

“...An Announcement of a New Spiritual Dispensation...” Pentecostalism and Nationalisation of Prayer in Zambia

Chammah J. Kaunda
Mutale M. Kaunda

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the response of Zambian Pentecostalism to the Declaration of the National Day of Prayer and Fasting. Empirical data was gathered through interviews, collection of prayers, blogs, personal communications and interviews, and analysed through a missio-political approach. The findings show that there are a number of Pentecostals seeking to engage in the Day of Prayer through activism, in order to impact the nation in concrete ways. They are seeking a paradigm shift from empty-talk prayer to a socio-politically engaged prayer that demands an alternative political vision for the nation.

Introduction

Prayer is foundational to Pentecostal spirituality. Most Pentecostals believe that prayer alone has efficacious power to change everything, including the prayers themselves.¹ Praying for the political spheres is often understood as a biblical obligation because of the Pentecostal belief that only through prayer can God bring transformation into the nation. Hence, some scholars insist that the Pentecostal act of public praying is a form of “political action”.² They underline that public

-
- 1 Amos Yong, “Prayer, Pentecostalism, and the Political: Renewing the Public Square?”, *Essays & Exchanges* (2013), <http://forums.ssrc.org/ndsp/2013/09/20/prayer-pentecostalism-and-the-political-renewing-the-public-square/> (accessed 26 Oct. 16).
 - 2 Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Naar M’fundisi, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Spiritualities and Civic Engagement in Zambia (1964-2012)” (PhD, The University of Birmingham, 2014); Richard Burgess, “Pentecostals and Political Culture in Sub-Sahara Africa: Nigeria, Zambia, and Kenya as Case Studies”, in *Global Pentecostal Movements: Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*, edited by Michael Wilkinson (Leiden: Brill), 17-

CJ Kaunda, Human and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council and University of KwaZulu-Natal. <pastorchammah@gmail.com> Mutale Mulenga Kaunda, Postdoctoral research fellow, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. <mutalemkaunda@gmail.com>