

Missional and indigenization nexus

Assemblies of God and Grace Bible Church in South Africa

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Abstract

The paper examines the indigeneity and missionality of the Pentecostal churches in South Africa, and how they have indigenised themselves in order to be effectively missional in South Africa. The research methodology and findings lean heavily on personal observation, literature reviews, and informal interactions with those in and outside these churches. The scope broadly surveys the one Pentecostal church (Assemblies of God) and one Charismatic Church (Grace Bible Church). Looking into these two churches' expansion and growth, research examines their history, missional methodologies, contexts, and culture to assess the extent at which the two churches navigate between missionality and indigenization.

Key Words: missional, indigenous, Pentecostal, Charismatic, history, context, church

1. Introduction

This paper argues that Pentecostalism in South Africa has become missional in activity and indigenous in character. Two churches are selected to substantiate this fact – one Classical Pentecostal, Assemblies of God; and one Neo-Charismatic (Third Wave Pentecostal), Grace Bible Church. The historical evolution of the two churches is used to validate their missionality and indigenous character. The missional and indigenous church is defined to locate the rationale for selecting these two churches. The research methodology and findings lean heavily on personal observation, literature reviews, and informal interactions with those in and outside these churches.

2. Missional and indigenous Pentecostal churches explained

For more than fifty years, missiologists and scientists of religion, including practical theologians, have given concerted attention to mission as a matter of Christian identity, grounded in the concept, *missio Dei* i.e. the 'mission of God'. From this evolved the term "missional" used to express the church's active and practical participation in God's mission. To be missional is to think and live in a way that engages the mission of God in the world, and for the church to be a missional church means

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the people of God partnering with God in His redemptive mission in the world (Lexington, 2018:5). A missional church is:

A community of God's people who live in the imagination that they are, by their very nature, God's missionary people living as a demonstration of what God plans to do in and for all of creation in Jesus Christ (Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006: xv).

This notion is further expanded by Minter (2012:42) that missional churches:

Challenge and equip their parishioners to live as agents of God's grace outside the worship center and to become agents of Christ's mission on this earth.

Their mission is to train congregants to reach out to the people in the world. The members are equipped and challenged to serve their communities in all spheres of life including homes, workplaces, schools, and wherever people are found. These parishioners are conscientised that Christians are called to go into the world by proclaiming and incarnating Christ's love by displaying God's love. Missional churches believe that every community, regardless of its economic classification, deserves a like-minded church. The church expresses this by training church members and sending them to spread God's love among all types of needy people who are hopeless without Christ. Van Aarde (2017:2) captures it vividly:

Missional means that it is not the ordained pastors and missionaries who step out on behalf of all Christians, but it is the call of all Christians to actively live out a missional lifestyle through service, through a lifestyle which affirms a conscious decision to proclaim the Gospel. It is the calling of the entire body of Christ to become participants in God's mission and his purposes.

Missional churches do not necessarily measure their success by big auditoria with glitter of lights and décor, or office block with huge number of staff, and positive bank balances. These missional churches embrace the biblical missions which focus on:

Meeting man's spiritual need and, in the context of the church, leading him to the place where he can be used of God to meet the needs of others (Hulbert, 1986:31).

This is what Kritzinger (1988:6) calls an "attempt to embody God's liberating presence in every human situation." This means that being missional also means being "contextual" (Saayman, 1991:8). The church's missionality is measured by her calling to:

Become *ecclesia docens* as well as *ecclesia discens* (the teaching and the learning church), since the grace of God is still available, and as fellows with the Trinitarian God, still is *ecclesia cruce*s (the community of the cross) (Resane, 2017:215).

Indigenous churches have been a buzzword for almost hundred years now. The indigenous church is “a church which reflects the culture in which it is located, administering and supporting its own life and outreach” (Hulbert, 1986:92). Missiologists agree with the definition of indigenous churches as churches suited to local culture and are under the leadership of the local constituents. The ideal indigenous church is described as the church that puts emphasis on the indigenous believers, whereby these believers are given the space to create their own structures (Kritzinger et al., 1994:121). For a church to arrive at that stage, there should be some historical process whereby the gospel takes roots in indigenous culture and is expressed in forms relating to that culture (Pretorius et al., 1996:193). These churches’ indigeneity is measured by the three famous “S” which is self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing.

3. Assemblies of God in South Africa: Missional and indigenous Church

The Assemblies of God was founded in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas with 300 people at the founding convention. From the onset, its missionary inclinations were the establishment of indigenous churches among the heathens. Wilson (1997:52) points out “respect for the emergent overseas Pentecostal community... the policy of indigenous missions, had been a pillar of Assemblies of God policy.” This goal of missions in Assemblies of God, is spelt out by McGee (1986:168) as “the training of national believers for preaching the gospel and acts of compassion.” The American missiologist, Melvin Hodges, published and familiarised Assemblies of God with *Indigenous Church* (1953). This was inspired by the ideal of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches. This approach inevitably rescinds paternalism in missions, but ushers in contextualisation, which “assumes that every theology is influenced by its particular context and must be so to be relevant” (Anderson, 2004:212). Assemblies of God in South Africa started both as a missionary and an indigenous church (Resane, 2018:2). Missionary Henry “Turney registered the name Assemblies of God with the Department of the Interior in Pretoria” (Watt, 1992:21). The conglomerate of missionaries from United States of America, United Kingdom, and some Scandinavian countries constituted what evolved into the indigenous Assemblies of the God of today. This loosely structured conglomerate called Assemblies of God in South Africa qualifies this entity as a historically missionary church. The church has gone through some historical and evolutionary shapes to finally qualify as an indigenous church. Today, it is difficult to point to one entity and call it Assemblies of God South Africa as it

splintered into some autonomous groupings such as International Assemblies of God, Assembly of God Fellowship, Coastal Assemblies of God, and Emmanuel Assemblies. This article limits itself to Assemblies of God, which is also a cumbersome exercise as this entity is using a Group System that still makes an outsider see three different sections of the church patterned after the erstwhile apartheid racial classification. For indigenous Africans, the group is called Assemblies of God Movement (Back to God), hence one comes across AOG/BTG acronyms. For the Coloureds and Indians, there is Assemblies of God Association; and for Whites, there is Assemblies of God Group. These divisions, however, do not delimit individual's membership affiliation. Any person of any race can become a member of any group without been told to join his or her racial church group. Although the Group System has been a historical polity earlier not based on racial lines, it is despicable that it all scaffolded into apartheid ideology of separateness based on race. However, the Assemblies of God in South Africa is the second largest Pentecostal Church with its complex politics, and it has exerted itself as a historically missionary church that has transitioned into an indigenous missional church. The internal *Afscheidings*, especially of 1964 (International Assembly of God) and of 1981 (Assembly of God Fellowship), left South African Assemblies of God as a totally indigenous church, without any link to foreign or international partners. Bond (2000:48), after detailing all these historical events, concludes:

Their effect was to change the Assemblies of God from a struggling missionary body to a thriving indigenous South African church consisting of Blacks, Whites and Coloureds and Indians, one of the more significant denominations in the land.

One cannot write the history of Assemblies of God in South Africa without any reference to Nicholas Bhengu. He escalated the exuberant missionality and indigenization of Assemblies of God in the most remarkable way. Anderson (1992:47) is correct that "Bhengu's work was undoubtedly the main reason for the growth of the Assemblies of God as an indigenous Black church." The indigenous church characterised by the three "S" (self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing) epitomised his heartbeat. His proclivity towards Pan Africanism, which was also ideological inclination in his philosophy of ministry brewed conflict and heavy confrontation between him and the American missionaries (Mochechane, n.d:78).

On both international and national platforms, Bhengu was vociferous on the notion of the indigenous church. For instance, speaking at the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) in 1954, he announced:

Our churches are at the very beginning taught to be self-supporting. They are founded on indigenous principles like the early apostolic church. Not a penny

from outside sources comes to support any of our churches. Within six-months every assembly becomes self-supporting (Pentecostal Evangel, 1955:3).

This does not mean that Bhengu refused the external financial assistance. He made it very clear over and over again that this monetary assistance should come with no strings attached. This was one of the bones of contention, particularly with the American missionaries. He insisted that money for indigenous church should be strictly for that, no embezzlement allowed, as Mochechane (n.d:122) agrees that Bhengu's clarion call was "any money raised in the name of the work in the townships had to be administered by those who work and live in the townships." This was totally incompatible with AGUSA's (Assemblies of God in United States of America) constitutional stipulations.

The evolutionary processes within Assemblies of God in South Africa led into its current missional and indigenous character. From the 1980s, the movement was re-asserting itself both culturally and structurally. It still struggles to define its polity and identity, but it has become a socio-religious entity to reckon with. It has become and is eschatologically becoming a missional and indigenous Pentecostal church. Watt (1992:54) expresses the indigeneity of Assemblies of God that it s

Characterised by a form of Black theology. This means that the Assemblies of God has developed around the dignity of the Black leaders and Christians. Blacks have done for themselves what used to be done for them by Whites and missionaries.

John Bond, one of the prominent Assemblies of God leaders for almost half a century stipulates this church's indigeneity by stating:

We visualise therefore, a united church with autonomous Assemblies throughout the country. Assemblies well taught in the doctrines of the Bible, whose monies are kept in order by the elected officers of the Assemblies and books kept in order that the African leaders will be debarred from becoming capitalists by taking all the money to themselves... (Bond, 2000:32).

Bond further stipulates the missionality of Assemblies of God by stating:

The spiritual life of the Assemblies of God must be manifest in the New South Africa by spreading peace and truth through the Gospel at grass roots level. Our task is not so much to impress Governments or gain a place of prominence in church councils but to witness to the common people the love of God in Christ Jesus, teaching and showing them what it means to be a Christian (2000:329).

Lephoko (2018:79) narrates the vision Bhengu saw in 1949 to preach the Gospel from Cape to Cairo, and bring people back to God. "His clarion call; 'Africa Back to God!

Africa for Jesus – Jesus for Africa! fits well with the vision of Black Africans to whom he felt specifically called.” This was his motivation to start the Back to God Crusade in 1950. “The war cry, ‘Africa Back to God, Africa for Jesus – Jesus for Africa’ was written on his Back to God Crusade trucks and tents” (2018:190). This vision is the central spoke that has been oiling the missionality of Assemblies of God Movement/BTG in South Africa.

Opening the website of Assemblies of God South Africa (Back to God), one encounters the profound statement that reads; “The vision of this church is simple but yet powerful. It is to go into every town, city, province, country preaching the heart of God which is the Word.” The same notion is captured by the statement; “Our goal is to equip believers with biblical principles so as to enable them to reach out to people with the love of God. . . . To equip the church with sound biblical doctrine that addresses the needs of humanity in a holistic manner.”²

The Assemblies of God’s (Movement) indigeneity, especially in the Black communities, stands out by popular music delivered in a form of chorale encapsulating traditional hymns, re-vamped Negro spirituals, new songs, and African traditional songs. It is indigenous in worship style and leadership composition. Like the broader Pentecostalism, their worship style gives an authentic expression to Christianity, and “is inherently flexible; the freedom, enthusiasm and spontaneity” (Anderson & Otwang, 1993:16). Each local assembly stands as an autonomous entity operating under the umbrella of District Council, Regional Council, and/or the General Executive. As a composite church, it is self-propagating through mass evangelism by Back to God Crusades. It is self-supporting as it raises all operational funds through local churches. It is self-governing as all structures have democratically elected leaders in operation. It is, therefore, indigenous, “as they form a distinctively African expression of Christianity” (Anderson, 1992:6).

Its missionality is defined by its outreaches nationally and internationally. All the three groups (Movement, Association, Group) are missionally involved in their contextual communities and beyond national borders. For instance, the Group is actively engaged in Zambia, Mozambique, Island of Rodrigues, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere. The Association is involved in Malawi, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Albania. As Watt (1992:189) points out, “It has always been the aim of the Assemblies of God to extend the church by planting congregations that suits the culture of the local people.”

4. Grace Bible Church: Missional and indigenous church

Pentecostal historical studies indicate three waves. The first wave is what is commonly known as Classical Pentecostalism that evolved out of the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, United States of America in 1906. Assemblies of God and churches

² <https://aogbacktogod.org.za/next-events/> (Viewed 2 Feb 2021).

like Apostolic Faith Mission and the Full Gospel Church fall into this category. The second wave evolved out of the so-called mainline denominations, particularly the Anglicans, Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans etc. in the sixties of the 20th century. The members from these traditions testified of the Pentecostal experiences, such as baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by glossolalia and divine healing. This charismatic renewal spread worldwide like wildfires. Then, around the seventies, a new phenomenon emerged:

Inevitably, there were cases where the old wineskins did not seem able to hold the new wine. Frustration and impatience with conservative church leaders and traditional structures and liturgies led some charismatic Christians to leave their churches and form new ecclesial communities which are here designated “newer charismatic churches.” Terms such as “third wave” or “post-charismatic” churches have also been used for them (Roy, 2017:202).

C. Peter Wagner, the American church specialist and missiologist popularised the *Third Wave* renewal in his various books, particularly the one titled *Changing Church* (2004). Hayford and Moore (2006:8) highlight Wagner’s assertion in this regard:

He has used the term to describe those Christians outside the first two waves who experience the Spirit’s power and presence yet prefer not to be called either Pentecostal or Charismatic.

In the interest of the discussion of this paper, it is of great importance to capture the identification and designation of this ecclesial phenomenon as per Burgess and Van der Maas (2002:xv):

We identify the third wave with the huge throng of independent, indigenous churches that do not carry direct connections with Classical Pentecostalism or the Charismatic Renewal.

In their mainstream, these churches are of the conviction that they are practising biblical Christianity where the power of the Holy Spirit, together with his gifts and workings, is in operation. It is in this category that Grace Bible Church falls under. To capture its missionality and indigeneity, it is ideal to scan its historical evolution. The church was founded by Mosa Sono who grew up in the Dutch Reformed Church and was evangelically oriented by Youth Alive in Soweto. The church started in 1980 when a couple, Andre and Edna Knoetze, ordained by Raymond McCauley of Rhema Bible Church were mandated to start the Rhema Bible Church Soweto branch. The Knoetze’s handed over the church to Mosa Sono in 1983. At the time,

the church was meeting in Mavis Hall in White City, Jabavu, Soweto. Its exponential growth was interrupted by the loss of Mavis Hall as a venue, which resulted in the loss of some members, financial support from Rhema Bible Church, and the conducive place for services. The small core of leadership was asked to withdraw the usage of the name Rhema, hence Grace Bible Church was adopted in 1984.³

The church meetings moved to Isaacson Higher Primary School in Moroka, Soweto. From there, the church experienced remarkable growth accompanied by consolidated administration, ministry of help, training, retreats, extended prayer meetings, and the new addition of co-labourers such as Mr Ngakane and Kenneth Makopo. The church became nomadic – venue-wise – until finally settling in the current Pimville auditorium in Soweto.

Its missionalty is captured in their mission of becoming ‘a church that D.R.E.A.M.S.’ This acronym is analysed or expressed in the following manner:

D= Discipleship

R= Restoration

E= Evangelism

M= Missions

S= Social Relevance

Mathole (2006:43) expands this acronym as follows:

They have initiated a D.R.E.A.M.S campaign in an attempt to enhance the quality of ministry and service to all the people in their community, through a variety of programs and interventions. They have made a commitment to contribute in the restoration of broken lives, families and societies. Ministry to the poor is a priority to this church, although it is still in a developmental phase. Some of their programmes are just evolving; they have not yet achieved their aims to the fullest. They have a cluster of designated personnel on the church’s payroll, which are the custodians of the vision of ministering to the poor and dealing with matters of social welfare and development. It is so significant to them, that they allocate resources to addressing issues of poverty.

Grace Bible Church does not have traditional mission roots or heredity planted by external missionaries from elsewhere. Its missionalty is validated by its history or origin. It expresses itself as a Pentecostal-Charismatic communion composed of people involved in broad range of activities such as support groups for AIDS, substance abuse, divorce, and bereavement. It offers diverse skills training, such as computer literacy, entrepreneurship, leadership, arts, prison ministries, men and women issues, youth and teenage related themes etc. Archer (2009:249) expresses this Pentecostal missional calling as:

³ <https://gracebiblechurch.org.za/about-us/> (Viewed 2 Feb 2021).

The purpose of these manifestations and community is to empower, guide, and transform, the individuals in community so that the Pentecostal community can faithfully follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

By so doing, it becomes missional by self-propagating as all these services are done by local people with internal funding. Mathole continues to reinforce this missional character of Grace Bible Church by stating:

In their witness to the poor, they have involved members of their church to join the team that offer this ministry. They have a number of volunteers who are the workforce behind these essential services. Their church relies a lot on volunteers in pursuing ministry activities. They participate by giving generously towards the needs of the poor both financially and in kind, especially by donating food parcels to cater for the pressing needs of the moment (2006:42).

Grace Bible Church functions pastorally as a healing community by nurturing the broken hearted. As a missional and indigenous church, Grace Bible Church embraces those on the margins, the sick, lonely, rejected, and victimised (Archer as cited in Thomas, 2010:41). All these missional activities are for transformative growth.

The expression of the dreams of Grace Bible Church as a missional church also observed through their extensive church planting efforts across the racial and tribal divisions. The ministry is recognised internationally for its church planting and empowerment of previously disadvantaged communities.⁴ The missionary outreach is at the heart of Grace Bible Church. It is still in essence a Pentecostal church that continues to embrace with great vigour the missionary task of reaching all people with the Gospel (Archer, 2009:250). The church has more than 69 branches around South Africa. Frahm-Arp (2015:73) indicates; “The church attracts Black, Coloured and Indian members from all economic classes.” In 2017, one local pastor in Welkom, Butta van Wyk, who happens to be an Afrikaner told Tharien Hurter of Netwerk24:

To preach and do what God has laid upon me to do, is not in the name of the church. I was not reluctant to change the name to Grace Bible Church... The Grace Bible Church invites all community members to join the congregation.”⁵

Although Anderson’s description is bit old, it is still important to refer to it to substantiate the vigorous missional endeavours of Grace Bible Church here:

⁴ <https://alac.org.za/coaches/item/36-mr-mosa-sono> (Viewed 10 Feb 2021).

⁵ <https://www.netwerk24.com/ZA/Kroonnuus/NUus/church-finds-home-20171106-2%20> (Viewed 3 February 2021).

In October 1991 'Grace' had some 3200 members in Soweto, with five full-time pastors and one missionary (Kenneth Makopo) attached to the church. Kenneth has pioneered two churches which are independent of the Soweto church, Grace Bible Church in Garankuwa near Pretoria (pastored since 1987 by Agaonkitse Mogale), and Grace Christian Center in Mmabatho, Mafikeng (pastored by Makopo himself). In Kagiso, Krugersdorp, a church has been established recently which repeats the service in Soweto. It is therefore the responsibility of Mosa and his team (1992:54).

Some huge changes had happened since the era penned down by Anderson here. For instance, Makopo moved from Mafikeng to Rustenburg to plant a new church, and he is now in Cape Town for the same cause. Grace Bible Church is definitely a missional church. It is aware of its members' socio-historical context, endeavours to understand its context, and seeks to respond *wisely* in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, every component of the church's ministry is attuned to the D.R.E.A.M.S in its outreach ministry to the community. It is an ecclesial community striving to be relevant to its context and taking the Great Commission beyond its confines. This is expressed vividly by one of their leaders, Pastor Ezekiel Mathole:

This is a church that began in Soweto in a hall in 1983 with 35 congregants; now, 24 years later, it boasts a membership of 11 000, with the two-hour 9am Sunday church service drawing 5 000 people. These worshippers are served by six full-time pastors, led by Pastor Mosa Sono, and 40 part-time pastors and elders.⁶

The missional character of Grace Bible Church is wrapped within its historical genesis. It has stood the tests of time and surged through all turbulences of racism, marginalisation, and religious judgements labelled against any religious group that is planted within the fallen humanity. It has grown through its missional endeavours and indigenous character. On his Twitter account on 12 March 2021, the Bishop announced; "The founder and Presiding Bishop of Grace Bible Church, which was established in September 1983, and now has 69 branches in South Africa."

Just like its missional character defined by its history, so is its indigenity. Pastor Mathole engrosses the indigenous character of Grace Bible Church:

We identify with township culture, language and symbols, for instance, the music and the way that people sing a song. We relate spirituality to their needs and deal with people's perceptions of the church.⁷

⁶ https://www.joburg.org.za/play_/Pages/Play%20in%20Joburg/Culture%20and%20Heritage/Links/places%20of%20workshop/links/Grace-Bible-Church,-Pimville,-2002.aspx (Viewed 3 February 2021).

⁷ *ibid*

Grace Bible Church is an indigenous church because of its context, culture, and character. In reference to its context, it is a South African Charismatic Church, born, planted, and grown in Soweto. Wherever one finds Grace Bible Church, it is the church of the people on the ground, led and governed by the local people. Sometimes a church planter is sent, but it will always be a contextually relevant person. Mosa Sono's calling and passion is to win people to Christ, bring believers into full maturity of their walk with God, train, raise, and mentor leaders in the church, corporate sector and in the community at large.⁸ All these to be done within their contexts.

Culturally, Grace Bible Church is not a foreign church migrated from or into another culture. It is not transplanted but planted. It is not a big plant transported from another ground to another soil. It is a seed planted on the new ground to acclimatise itself to the new soil where it germinates and buds. From its beginnings, it could easily be categorised as the church for urban Black culture. It was consisted of mostly young people, but currently it has become representative of all age groups. Anderson (1992:54) points out; "Mosa always preaches in English with a Sotho or Zulu interpreter (the main African languages in Soweto)." This agrees with Pastor Mathole's assertion above. Frahm-Arp (2015:126) attests to this:

The congregation is 99% Black, attracting people from all economic sectors throughout Gauteng. The sermons are held in English and many are streamed from the main Soweto church to the eleven smaller church branches in South Africa.

The cultural appeal to the people of Grace Bible Church is cased in the way it balances its way of doing church. For them, the church is not just for spiritual inspiration but for personal empowerment and community impact:

As part of its contribution to nation building, Grace Bible Church hosts and runs programmes like Achievers Awards, Ngwazi Awards, Grace-Umusa Day, HIV/AIDS programmes, a feeding scheme, distribution of clothes and food to the needy, prison ministry, and annually the church in partnership with the department of health hosts the eye care programme.⁹

Character-wise, Grace Bible Church is an indigenous church, emerging from the grassroots where racial prejudice in the form of apartheid was directly experienced. Mosa coming from the Dutch Reformed Church background and his association with the likes of Youth Alive and Student Christian Movement, should have influenced him into the rootedness of the word. "There is a strong emphasis on the preaching of the

⁸ <https://alac.org.za/coaches/item/36-mr-mosa-sono> (Viewed 10 February 2021).

⁹ <https://alac.org.za/coaches/item/36-mr-mosa-sono> (Viewed 10 February 2021).

Word. Prayer for divine healing is an important part of this work, but this is not the main reason for the growth of the church” (Anderson, 1992:54). In another research, Anderson and Otwang (1993:17) discovered that people in Pentecostal churches like going to the church because it is the place where they “found salvation”, where “salvation” is being preached, and where their spiritual needs are being met. They claim that the church is where they are spiritually equipped with balanced teaching from the Bible. They further claim that the church is where they are spiritually revived through prayer and intercession. I have not come across any person who attended or joined Grace Bible Church for healing, miracles, breakthroughs etc. People are attracted to the church by the anointed ministry of the Word and/or by the church’s *diaconal* services into their personal lives. At Grace Bible Church one observes:

The holistic witness of incarnational living had once again proven that God’s message to the whole person is attractive and compelling, and many will respond when given the chance to see it lived out in their midst (Yamamori et al., 1997:76).

The character of the church is not based on its popularity based on ascetic practices, rhetoric rituals, liturgical strictness or even traditional confessions. Grace Bible church as a missional and indigenous church demonstrates what Resane (2019:6-7) asserts:

The church is called upon to be engaged in social service rather than social action. Social action implies overt socio-political involvement designed to change social structures. Social service on the other hand speaks of the manifestation of Christ’s love by serving His people so that these people can become His followers by experiencing and observing His love in action in and through His people.

As the neo-Pentecostal Church, Grace Bible Church is characterised with human involvement. They do not stand from a distance but get involved in the life of other people without compromising their allegiance to Pentecostal community and testimony (Archer, 2009:250). After all, as a church with Pentecostal roots and character, it has to endeavour to expand its view of the saving-healing work of Jesus, the healer, to include holistic understandings (Alexander as cited in Thomas, 2010:204).

In the Third Wave of Charismatic renewal manifestation, the apostolic and prophetic leaders are at the apex of these churches. These individuals are generally considered apostolic by virtue of their calling and their ability to work miracles, and prophetic by manifesting diagnostic and predictive abilities (Mofokeng as cited in Kgatle & Anderson, 2020:26). The character of Grace Bible Church is observed

by migration from a typical synodical or congregational polity to Episcopalian polity titles such as pastor or evangelist. Mofokeng further points to this:

Today, some well-known figures associated with 1980s and 1990s neo-Pentecostalism have adopted episcopal titles – mainly because of adopting episcopal ecclesiastical structures. Examples of this tendency include Bishop Mosa Sono of Grace Bible Church... (2020:26).

Pastor Mosa Sono is now Bishop Mosa Sono. His Twitter account on 6 April 2019 announced:

Today is a special day in the history of GBC, as we establish our Bishop's Council with Bishops, Overseers & Ministers. Our 36 years of ministry continues to unfold before our very eyes, and we see the goodness of our Lord in the land of the living.

5. Conclusion

The two churches studied in this article demonstrate beyond any shadow of doubt that Pentecostalism in South Africa is indigenous (self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing). There is a further understanding that Pentecostalism in South Africa is indigenous in character, as demonstrated by context, culture, and character. There is a call for Pentecostalism to recognise that from its inception, it has been a contextual movement, and therefore should be open to further contextualisation. Its theology and practice must adapt to various cultures in which it takes roots (Alexander as cited in Thomas, 2010:204). It is a dynamic movement that should continue to yearn for the Holy Spirit's leading and empowering for fulfilling the missionary task Jesus mandated to his followers. Pentecostals in South Africa are called upon to create a community that can provide the context in which the Spirit's manifestation can take place (Archer, 2009:248). They should continue to be ecclesiastically missional and treat mission as a means of the enlargement of the church (Warrington, 2008:247). Their kerygmatic activities should seek to bring hope, and a spiritual and dynamic perspective to people living in context of powerlessness, deprivation, and all sorts of negative societal crises (2008:257).

The two churches studied are the force to reckon with. They are making some missional impact in communities due to their indigenous character and culture. The growth of Christianity in South Africa, and the continent in general, is primarily based on indigenous independent churches, most of which are charismatic (Barret, Kurian & Johnson, 2001:13). The growth of Pentecostalism in South Africa is enhanced and inflamed by its missional intentions and indigenous character.

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