is prevalent in the protestant churches. Prophets such as Eubert Angel are said to move in the prophetic dimension characterized by prophetic utterances and disclosure of hidden mysteries in peoples' lives. This has caused huge theological and biblical debate hence this study will try to explore the credibility of modern Pentecostal Prophetism from a biblical perspective.

1.1 Area of Investigation

This dissertation falls under Old Testament Studies as well as Christianity in Africa. The main thrust of this is to examine whether the type of Prophetism being exhibited in Pentecostal settings is consistent with the type of Prophetism exhibited in the Old

Testament known as ecstatic prophecy. More so, looking on the contribution of the Old Testament to the development of Pentecostal Prophetism this study will follow all prophetic traits of the 'Pentecostals', using 'Prophet' Eubert Angel, founder and senior pastor of Spirit Embassy Church in Harare. I have deliberately used the term Pentecostal in quotes because, in as much as this movement is referred as such, it is rightly termed (AICs), African Independent churches or African initiatives in Christianity.

1.2 Justification

The Pentecostal movement is a very dynamic movement which focuses on different aspects of the Christian faith. When the movement started its main focus was the charismatic gift of speaking in tongues, then the focus shifted to faith healing, then prosperity. In recent a time, the budge has been termed the 'prophetic dimension'. Although some conservative scholars have termed this to be a trite heresy, the practice tends to have a biblical basis.

C. Forbes argues that, the practice is not of Christian origin but of Judaic nature. However on the other hand, it can be argued that Christianity was birthed in a Jewish cradle hence it is inevitable to have these Judaic traits. Other scholars like H. A. Guy also argue that Christian doctrine cannot be founded on the basis of the Old Testament but solely on the New Testament. They further argue that the Old Testament can only be either an affirmation or shadow of the Christian doctrines

founded on the New Testament foundations hence they deem the Modern Pentecostal ecstatic prophetic practice a fallacy and heresy.

It is interesting how we can draw parallels between Old Testament prophecy, pre-classical in particular and modern Pentecostal Prophetism hence this research will establish the authenticity and palability of modern Pentecostal Prophetism using 'Prophet Eubert Angel' as a case study.

1.3 Problem Statement

The advent of the Pentecostal prophetic movement has hit Zimbabwe and thus resulting in a serious exodus from the protestant churches, moreover commotion and confusion wrought into Christendom. The fundamental basis of the Christian faith has been shaken from Christ being the centre of faith to prophesy of the day.

1.4 Aim of Study

To establish the extent to which the Pentecostal prophetic dimension is biblical and to draw lessons for the protestant churches.

1.5 OBJECTIVES

For such an aim to be achieved the following objectives should be met:

- To establish the origin of Pentecostal Prophetism

- To evaluate whether Pentecostal Prophetism is consistent with Old testament Prophetism
- To establish the social and theological implications of modern Pentecostal prophetism in the Zimbabwean society.
- To pencil in lessons for the protestant churches in order to curb an exodus of people to Pentecostal churches

1.6 Methodology

The approach taken in this research makes certain methodological assumptions. The methods which will be used are the historical, hermeneutical, comparative, and theological methods. Other research tools employed are the secondary tools such as observation and interviews.

1.6.1 HISTORICAL METHOD

The historical method is a methodology that is unique; it is a technique that looks at a specific area of study from the past. In this study archaeological data and oral tradition become critical. M. Chiwawa asserts that, "its uniqueness is in that; it does not start from assumptions as the point of departure but it starts from a historical fact"¹ that has to be examined. This method is critical in establishing the origin of biblicalecstatic prophecy, its traits, characteristics and practice. According Edgar Krentz, "The historical critical method produces history in the modern sense,"² for it consciously and critically investigates

biblical documents to write a narrative of the history they reveal hence I will use this tool to establish facts about the origins of biblical prophecy. This methodology has its own strengths and weaknesses. Its potency is in that it is a method that deals with empirical evidence, it is also based on facts with traceable records however, it may be abated by the fact that information is dynamic over time hence it may not be relevant as it were during its time.

1.6.2 Hermeneutical Method

The hermeneutical method is a method that is based on biblical interpretation. Moisés Silva asserts that, “even though the term hermeneutics is like a moving target when it comes to defining it, its traditional meaning refers to a discipline that deals with interpretation.”³ This scientific method of interpretation makes it possible to focus on language and history hence making it easier to establish the correct meaning and context of the biblical text. The hermeneutical method will be used together with the exegetical method in order to establish facts that are deduced from the original context about biblical ecstatic prophecy. The hermeneutical method boasts on the basis of the scripture alone as its basis however on the other hand, the understanding of this same scripture is subjective and hence it tends to be biased.

1.6.3 Theological Method

Mildred J Erickson says , “ A theological method seeks to understand the God revealed in the Bible and to provide a Christian understanding that helps and lead towards coherent whole”.⁴ The theological understanding of a certain group of people shapes their identity, ideologies and practices. The theological method will then be applied in this study to establish whether or not these practices are coherent and consistent with conservative protestant theologies. The theological method will also help us to ascertain the implications of such prophetism in Zimbabwean Christendom. The strength of this method is that we can only understand practices in Christendom only from a theological perspective. Again, this method may be shot down by the fact that it is subjective. Each grouping of people have their own theology.

1.6.4 Comparative Method

The chief method in this study is the comparative method. It is a method that takes two or three items side by side to critique either one or more of them in order to establish their tenets. W.R. Borg in M. Chiwawa asserts that, “a comparative research method is applied when one wants to establish coherence and consistency.”⁵ It explores the similarities and differences in two or more research areas. In this case this method will be used to compare modern Pentecostal prophetism and Old Testament ecstatic Prophetism. The comparative method is superior in that it takes the subject of study and the standard side by side in order to extract facts. Its weakness is that no two things are the same no matter how identical they are hence comparing them will be difficult.

1.7 Research Tools

The tools used to make this research quantitative and qualitative are extra Biblical sources (secondary sources), observation, newspapers, interviews, unpublished sources.

1.7.1 Observation

This tool involves scrutiny so the researcher will attend some of the church services at Hubert Angel's Spirit embassy church to establish the type of prophetism that is practiced. This method also involves observation of the congregation's response to the prophecy. The researcher will take three (3) to five (5) observation sessions in order to come up with conclusive results. R. C Bodganargues that the researcher should always stay at a mid-point of being a complete observer and being in complete involvement in research.⁶

1.8 Literature Review

This is an endeavor to comment on what is already known from scholarship about a particular subject matter by collecting different sources , synthesizing and analyzing such sources critically . The purpose of literature review for the present study is not only to locate this dissertation in a larger ongoing dialogue but also to map out the scope of the research problem and to clarify the research objectives in terms of gaps identified in the available body of knowledge. The literature review undertaking is also expected to help clarify the underlying assumptions and, hence, refine the theory that frames the subject and aim of the study. Such scholarly ideas have been of great aid to both my academic,

theological and biblical analysis of the origins, practices and developments of Pentecostal prophetism

1.8.1.W. Eichrot's arrangement in his Old Testament theology vol. 1 is, God and people, God and the world and God and man. For him covenant relationship is key and so is the communication between God and people. Eichrot explicitly outlines the role of prophets and prophecy in ancient Israel. Eichrot suggests that prophetic ecstasy may have sprung up from the group frenzy of the cultic dance, but he is in line with the modern revolt against regarding all prophets as ecstatic cult specialists⁷. This will give a clear basis for comparison in this paper.

18.2 J.N Schofield, outlines in his work, Introducing Old Testament theology, under the chapter entitled, "God who speaks", that the origin and significance of prophecy in the Old Testament. Schofield delineates how and why God spoke through prophets in the Old Testament times. He explores the role of prophets as messengers. This work is going to help me to establish the theological characteristics of prophets in the Old Testament.

18.3 Johannes Lindblom in his work, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, explores the nature, scope and practices of prophecy in ancient Israel. In this work Lindblom explores how prophecy became a part of the Israelite community. His work explicates the characteristics of prophecy in ancient Israel thereby making it easy to compare it with modern Pentecostal prophetism. In his study, Lindblom uses the historical critical

method which also helps in making identities of the *sitz-im-leben*. This approach will also help me in this study to compare the socio- political and religious settings of ecstatic prophecy in ancient Israel and Morden Pentecostal Prophetism.

18.4 Kenneth Hagin has many pieces of work on Pentecostal charismatic prophecy but key to this subject is his book, The ministry of a prophet, in which he outlines the centrality of ecstasy. In this work he also makes a distinction between prophecy as a gift and prophecy as a vocation or an office. This will help us to clarify the basis of Morden Pentecostal prophetism.

1.8.5 Oral Roberts, in his autobiographical publication, Expect a Miracle: My Life and Ministry: An Autobiography, emphasises the importance of prophecy in the Pentecostal movement. For Roberts, in his work, prophecy has a 'dispensation' where it will take centre stage. He also highlights that the mode of prophecy is not important but he argues that the question should be whether God's message has been relayed to His people.

End notes

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4. M.J. Erickson, Christian Theology.1989, p.23
5. W.R. Borg, in M. Chiwawa, Op.Cit, p.212
6. R. C. Bodgan, Qualitative Research For Education, 1992, p. 343
7. W. Eichrot, Old Testament Theology Vol.1, 1961, p. 313

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND OF PROPHECY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore prophecy in general and the expression of the phenomenon in the biblical text. The investigation will mainly be centred on Old Testament prophecy although a brief survey on New Testament prophecy will be considered in order to explicate the study.

2.2 A Background of Prophecy In General

The English term “prophecy,” is an Anglicized Greek word, προφήτης (*prophetes*), which is derived from two root words, a prefix, προ (*pro*), which has several nuances depending on the context in which it is used, but is commonly used to denote “before” or “for”, and φημι (*phemi*) which may be rendered to mean “to say” or “to speak”¹. The term προφήτης (*prophetes*) can therefore refer to someone who

“speaks before” in the temporal sense of proclaiming in prediction, or in the explicit sense of speaking on behalf of another person. In both cases the implicit idea is that the speaker acts as a spokesperson or mouthpiece of another person or being. In ancient Greek lexicology, the term προφήτης (*prophetes*) referred to someone who spoke for a god and thus interpreted the will of the god to human beings².

Prophecy is therefore a product of either revelation or inspiration or both. Emil Brunner notes that “the concept of revelation, in some form or other, is as widespread as the idea of God.”³ Brunner goes on to note that in the ancient world of the Judeo-Christian faiths origins, the idea of revelation, whether in the form of “primitive mantic practices of divination in order to discover the will of the gods or again for the teaching of thinkers who claimed to have received supernatural ‘illumination’ in a state of ecstasy, was taken for granted and generally believed.”⁴The notion of ‘inspiration’ is understood as an invasive divine compulsion or an overwhelming divine presence that is often experienced in prophetic activities as a feeling of energy and compulsion. Johannes Lindblom observes that “when inspiration strongly intensifies it turns into ecstasy ... a mental state in which one has a feeling that the soul leaves the body.”⁵The “hand of Yahweh” metaphor is often used in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Ezekiel, to signify an overpowering presence of God’s Spirit, for example, in Ezekiel 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40.

2.3 Prophecy: A Biblical Perspective

The biblical survey undertaken in this section is, methodologically, not an exhaustive exegetical and hermeneutical analysis of biblical prophecy; rather, it is just a hermeneutical illustration of the phenomenon of prophecy from a broad biblical perspective. This survey will deduce major traits of biblical prophecy which will be used in comparing it with modern Pentecostal prophecy

2.3.1 Prophecy In The Old Testament

The phenomenon of prophecy in the context of the ancient Israelite faith and its Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) religious milieu was generally understood as the human transmission of divine messages, thereby revealing the divine will to humans.⁶ Although the phenomenon of prophecy is portrayed in the Old Testament in a variety of ways, the aspect of intermediary transmission, or proclamation of divine messages to human audience, is generally viewed as the key characteristic of the Old Testament prophecy. Thus the flow of the prophetic intermediary direction is divine-to-human, and, therefore, the initiative for prophecy is always divine.

S. Mundie, Suggests that Johannes Lindblom notes that the Hebrew Version (LXX) of the Old Testament uses a number of role labels that appear to convey various degrees of the phenomenon of prophecy:

These include נָבִיא as the generic word for “prophet” in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Num 12:6; Deut 13:2), רוֹאֵה “Seer” or “Diviner” (e.g. 2 Sam 15:27; 1 Chr 9:22; Isa 9:9), חֹזֵה “Visionary” (e.g. 1 Chr 21:9; Isa 29:10; Amos 7:12), אֱלֹהֵימָאִישׁ “Man of God” (e.g. Deut 33:1; Josh 14:6; 1 Kgs 12:13). The various

role labels could be indicative of nuanced prophetic manifestations. On the other hand, the different role labels could be indicators of different regional names for the same phenomenon. For example, the role label, רוֹאֵה (seer) is mostly used in the Northern Kingdom prophetic books of the Bible while the role label הִנֵּן visionary is most prevalent in the Southern Kingdom prophetic books. In addition, there appears to have been a temporal semantic development of the role labels. Thus, for example, “formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, ‘Come let us go to the seer, רוֹאֵה,’ because the prophet, נְבִיא, of today used to be called a seer, רוֹאֵה, (1 Sam 9:9).⁷

The key characteristic of intermediary transmission of divine messages as highlighted by Mundie provides a generic definition using role labels, of an Old Testament prophet as “a person who, because he is conscious of having been specially chosen and called, feels forced to perform actions and proclaim ideas which, in a mental state of intense inspiration or real ecstasy, have been indicated to him in the form of divine revelations.

Other biblical scholars, however, critique Lindblom’s definition on the grounds that his emphasis on the divine influence undervalues the role of the prophet’s personality and rationality in the formulation and transmission of the prophetic message. An alternative view of prophecy in ancient Israel and in the ancient Near Eastern milieu highlights the rational cognitive role of the prophet. For example, Hans M. Barstad defines such a prophet as:

A person, male or female, who, through a cognitive experience, a vision, an audition, a dream or the like, becomes the subject of the revelation of a deity

or several deities, and is conscious of being commissioned by the deity/deities in question to convey the revelation in speech or through metalinguistic behaviors, to a third party who constitutes the actual recipient of the message.⁸

Old Testament prophecy is also portrayed as a divine-human dialectic; in certain prophetic oracles, the prophet utilizes the annunciation formula, “thus says Yahweh” (e.g. Isa 37: 21; 50:1; 56:1), thereby appearing to function as a mere mouthpiece of Yahweh, while at other times the prophet speaks as a narrator, and thus portrays an anthropological dimension in the conceptualization of the prophetic proclamation. For example, the prophet Amos often uses the narrative introductory formula: “This is what the Sovereign Yahweh showed me” (Amos 7:1; 8:1). William McKane describes the anthropological dimension as the “transmutation of a prophet’s meeting with God ... the prophet absorbs the mysterious experience into his humanity, filtering it through human modes of apprehension and evaluation, and causing it to issue in a linguistic form which is human and not divine.”⁹

The Old Testament locates the etymology of Old Testament prophecy in the Sinaitic theophany where a covenant relationship between Israel and Yahweh, the God of Israel, was consummated and ratified by means of a covenant code (Exod 20:23- 23:19).¹⁰The Deuteronomist recounts the covenant-making episode (Deut 5:1-33) and then traces the provenance of the Israelite prophecy to that moment when the Israelites desired an intermediary to speak to them on behalf of Yahweh, rather than Yahweh speaking to them directly: Yahweh (יְהוָה), your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the LORD

our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die. The LORD said to me: 'What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words into his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.' (Deut 18:15-18). The provenance of the Old Testament prophecy is thus portrayed as a mediated revelatory presence of an awe-inspiring Almighty God to human finitude that is otherwise overwhelmed by an unmediated overwhelming divine presence: Yahweh descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called... when the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, 'speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die (Exod 19:20; 20:18-19).

In view of invasive prophecy, Rudolf Otto describes the feeling of being overwhelmed by divine presence as *mysterium tremendum* or "the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures."¹¹ The phenomenon of prophecy that is attested in the Old Testament is portrayed as a prophetic charisma as well as a prophetic vocation. Notable Old Testament prophetic figures, such as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, are not only referred to as prophets, (1 Kgs 18:36; 2 Kgs 9:1; Isa 37:2; Jer 1:5; Ezek 2:5), but their whole life spans are characterized by the exercise of prophecy as a vocation. The nature of their prophetic manifestations is, usually, either invasive or non-invasive. In the former category, the prophetic manifestation is an immediately inspired proclamation without plural rendering since the general content of the pericope intimates a successive series of prophets. John Penney notes that "a mosaic origin for a prophetic office within Israel seems evident from Deut 18:14- 22 which explicitly relates to the Sinai covenant."¹²

The inference here is that Old Testament prophecy was divinely initiated in any apparent prior reflection on the part of the prophet. For example, “then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the thirty, and he said...” (1 Chr12:18). Max Turner notes that, in invasive prophecy, “the Spirit is conceived of as strongly stimulating the speech event itself and granting some kind of immediate inspiration of its revelatory content”.¹³

Non-invasive prophecy is essentially a prophetic report of a prior revelation in which the prophet appears to have reflected on the revelatory encounter with Yahweh and formulated it in the form of a report of what God had revealed to him or her. Elijah’s prophetic report to King Ahab appears to fit the category of non-invasive prophecy (1 Kgs 21:20- 24). The apparently non-invasive prophecy is portrayed as a consequence of a prophet having “stood,” or having become privy, to a heavenly council, thereby signifying a prior encounter with Yahweh. For example, the prophet Jeremiah, in his polemic against false prophets, rhetorically depicts them as people who had not been privy to the council of God; “but which of them had stood in the council of Yahweh to see or to hear his word?” (Jer 23:18), to which Yahweh’s rejoinder is: “but if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my word to my people” (Jer 23:22a). The inference here is that Old Testament prophecy was divinely initiated in entirety, even as the New Testament writer reminds his audience that the Old Testament prophecy did not originate from human will or human reasoning (2 Pet 1:20-21).

There are also other prophetic manifestations in the Old Testament which appear to be associated with liturgical worship. The Chronicler, for instance, gives accounts of several people in the Davidic temple *cultus* (1 Chr 6:31- 48; 25:1- 31; 2 Chr 20:14- 17) who had been appointed by King David “for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals” (1 Chr 25:1b). Although their ‘prophetic’ activities appear to have been intermittent and part of their liturgical service in the temple, the term ‘prophecy’ as applied by the Chronicler had, plausibly, a wider hermeneutical significance than simply proclamation of divine oracles; prophecy as a mediated revelatory presence of God could also include such liturgical activities as music. This is perhaps the role that earned Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, the title of “prophet” (Exod 15: 20) although no explicit prophetic activity is ever associated with her in the Bible except her leadership in the liturgical Song of the Sea: “then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them ...” (Exod15:20- 21). Liturgical music is therefore portrayed as instrumental in the mediation of divine presence, even as the case of Elisha (2Kgs 3:15, 16) also illustrates that music played an intermediary role in the execution of prophecy in ancient Israel.

J. Blenkinsopp notes that, in the case of the “levitical prophecy,” both prayer and praise were essentially the words of God inspired to the prophet in the first instance: The Levites who sang and prayed in the temple were called ‘prophets,’ for when they prayed, and sang, and played, divine inspiration descended upon them ... prayers to God consist of words that God has put in our mouth... thus some Jewish sages regarded the entire book of psalms as a work of prophecy¹⁴.

Liturgical worship is thus viewed as a symbolic response to the experience of God's presence. J. D. Crichton utilizes Rudolf Otto's portrayal of a numinous encounter as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* "awe-full, numinous and gracious" to convey the essence of prophecy as divine presence that confers divine grace, as he defines worship as, "a reaching out through the fear that always accompanies the sacred to the *mysterium* conceived as *tremendum* but also *fascinans*, because behind it and in it there is an intuition of the transcendent."¹⁵ According to this definition, therefore, worship is germane to prophecy in that it not only opens one's spirit to divine encounter but is also a responsive expression of an intuitive experience of the *mysterium tremendum* of divine presence; hence Crichton's further assertion that "because it is God who always takes the initiative, Christian worship is best discussed in terms of response; in worship, man is responding to God" or uttering divinely-inspired words.¹⁶

The general inference emerging from the above survey is that Old Testament prophecy was multifaceted and complex. Although the Hebrew term נָבִיא (prophet) appears to have achieved prominence as the generic term for the intermediary functionaries, the varieties and modes of prophetic functions still persisted throughout the Old Testament period. This has led Ronald Clements to remark that, "it is not possible to construct a consistently homogeneous prophetic theology underlying the variegated types of prophets and prophecies portrayed in the Old Testament"¹⁷. Nonetheless, the dominant motifs of Old Testament prophecy that emerge from the above survey are that the ancient Israelite prophecy was a revelatory experience of divine presence, that the prophet was the human medium who received and proclaimed the divine revelation, and that divinely-inspired

liturgical utterances were also, plausibly, viewed as prophecy in the sense that they mediated the immediacy of divine presence.

2.3.2 Prophecy in the New Testament Church

The phenomenon of prophecy observed in the New Testament Church is understood variously. Whereas some theological scholars espouse a dispensational approach which posits that prophecy was intrinsically related to the dispensation of the formation of the biblical canon, and therefore ceased with the formation of the canon, such scholars include the likes of F. D. Farnell who argues that “prophecy of both testaments was foundational and linked to closure of the respective canons; hence prophetic claims after Malachi and after the formative revelatory period of the early church are to be rejected as false.”¹⁸ John Penney adds that “cessationists argue from the testimony of 1 Cor 13:8-12 and the judgment threatened in Rev 22:18-19, that true prophecy ceased with the completion of the canon.”¹⁹ However, as John Penney aptly points out, 1 Cor 13:8-12 most likely refers to the cessation of tongues and prophecy at the parousia, as intimated thus: “Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gifts as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed”(1 Cor 1:7).²⁰

Contrary to scholars who give acclamation to the cessation theory, J. Panagopoulos suggests that there is a general consensus in scholarship that there were continuing forms of prophetic manifestations in the New Testament incipient Church, some of which were essentially a continuation of the Old Testament prophetic forms as he notes that “the manifestations of prophecy in the New Testament church are best understood in the light of their background in Israel and in the mission of Jesus.”²¹ The New Testament apostolic

writings portray Jesus Christ as the ultimate revelatory presence of God (1 Tim 2: 5; Heb 8: 6; 9:15; 12:24). The Apocalypse of John also depicts Jesus Christ as the ultimate revelation of God and that his revelatory presence constitutes the charism of the New Testament prophecy (Rev 19:10).

A survey of the usage of the word “prophecy” in the books of the New Testament reveals that, of the 144 occurrences, 123 of them refer to Old Testament prophets, while the remaining occurrences refer to Jesus Christ, to John the Baptist, the incipient Church prophetic figures, such as Agabus (Acts 11: 28; 21:10), the prophets at Antioch (Acts 13:1-2), Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32), and daughters of the Evangelist Philip (Acts 21: 9).²² In addition, there are other references to prophetic manifestations among early church believers. For example, some disciples in Ephesus are reported to have prophesied when Paul placed his hands on them; “they spoke in tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19: 6). Nonetheless, all forms of New Testament church prophecy appear to be subsumed under the authority of Jesus Christ as the ultimate prophetic- revelatory presence of God.²³

The Early Church prophecy as gleaned from the New Testament texts appears to have been, characteristically, invasive prophetic manifestations in congregational settings, though a few people appear to have functioned as prophets in the ministry of the early church.²⁴ However, the phenomenon of prophecy witnessed in the New Testament incipient church should, ideally, be visualized in terms of two modes: a temporal and authoritative apostolic-canonical mode of prophecy in line with the Old Testament canonical prophecy, and a less authoritative but enduring form of congregational prophecy manifestations. The Apocalypse of John is portrayed as canonical prophecy in line with Old Testament canonical prophecy

(Rev1:3; 22:18) as well as the other New Testament writings which are equated with “the other (Old Testament) scriptures” (2 Pet 3:15-16). However, congregational prophetic manifestations, such as are witnessed in the Corinthian church (1 Cor 12-14), were viewed as a less authoritative form of prophecy which needed to be evaluated to determine whether the prophetic utterances were acceptable to the church (1 Cor14:29; 1 Thess 5:19- 21).²⁹²

4.4 CONCLUSION

The apologists of the non-cessation theory which states that the charisms that are mentioned in the bible are continuing to this day use the New Testament to connect the charismatic practices to the Old Testament. The prevalence of the prophetic practice in both the Old and the New Testaments acts as a pillar for the emergence of Pentecostal Prophecy.

Endnotes

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Chapter three

PROPHECY IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Theodore. E. Long rightfully said, “religious prophecy seems to become entangled with politics almost inevitably...whatever their content, prophetic claims raise the issues of social authority, creating opportunities....”.¹ the advent of crisis in Zimbabwe that was characterized by an economic meltdown and political upheaval also created a centre stage for the rising of Pentecostal prophecy in the land. Many pastors discarded the title, “Pastor” for a seemingly higher title of Prophet. This caused the rise of prophetic figures like, Prophet Emanuel Makandiwa, Prophet Magaya and Prophet Eubert Angel amongst many. This chapter will focus on the rise of Prophet Eubert Angel, his personality and his ministry.

In order to gain an inductive understanding of the phenomenon of charismatic prophecy within the selected Pentecostal-charismatic congregational settings, it was decided to begin

the empirical-biblical cycle with an exploratory case study. The purpose of the exploratory case study was to gauge the validity and reliability of the proposed methodology, aid in the development and clarification of the research problem, and gain some heuristic knowledge of charismatic prophecy in a Pentecostal-charismatic congregational setting. Thus the exploratory case study was part of the process of the research design in order to establish the construct validity in terms of whether the content of the research problem was relevant to the phenomenon under study, and reliability in terms of whether the process by which the study questions were to be applied was operationally precise with respect to the phenomenon under study.¹ The exploratory case study also served the purpose of theory confirmation in terms of comparing the researcher's heuristic pre-understandings of the phenomenon of charismatic prophecy with the inductive knowledge emerging from the exploratory case study.

John. Creswell notes that "no qualitative study begins from pure observation ... prior conceptual structures composed of theory and method provides the starting point for all observations."²The heuristic pre-understandings of the researcher, as modified or adjusted on the basis of the exploratory case study data and on the basis of literature review, were then developed into broad theoretical constructs that were subsequently deductively evaluated through explanatory case studies. This process is consistent with Rossman and Rallis' observation that qualitative research process is emergent, rather than tightly prefigured, and that it moves dialectically between induction and deduction.³

3.2 The Case Study Setting

The congregation for the case studies was chosen on the basis of strategic and practical considerations, including a reported prevalence of charismatic prophecy manifestations in the congregations, prior acquaintance of the researcher with the church leadership and congregation, ease of access to the church locations, and the perception, by the church leadership and congregation, of the researcher as an insider, or as 'one of their own,' in terms of faith and Pentecostal-charismatic experiences of the *charisms* of the Holy Spirit. In addition to church attendance, the researcher had access to church documentary resources including electronic recordings of church worship gatherings, 80 church bulletins, and the Spirit Embassy satellite channel found on Free-to-Air satellite decoders as well as the pastorate library of books and a repertoire of electronic- sermonic materials.

The congregation selected for the exploratory case study was part of a denominational network of over one hundred Pentecostal-charismatic congregations spread all over Zimbabwe. The denomination is one of the emergent independent African initiated Pentecostal-charismatic churches in Zimbabwe. Most of the African initiated churches are either conversions of foreign missionary churches into locally constituted churches through the initiative of local leaders, or outright breakaways from foreign missionary denominations, or African initiatives inspired by foreign missionary denominations or travelling evangelists. Either way, the emerging 'African Initiated Churches,' which are usually, identified by the acronym 'AICs' are, in effect, African initiatives in Christianity. Thus the common feature of the various referents of the acronym 'AIC,' such as 'African Independent Churches,' 'African Initiatives in Christianity,' or 'African Instituted Churches,' is that they are Christian initiatives by Africans.⁴

Although in the past scholars have attempted to draw distinctions between traditional or native African Instituted Churches, or “spiritual churches,” and the more recent movement of independent African initiated Pentecostal-charismatic churches, the influence of the latter on the former has been so overwhelming that the distinctions between the two are increasingly getting blurred.⁵ Harold Turner’s definition of an AIC as “a church which has been founded in Africa, by Africans and primarily for Africans,”⁶ is no longer an apt description of the emerging African initiatives in Pentecostal-charismatic churches; many of them have close collaborations with foreign churches, foreign missionaries and traveling evangelists. The distinguishing mark of the African initiatives in Christianity is, in the words of Inus Daneel, “their interpretation of the Bible, distinctive forms of worship, and modified rites (which) are part of an authentic indigenous response to the Gospel, an independent momentum free of European supervision, and of the radical spirit which would have characterized a real reaction to mission.”⁷

However, as Philomena Mwaura observes, the African initiated charismatic or neo-Pentecostal churches, which are increasingly forming linkages with the global Pentecostal-charismatic movement, are tendentially aligning themselves with modernity and “in their quest for modernity, they have tended to adopt Western technology; this increases the force of externality in African Christianity.”⁸

3.3 The Spirit Embassy Church

The denomination which is the subject of the present case studies, The Spirit Embassy that is led by Prophet Eubert Angel, is a typical African Christian initiative which emerged in 2008 in Zimbabwe, Southern Africa, after the founder and president of the church Eubert

Angel returned from the United Kingdom. Eubert Angel is born Eubert Madzanire who hails from Gutu in Masvingo. The Standard newspaper writes about his identity and says, “He appropriately renamed himself to ‘bring himself to the spotlight’⁹. Although literature on Eubert Angel and Spirit Embassy is scanty, the researcher is familiar with the origins and development of the church, and the following historical account includes personal recollections of the researcher.

Spirit Embassy became one of the fastest growing Pentecostal-charismatic churches in Zimbabwe in 2009. The founder (Eubert Angel) has a spiritual father in Ghana by the name Prophet K. Boateng whom he shares sonship with his local companion prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa. The church mobilized young people, with its modern electric musical instruments and contemporary Christian music rendered in African tunes and rhythms, into mass evangelistic crusades all over the country and beyond. The apparent success of the initial Spirit Embassy evangelistic crusades (in terms of mass conversions and, reportedly, attendant miraculous healings, exorcisms of demonic spirits, and prophetic utterances), attracted the attention of Western Pentecostal-charismatic evangelists, such as Reinhart Bonnke, Morris Cerullo, T. L. Osborn, Rex Humbard, among other, whose ministries partnered up with Spirit Embassy in their evangelistic thrust and thus popularized the church nationwide and beyond.

3.4 Participant Observation

The congregation selected for the case study is the Spirit Embassy Church in Harare which gathers at the City Sports Centre that is reportedly renowned for their pronounced manifestations of the *charisms* of the Holy Spirit, including glossolalic and prophetic

utterances, 'miraculous' healings, and deliverances from 'demonic' oppressions. The process of conducting the exploratory case study, began with an informal attendance at church worship gatherings of the selected congregation. Initially the congregation pastor was requested not to announce the researcher's presence or intention. The purpose of the request was to ensure that participants were not conscious of being under observation, and hence to secure a natural observational setting.

The researcher attended five Sunday Morning and Sunday Evening worship gatherings, three Wednesday Evening prayer meeting, and two Friday "Watchnight" service, an overnight prayer meeting held every Friday night in the church and popularly known in the Shona language as *Pungwe*, over a period of five month in December to April 2014. An apt description of a typical Pentecostal- charismatic "worship" gathering is given by M. J. Cartledge, who, following Daniel E. Albrecht, notes that "worship includes a variety of components: singing, praying, a diminutive of Scripture reading and preaching, as well as alter calls or ministry times when people are prayed over for the work of the Holy Spirit to begin or increase in new or deeper ways."¹⁰

With the permission of one of the Senior Pastors, electronic recordings were made of every prophetic utterance in the church gatherings. After a relatively short period of time, the researcher had learnt when to expect prophetic utterances and other manifestations of the *charisms* of the Holy Spirit in the course of a congregational worship gathering. All worship meetings, including the weekday meetings, began with enthusiastic prayer and singing, with an accompaniment of musical instruments, notably electronic keyboards, electric guitars, drums, and other African musical paraphernalia. The musical orchestration was usually led

by a “worship leadership team” which appeared to comprise a few charismatic rhythmic vocalists who, intermittently, uttered exhortatory locutions urging the congregation to worship “in tongues” and thus to “open up to the presence of the Spirit” and to “expect the unexpected,” often uttered in Shona as *gadzirira Jehovha chikopokopo* “the unexpected can happen.” Some songs which were repeatedly and exultantly rendered, both in English and in Shona appeared to catalyze the worship sessions into climactic moments of manifestations of the *charisms* of the Holy Spirit. As the singing, clapping of hands, and dancing reached a climactic crescendo, the worship leadership team would lead the congregation into singing and praying in glossolalia; the scenario turned into what may be dialectically described as a cacophonous ensemble of glossolalia, or what the Senior Pastor, in an interview, described as the moment when “heaven comes down.”

The climactic atmosphere was, in one sense, eerie and unsettling but, in another sense, resplendently transcendent as the congregants appeared to transcend themselves and enter into a ‘heavenly’ atmosphere. It was in this atmosphere of apparent self-transcendence that some congregants would jerk and fall down, while others would let out what sounded like weird shrieks. The latter attracted the attention of the pastoral team who immediately swung into action to ‘cast out demons’ from the ‘shrieking’ congregants. Other congregants would shout that they had been healed and/or set free from “demonic oppression.” As the atmosphere appeared to calm down, there would be sudden irruptions of glossolalic utterances that sounded distinctively invasive. Each prophetic utterance was usually received with a thunderous applause and shouts of “hallelujah,” “prophecy papa”, “amen,” or “thank you Jesus and sometimes just an eerie of screams and shouts.”

End Notes

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Chapter four

BIBLICAL PROPHECY AND PENTECOSTAL PROPHETISM: A COMPARISON

4.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe has in the recent past witnessed an unprecedented surge of Christian preachers who call themselves prophets/esses. Characteristically, these so called prophets/esses claim to work miracles; particularly miracles that ‘contradict’ the natural world. This has earned them huge numbers of both followers and critics. Grippingly, while admirers and followers quote the Bible to endorse them as true prophets, critics and skeptics also cite the same Bible to characterize them as false prophets. By appealing to the Bible, both camps might be wrong. The Bible may not have watertight criteria to distinguish true from false prophets. In other words, there is no distinction between a true and a false prophet in the Bible because fundamentally they are both called prophets! This chapter seeks to explore

whether the comparison between modern Pentecostal prophetism and biblical prophecy is enough to authenticate the phenomenon of Pentecostal prophetism as shown by Uebert Angel and others.

4.2 Development of Pentecostal prophetism in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has recently seen not only an increase in the number of Christian movements that have so far radically transformed the Christian landscape, but it has also seen an eruption of a phenomenon of 'prophets' that perform 'strange' miracles. From 2009, names that include, Uebert Angel and wife, prophetess Beverly of Spirit Embassy, prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa and wife, prophetess Ruth of United Family International Church, prophet Tavonga Vutabwashe of Heartfelt International Ministries, prophet Passion Java and wife prophetess Yasmin of Kingdom Embassy, prophet Adventure Mutepfa (Revival Centre World Ministry), prophet Oliver Chipunza and prophetess Makanyara (now late) of Apostolic Flame Ministries of Zimbabwe, have made news headlines. In media terminology, stories about their exploits could be regarded as the most trending. And their popularity is increasing by the day. Generating much interest is their claim to perform 'extraordinary' miracles such as filling pockets, wallets and hands of believers with bank notes and gold nuggets. After prayer, followers open their eyes only to find their pockets and wallets full of money and gold nuggets in their palms. These prophets claim to heal any kind of sickness such as cancer, HIV, AIDS and even raise the dead. In full view of their congregations, some have caused people to instantly stop smoking, instantly lose weight up to 30kgs, and instantly grow full teeth that had long fallen. They usually confound their congregations by telling them their house numbers, cell phone numbers, Identity Numbers (IDs), car registration numbers and the colors of undergarments their followers would be wearing.

Other 'extra ordinary' miracles include children being born only after three days or just hours of conception and increasing fuel in cars instead of it getting used up as one drives. They also specialize in making accurate predictions of events that will happen in the near and distant future. In short, their miracles follow closely those performed by West African Pentecostal prophets such as T.B. Joshua of Synagogue Church of All Nations, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy (both of Nigeria) and Victor KusiBoateng of Ghana who is Angel's spiritual mentor, Godfather.

4.3 The Biblical basis of Pentecostal prophetism

All these miracles and the doctrine of prosperity which is the anchor of their preaching are therefore not entirely unknown in Zimbabwe and in Africa at large. They have been heard of; even in the history of Christianity such events and teachings are not new. In fact, in the Bible, working miracles seems to be one of the preoccupations of Israelite prophets, especially pre classical ones.¹ For instance, Abraham prayed for Abimelech and was instantly healed (Gen.20:7), Moses provided manna to hungry Israelites (Ex. 16:1ff), provided water out of the rock (Num 20:11ff), at Zarephath Elijah miraculously increased flour and oil, instead of these commodities being used up (1 Kgs. 17:9-16) and he raised the dead (1 Kgs. 17:17-12), Elisha increased oil and one jar of oil filled several jars until there was no more empty jar (2 Kgs. 4:1ff). Jesus in the New Testament is also depicted as one who performed similar miracles.

Zimbabwean prophets have therefore sought to closely follow these great Old Testament prophetic figures and Jesus. Their interest is to relive, to reenact the biblical times. In other words, they seek to dramatise¹ what they read in the Bible. Apostle Ezekiel Guti, in an interview suggested that, “the young and ambitious prophets also use the call of Nathaniel in John 1:43-51 to defend their prophecies. If Jesus could locate Nathaniel then by the same anointing God can use his prophets to locate an individual.² Thus Zimbabwe has always been inundated with stories of miracle workers, who perform miracles similar to the ones these great men of God performed, from time to time. Prophets in African Initiated Churches and traditional healers are known to perform such miracles. Followers of Prophet E.H. Guti and wife prophetess Eunor of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God, Africa Forward in Faith (ZAOGA_FIF), Andrew Wutawunashe and wife, prophetess Ruth of Family of God Church (FOG) and Matthias and Mildred of Matthias and Mildred Church have also claimed that their leaders perform such miracles. But the popularity of such individuals never reached that of Angel, Makandiwa and Vutabwashe, who attract around 45 000 followers every Sunday service. This has never happened in the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. People flock from as far as Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, and Mozambique to be ‘ministered’ to by these prophets.

Some suspect that, Angel and other prophets could be playing African magic acquired from either Nigeria or Ghana where such priests are common and one from Ghana has confessed that several pastors from across the globe including from Zimbabwe flock to him to get the magic to perform such miracles as making money. The Ghanaian magician claims that he makes ‘miracle money’ from nowhere.³ Also, that the whole Zimbabwean society could concentrate on such individuals to the extent that even politicians, technocrats,

economists discussed and consulted them is unprecedented in postcolonial Zimbabwe.⁴ Therefore, what is new is the popularity of the performers of such miracles and the rich pickings they get from these activities not the miracles.

In other words, the Zimbabwean society is abuzz with talk of their miraculous exploits. The discussions range from skepticism, outright dismissal of them as false prophets and their miracles as magic to admiration. At the centre of the arguments is the Bible. Those who dismiss them as false prophets appeal to the Bible and those who absolutely believe them as true prophets also cite the Bible. Such texts as Mark 16:17-18 which claim that 'and these signs will accompany those who believe...in my name they will drive out demons;...speak new tongues;...they will pick snakes with hands;...will drink poison (but) it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people and they will get well' and 1 Cor. 2:9, which says, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God prepared for those who love him' have often been cited by the followers in defence of their leaders. Also quoted often is John 14:12 which has Jesus promising disciples that, 'anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will even greater things than these'.⁵ For the followers of these prophets, these scriptures are being fulfilled in the ministries and miracles performed by Angel, Vutabwashe and Makandiwa among others. The prophets at the centre of the discussion also cite the Bible to show that they are indeed true prophets, followers of Christ. The main import of this article is to dismiss the criteria set in the Bible as not sacrosanct in dealing with such a complex phenomenon as prophecy, let alone distinguishing true and false prophets. Evidence shall be drawn especially from the Old Testament.

The problems faced regarding the criteria to distinguish who is a true and who is a false prophet is not a modern phenomenon. It is maybe as old as the institution of prophecy itself. The Old Testament bears evidence of a society similar to our own; a society grappling with the determination of true from false prophecy. While in ancient Israel, the society was provoked by the existence of conflicting messages from people who both claimed to be prophets of God, in our contemporary society, the existence of men and women who perform 'extraordinary' miracles seems to spark the debate more than conflicting messages. The clashes between Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal (and 400 prophets of Asherah) at Mt. Carmel (1Kgs 18: 16-40), that of Micaiah ben Imlah and Zedekiah (1 Kgs 22:24) and the one between Jeremiah and Hananiah (Jer. 28) are convincing evidence not only to the fact that in Israel conflicting theological convictions between prophets was the source of contradictory messages but also that this ideological clash in most cases ended up in real physical clashes/fist fighting and death. Thus, prophetic conflict in Israel was not uncommon and the reasons for their clashes varied.⁶ According to Robert Carroll, while prophetic conflict had been part and parcel of the Israelite society maybe from as far back as its origins, the problem became acute towards the end of the Judean Kingdom in the sixth century BCE.⁷ As one prophet said one thing, another said the opposite. This became confusing to the society until theologians of the era took it as their responsibility to advise the society on the criteria to differentiate true and false prophets. Unfortunately, some of these theologians were interested parties in that they were prophets themselves. As such, they premised themselves as true and condemned as false whoever had a contrary theological or political ideology to theirs.

While such prophets cum theologians thought their criteria were objective and water tight, the suggested criteria, as we look back, are very biased and can hardly solve the debate within our societies. Be that as it may, this attempt at establishing criteria of authenticity of prophets in Israel is captured in literature by Deuteronomist theologians/editors Deut 13:1-5; 18:15-22, Jeremiah 23:9-32 and Ezekiel 13. However, rather than solving the debate as regards to who exactly was a true prophet and who was a false one, the criteria set by the Deuteronomist theologians only provide very important insights into the dilemma that befell the society of Judah in trying to fish out false prophets from true prophets. And the same dilemma is on our societies. The criteria set by the Deuteronomists (and in the entire Bible) cannot help us solve the debate. While these criteria have been invoked as watertight by some in our contemporary world, (in Zimbabwe in particular) in the debate relating to numerous Pentecostal preachers who are called prophets, this research regards the criteria of following biblical traits as having failed to really make a distinction between true and false prophets.

The book of Deuteronomy offers maybe what could be the earliest and most comprehensive attempt by the society at establishing criteria to determine authentic and inauthentic prophets in Israel. For instance, in two separate but thematically related texts, Deuteronomy provides some criteria that have been cited over the ages as important for distinguishing true from false prophets, even in our midst. The first criterion proposed was 'speaking in the name of Yahweh'. A true prophet was to speak in the name of Yahweh. This criterion assumes that in Israel true prophets were messengers of Yahweh, hence were supposed to speak in his name. And they were supposed to invite listeners to worship Yahweh alone. Any prophet who spoke in the name of another god, or one who told the Israelite community

to worship other gods beside Yahweh was to be stoned to death (Deut 13:1-5). In the contemporary world, and especially for the ordinary readers of the Bible, this criterion is clear and has the capacity to flush out false prophets from true prophets. However, the matter of determining whether a prophet is true or false is not that simple.

Prophecy as a phenomenon is very complex. The main weakness of this criterion is that in ancient Israel, it only may have catered for the difference between foreign prophets and Israelite prophets. Indeed, prophets of Baal most likely spoke in the name of Baal and those of Yahweh spoke in the name of Yahweh. What this means is that the criterion did not solve the problem among Israelite prophets who all claimed to speak for Yahweh, yet they had contradictory messages. The same is true in our modern society. All individuals who claim to be prophets speak in the name of God, even though their messages some times are contradictory. Under such circumstances, who could we call true and who is false?

It was maybe due to the above weakness that Deuteronomists included another criterion that had to be considered also in the determination of who is false and who is true; the criterion of prediction and fulfillment (Deut 13:1-5; 18:21-22). In this sense, Deuteronomy assumes that a true prophet must speak in the name of Yahweh and the prediction must come to pass in the manner so predicted. From the point of view of the Deuteronomist theologians, the criterion of speaking in the name of Yahweh was supposed to be used simultaneously with that of prediction and fulfillment. If a prophet spoke in the name of Yahweh and predicted something which comes to pass, but goes ahead and calls upon the people to worship some other gods besides Yahweh, such a prophet was to be stoned (Deut 13:1-2). In the same manner, if he spoke in the name of Yahweh but the word was not

fulfilled, such a prophet was to be regarded as a false prophet, hence was supposed to be stoned to death (Deut 13:5; 18:20). With these criteria, maybe no contemporary man or woman who claims to be prophet would be stoned. They all would be attested as true, for most of their predictions have come to pass. But at the same time, they would all be stoned, since some of their predictions have not been fulfilled. As noted in the introduction, most (but obviously not all) of the predictions by Zimbabwean prophets for example are accurate and come to pass as predicted. In fact, in Zimbabwe, those in support of Angel, Vutabwashe and Makandiwa believe that these individuals are true prophets because their predictions have come to pass.

Critiquing the two criteria proposed by the Deuteronomist theologians, Carroll is apt when he observed that, 'it was too oversimplified an approach to the complex matter of prophecy'.⁸The criteria leave a lot of issues unattended to. Firstly, the criterion of prediction and fulfillment of events only caters for prophets who make short term predictions, such as: tomorrow you will die, you will get money, or next week or next year there will be drought, etc. But, prophets who make long term predictions were left '*unjudged*' until such a time predicted has lapsed. But some of these predictions took generations to be fulfilled, hence caused a lot of anxiety in the society (Ezek 12:27). And by the time the prediction was fulfilled, the concerned prophet may have died. What this means is that, prophets who made long term predictions would die false prophets.

In other words, they only could be taken as true prophets by later generations who would have witnessed the fulfillment of their predictions. But again, it depended on the memory of

the people from one generation to another; otherwise most of the predictions of these prophets would have been forgotten.

The second weakness is that this criterion is self-contradictory. While according to these theologians, a prediction was supposed to be fulfilled maybe in the prophet's life time, some of these Deuteronomist theologians included in their history, long term predictions; prophecies that were not to be fulfilled in the immediate future or in their life time. For example, 1 Sam 2:31-36 predicts what is in the very distant future and not yet conceivable. 1 Kings 13:2 also indicates that the prediction was made so many years back and the society may have forgotten about it. Another incident is that found in 2 Kings 13:15-19, where Elisha made a prediction but died before the prediction was fulfilled (2 Kgs. 13:20). Thus when we use the criterion of fulfillment of prediction, Elisha died a false prophet. The same conclusion could be reached regarding Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10, Jeremiah made a prediction that Judah would be released from Babylonian slavery after seventy years. Basing upon the criterion of fulfillment of prediction, Jeremiah would only be proven as a true prophet after seventy years. And by that time Jeremiah and most, if not all the people who were his audiences would have died. In short, Jeremiah, according to this criterion, died a false prophet.

The criterion has thus the propensity to dismiss as false all the prophets we have always regarded as true, such as Elisha, Jeremiah, Micah and Isaiah among others. Micah (5:5) and Isaiah (10:5) for example, predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Assyrians in the eighth century but Jerusalem was not destroyed by the Assyrians in the

eighth century.⁹It was destroyed instead by the Babylonians in 587, in the sixth century BCE. According to this criterion, Micah and Isaiah are false prophets.

A third weakness associated with the Deuteronomist theologians' criterion of prediction and fulfillment of prophecy is that it makes prediction the sole function of prophets. Of course prophets predicted and this is very pronounced in the Old Testament. In 1 Sam. 10:5 for example, Samuel predicted that Saul would come across a group of prophets, and it happened (1 Sam 10:10). In 1 Kings 11:26 Ahijah predicted the break of the kingdom and Jeroboam would be king over the northerners, Israel and it happened (1 Kgs. 12:20). Ahijah predicted that Jeroboam's ill son was going to die and it happened (1 Kgs. 14:12, 17) exactly as predicted. But equating prophecy with prediction is not always quite correct.⁹Prophets were first and foremost preachers, whose preaching was intended to cause change of attitude and change of action from the audience. Herbert Bess is therefore right when he observes that 'certainly the (Israelite) prophet did predict the future...but prediction (of the future) was not the larger part of prophecy; it was as much the prophet's responsibility to interpret correctly the past and the present'.¹⁰ In other words, what they predicted may be offset by the change of behavior of the people. In fact, most of the great prophets of Israel always connected their predictions of doom and gloom with hope and chance of repentance. They always wanted people to repent so as to avoid consequences which they predicted.

The fourth most important weakness of the criterion of fulfillment of prediction, as implied in Deuteronomy 13:1-5 especially is that even a false prophet could by chance predict what could come to pass. In other words, there was also a great chance that a prophet regarded

as genuine might on occasion be false and the so called false prophet might speak the truth (1 Kgs. 13:18).¹⁰ This scenario was witnessed in many other instances in the history of Israel. A prophet regarded as true would be deceived by God to prophesy falsehoods. He, in other words, would be given a false revelation by God. 1 Kings 22 is the classic example of divine deception; the fact that God could lie to true prophets so as to achieve certain goals. In this case, King Ahab consulted 400 prophets on whether he has to go for war or not. They all encouraged him to go claiming that God was with the king to give him victory (1 Kgs. 22:6). Yet, the text is very clear that the 400 prophets had been lied to by God (1Kgs. 22: 19-23). This means, had it not been the lying spirit from God that entered these prophets, they would have said the truth. In fact, it is clear that before this incident they always told the truth; they were true prophets.

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Chapter Five

MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Main Findings and Conclusions

The main findings of the study were that charismatic prophecy is an invasive oracular utterance inspired by a perceived immediacy of divine presence, or the Holy Spirit, which, perceptually, impacted the human deep unconscious dimension with revelatory impulses. Since the inspiration and the utterance were perceived to be impartations of the Holy Spirit, charismatic prophecy was viewed as a *charism* of the Holy Spirit, hence the appellation 'charismatic prophecy.' The contextual settings for charismatic prophecy experiences and manifestations were observed to be congregational worship gatherings at which hyper-

arousal rituals, such as exultant singing, passionate prayer, and glossolalic utterances, created a charismatic encounter or an ecstatic atmosphere which was also catalyzed by the worshippers' longing for, and expectancy of, divine presence and revelatory manifestations.

The nature of the charismatic prophecy experience was viewed as an intense ecstatic moment of a sacramental participation of the human deep unconscious dimension, or the human spirit, in the immediacy of divine presence, or the Holy Spirit which overwhelmed and infused the human conscious dimension, or the mind, with revelatory impulses. The revelatory impulses were, perceptually, thought to induce words, voices, images, or pictures, which the subject did not create consciously and which sprang up as promptings to speak forth. Charismatic prophecy was also viewed, conceptually, as a transpositional revelation in which an infinite-finite inequality negated any isomorphic coupling between infinite divine disclosure and finite human perception, conceptualization and articulation.

The divine disclosure was therefore adaptively framed, consciously or unconsciously, into phenomenal imageries amenable to human conceptualization and articulation. Thus charismatic prophecy was considered to be neither purely divine nor purely anthropological; rather, it was an immediacy of divine will and speech transpositionally expressed through human liberty and language. The utterance of charismatic prophecy was either a direct speech in a language native to, or understood by, a congregation, or a glossolalic utterance which was subsequently invasively uttered in vernacular as an 'interpretation' of the glossolalic prophecy. However, there appeared to be no isomorphic coupling between the glossolalic utterance and the subsequent 'interpretive' utterance; hence the plausibility of more than one 'interpretive' utterance of the same glossolalic prophecy. The critical

functional significance of charismatic prophecy was observed to be *paraklesis* ; it served to edify, encourage, and console a congregation in contextual situations. Charismatic prophecy was therefore viewed as a *kairological* word for specific people in specific contextual situations. Thus, unlike Scripture, the charismatic prophecy utterances were not viewed as having universal and abiding authority. However, the *paraklesis* effect of charismatic prophecy was perceived as impacting the hearers with an abiding-eschatological hope in the sense that human finitude was brought into an intense sacramental experience of eternal-eschatological divine presence.

In the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition studied, charismatic prophecy was the most treasured *charism* of the Holy Spirit because it brought about a real, rather than simply a propositional-doctrinal, presence of God which, perceptually, impacted both the prophecy speaker and the hearers with powerfully inspirational and transformational revelatory words of edification, encouragement, and consolation. The use of scriptural language in the charismatic prophecy utterances was perceived as a revelatory-auditory application of the letter of Scripture to specific contextual situations in real life. Hence the portrayal, in some quarters of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, of Scripture as *Logos* (Written Word) and charismatic prophecy as *Rhema* (Speaking Word).

The main findings summarized above appeared to correlate fairly well with the nature and significance of charismatic prophecy as portrayed in Scripture, in Church praxis in historical perspective, and as observed in other contemporary Pentecostal- charismatic contexts. The study findings therefore provide fairly robust empirical- biblical data which not only contributes to the range of empirical-biblical knowledge of the phenomenon of Pentecostal-

charismatic prophecy in general, and in the African context in particular, but also provides material for critical theological reflection.

The findings of the present study have significant implications for ministry in the African Pentecostal-charismatic church context. First, the observation that charismatic prophecy is a sacramental experience should enrich the African Pentecostal-charismatic sacramental theology by viewing the charismatic prophecy experience as a sacrament. Second, the African Pentecostal-sacramental ontology should no longer be visualized in terms of the mystical aspect of the sacraments only; rather, all sacraments and sacramental experiences should be viewed as instruments or means of union, not only with the Holy Spirit but also with the church community. The *paraklesis* significance of charismatic prophecy should serve to accentuate the sacramental aspect of union with the church community.

Third, the observation that charismatic prophecy can conceptually be viewed as transpositional revelation, or an immediacy of divine will and speech adaptively framed and expressed through human liberty and language, should serve to temper the mystical, or tendentiously superstitious, awe with which prophecy utterances are sometimes esteemed in the African Pentecostal-charismatic context. Thus prophecy should be viewed as both divine and human utterance. The anthropological dimension of the prophecy utterances should therefore invoke biblical-critical and theological evaluation of the utterances in accordance with the scriptural admonishment to “weigh carefully what is said” (1 Cor 14:29b). Thus there should be concrete mechanisms or arrangements in congregational settings for evaluating prophetic utterances.

Finally, the observed significant *paraklesis* effect of charismatic prophecy on the congregations studied, in terms of the felt divine presence which infuses congregations with encouragement, comfort, building up, and which appears to impact the congregations significantly in terms of numerical growth, congregants' faithfulness, commitment, and prolific lay ministry, implies that the exercise of the *charisms* of the Holy Spirit, especially the *charism* of prophecy, should be encouraged in accordance with the scriptural pattern in 1 Corinthians 14.

Although the case study method adopted for the present study yielded observational results which correlate fairly well with observations in other contexts, some quarters of scholarship opine that the contextual nature of the case study method demands that case study results be replicated widely before they can be generalized as theory. Nonetheless, the fact that the study results were corroborated by observations already made in other contexts implies that the study results are generalizable to a considerable extent, and thus contribute to the repertoire of empirical-biblical knowledge of the Pentecostal-charismatic phenomenon of prophecy. However, since epistemology is an ongoing process, the observational results of the present study should also be viewed as providing data for future research on charismatic prophecy.

Moreover, biblical hermeneutics entails theological reflection since the biblical hermeneutist approaches the texts of the bible from a particular theological position or tradition. On the other hand, Christian theology cannot be divorced from the truth claims of Scripture. As Alister McGrath argues, Christian experiences of spirituality should never be conceptualized as valid Christian theology apart from the biblical truth claims that undergird the spiritual

experiences.¹It is also conceivable that a qualitative approach provides relatively wider latitudes of judicial interpretation of qualitative data than a quantitative approach whose interpretative latitude is limited by the relative objectification of variables. Although the foregoing are conjectural views, it is, nonetheless, recommended that the empirical-analytic results of the present study be replicated in future research utilizing purely empirical-biblical and qualitative study process designs.

In summary, underlying the Pentecostal understanding of prophecy is a biblicalhermeneutic which acknowledges the release of the prophetic during the end-times as referred in Joel 2. In this regard the major forms of prophecy found in contemporary Pentecostalism are two-fold:(1) a democratized *charism* available to all Spirit-baptized persons and (2) an ecclesiastical *office* that is being restored to Christianity. Hence the differentiation between prophecy as a vocation and prophecy as a gift is paramount in the Pentecostal circles. This shows that Charismatic Pentecostal prophetism has its roots in the bible based on a hermeneutical interpretation of the biblical text. The understanding of Pentecostal prophetism is also understood from a theological perspective of experience.

The research has also shown that Pentecostal theology emerges from experience then scripture is used to relate to the experience whilst protestant theology starts from scripture and moves towards experience. This influences the interpretation of scripture and subsequently the understanding of *charisms*. Ultimately this study has proven that although there are interesting parallels between Pentecostal Charismatic prophecy and biblical prophecy especially Old Testament ecstatic prophecy, the bible does not have a conclusive framework on determining the authenticity of Pentecostal prophetism.

End notes

1. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 147

Annexure 1

Interview Schedule: Deductive Case Studies

1. Can you remember any prophecy that you have heard or uttered?
2. What impact did it have on you?
3. What is your understanding of prophecy?
4. Is there any relation between prophecy and speaking in tongues?
5. Explain the process of receiving a prophecy. What happens?
6. Explain the process of delivering a prophecy. What happens?

7. Was there any key person or people who encouraged you to prophesy?
8. Do you usually receive the message for prophecy before or during a church service?
9. Are there any physical accompaniments which you associate with uttering a prophecy?
10. How would you characterize the message(s) of your prophecy: Encouragement? Warning?

Disclosure of hidden things to the church? Revelation of future events/things? Any other?

11. Explain the process of reception/evaluation of prophecy by the church. Have there been any rejected prophecies.
12. What Scriptural texts and other literature or media have been influential or helpful to concerning prophecy?
13. What is the significance of prophecy for: you personally? For your church? For the Pentecostal- charismatic movement? For the wider Christian church? For the local community? For the wider society?

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