

## N. Sande

Dr. N. Sande, Research Fellow,  
Research Institute for Theology  
and Religion (RITR), College of  
Human Sciences, University of  
South Africa, South Africa.  
E-mail: pastornomsande@  
yahoo.com  
ORCID: [https://orcid.org/  
0000-0002-4177-8391](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4177-8391)

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# Ecology and theology together within African Pentecostals worship liturgy

## ABSTRACT

*The African Pentecostal pneumatological experiences and the hesitancy to engage with the “other-worldly” (earth-based/earthly) matters have contributed to the slow uptake to contribute to the ecological crisis. An intentional, comprehensive, practical approach is needed to alleviate the ecological crisis. For the ecological strategies to be effective, they should blend into the church’s spiritual life, such as worship. The starting point is to identify and amplify any ecological notions that the church uses consciously or unconsciously. This study uses qualitative data to explore how hymnal worship songs construct and dialogue ecotheological notions. It concludes that bringing ecology and theology together within the church worship liturgy is an appropriate strategy for churches to contribute to the ecological crisis.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At present, one of the looming dangers in the world is the destruction of ecology. Ecology studies the relationship between living organisms and their environment (White 1996). Global and local ecosystems face disastrous realities because of climate change, biodiversity loss, and mass extinctions. Therefore, the extent of the danger calls for a concerted effort from political, economic, and religious perspectives (African Pentecostals, in particular).



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In Zimbabwe and many parts of southern Africa, the church is still a strong and revered institution. The church remains the primary place where the people's economic, social, psychological, and spiritual needs are met (Sande & Maforo 2021:1).

To add to Sande and Maforo's assertion, the church should actively participate in alleviating the ecological crisis. African Pentecostalism is one of the fastest-growing religious movements in the global south; its missiological approach has seen it penetrating the global north, reaching across the world (Sande 2019). Such vigorous global missionary campaigns give African Pentecostals an advantage in improving their knowledge and developing appropriate ecotheology. According to Steuernagel (2008), proper missiological theology should challenge believers to be good stewards of their environment. This study not only advocates that the church must develop effective ecotheology, but also argues for the appraisal of worship hymnal songs to find and amplify any ecological notions that the church uses consciously or unconsciously. This study explores the hymnal worship songs within the Apostolic Faith Mission "in/of" Zimbabwe and how they construct and dialogue ecotheological notions. The article uses the preposition "in/of" Zimbabwe to refer to the one church that split into two in 2022 because of "irreconcilable differences and disagreements over the amendments of the Constitution" (Mupangwa & Chirongoma 2020:1).

## 2. ECO-PNEUMATOLOGY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study uses eco-pneumatology as a theoretical framework to understand how hymnal worship songs construct a message that juxtaposes a relationship between nature and religion. African Pentecostals claim to be led by the Holy Spirit, believed to be at the centre of all creation. If this belief is anything to go by, then the Holy Spirit is an agent of spiritual life, natural life, and ecological revitalisation. The study follows Swoboda's conceptualisation of eco-pneumatology. Swoboda (2011) focuses on two key aspects, namely pneumatology and ecotheology, and fuses them to form eco-pneumatology. Swoboda further breaks down eco-pneumatology, asserting that ecotheologies deal with ecological thought and explore how theological principles can be translated into practical actions (Swoboda 2011). In the Pentecostal tradition, eco-pneumatology is "the relationship of their ecotheology to the person and the work of the Holy Spirit" (Swoboda 2011:158). This statement can mean that ecotheology is a constructive theology showing the relationship between religion and nature in the environmental context. Swoboda (2011) contends that ecotheology should be a practical and action-oriented theology centred

on creation, enabling Christian communities to care for the earth that God created and seeks to restore and reconcile to himself. Accordingly, this helps this study establish ecological values embedded within church traditions. Therefore, the sustainability of ecological values has to do with how church traditions account for the domination of nature, mainly how the notions of ecology are represented within the worship liturgy.

Swoboda (2011) emphasises the materiality of salvation as a foundation for social justice and posits that the Spirit of God dwells in creation. Swoboda (2011) underscores the intrinsic value of the natural world beyond its spiritual significance. This position is essential in this study, in order to answer the extent to which Christians should dominate nature and care for it. In other words, in the context of the ecological crisis, churches should rethink an appropriate theology to alleviate the problem. The eco-pneumatology lens provides opportunities for studying creatures within their natural environments, and the vital role nature plays is portrayed in the worship liturgy of the church.

The thrust of eco-pneumatology in this study is not searching for comprehensive religious knowledge about nature, but simply seeking a complete understanding of the ecological notions constructed during worship. Hymnal songs express relationships between living creatures within a natural environment. Therefore, eco-pneumatology helps understand how some worship hymnal songs consequently impact on the believers' behaviour in promoting ecological awareness. Accordingly, there is a need to incorporate components of ecological studies within theological training and theological education in church services. The clergy and laities have a role in emphasising that natural resources need to be preserved to save the world.

Swoboda (2011) highlights the challenge of "eco glossolalia", where the language and meaning of ecotheology could be more precise and require interpretation. Swoboda (2011) identifies obstacles such as the concept of "eco glossolalia" that hinder the development of Pentecostal ecotheology. From an eschatological standpoint, Pentecostals are influenced by dispensational eschatology, anticipate the earth's destruction, and view this world as temporary (Williams 2018). The prosperity gospel has both positive and negative value. In this instance, I argue for the positive value within the eco-pneumatological. Later I show its positive value within the Spirit motif. A potential conflict between neo-Pentecostal materialism and the prosperity gospel may undermine environmental stewardship (Golo 2013). In addition, human moral and spiritual issues such as greed, envy, ambition, selfishness, and apathy contribute to environmental degradation (United Nations Environmental Program, 2019).

### 3. THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION “IN/OF” ZIMBABWE

The Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe is a classic Pentecostal church whose roots can be traced to the Azusa Revival of 1906. The arrival of John Graham Lake in 1908 in Southern Africa marked the starting point of classic Pentecostalism in Southern Africa. There is, however, a paucity of history regarding the subsequent establishment of the Apostolic Faith Mission Church in Zimbabwe (Togarasei 2016). However, it is generally agreed that the formative establishment of the Zimbabwe Church started in roughly 1915 in Gwanda, a small mining/farming town in the southern part of Zimbabwe. Existing literature about the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe shows that the church is the oldest of all classic Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe (Sande 2017). Sande and Denga (2019) describe the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe as the largest but the mother of all classic and neo-Pentecostals in Zimbabwe. Following the initial formative work, Pentecostalism spread in Zimbabwe through schisms. However, it is unfortunate that the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe Church is currently going through “irreconcilable differences and disagreements over the amendments of the Constitution” (Mupangwa & Chirongoma 2020:1). These unabated schisms of the church have long threatened the longstanding claim that the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe is the largest classic Pentecostal church.

Most of the prominent traits of the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe stemmed from contextualising several classic Pentecostal doctrines. From a sociological perspective, Pentecostals tend to integrate some sociocultural flavour, which makes them unique. “[The] cultural context is one element that influences a community’s Pentecostal expression.” (Sande & Samushonga 2020:1). Divine healing is one of the central features of the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe. The church’s heavy reliance on, and belief in divine healing has resulted in the castigation of traditional herbal medicines as originating from evil spirits (Sande 2019:59). The discourse of the spirit world is broad and a largely uncharted subject within the African Pentecostal establishment. Most of their practices, including deliverance and exorcisms, aim to break the powers of darkness and curses that are believed to follow the bloodline. It is believed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is there for miracles and to protect the believer from evil spirits and demons. African Pentecostals also tend to pay more attention to prosperity theology, which argues that believers should prosper in all spheres of their lives, including health, material, and spiritual aspects.

#### 4. APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION “IN/OF” ZIMBABWE HYMNAL SONGS

African Pentecostals are defined by the music and art of worship, with some commentators suggesting that music is the heartbeat of African Pentecostalism. According to Chitando (2000), music is critical for Christians, giving meaning to repentance, triumph, deliverance, and all rituals. Whilst there are diverse Christian music styles within the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe church, hymnal songs are considered highly anointed. The hymnody in the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe is a product of the West (Matikiti 2017). However, the church has indigenised the hymnal songs by translating them into indigenous languages, mainly Shona and Ndebele. Clapping hands and dancing are very much part of the worship. Bakare (1997:1) notes that “[o]ne of the precious gifts God has given to Africans is the gift of singing and dancing”. Even though instruments have become popular in recent times, traditional instruments such as *hosho* (rattle), *ngoma* (drum, and *mbira* (lamellophone) were previously never used to accompany the hymnal songs. These instruments were frowned upon because they are also used in traditional indigenous music. Only recently did the Apostolic Faith Mission of Zimbabwe accept singing hymnal songs accompanied by Western instruments such as keyboards, electric drums, and guitars. Unlike other traditional African churches, the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe adopted western-minted instruments and hymnal songs.

#### 5. HYMNAL SONGS’ CONSTRUCTION AND DIALOGUE OF ECOLOGICAL NOTIONS

It is clear from the ongoing discussion that music is essential in the Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe. However, one would question how musical theology impacts on ecological crisis. A meaningful connection to ecological issues is deeply rooted in the Christian faith and how it expresses its worship hymnal songs. It is essential to deconstruct the hymnal worship songs, in order to understand how they portray ecological inclinations. The Apostolic Faith Mission “in/of” Zimbabwe hymn book has 200 hymns (AFM Hymn Book-Nziyo DzeAFM 2023). Out of the 200 hymnal songs, this study found that 56 of these portray ecological elements such as nature, animals, and the environment. This study interpreted the 56 hymnal songs as conservation-oriented and discusses the emerging five themes, namely the omnipotence of God holding the universe; nature objects as spiritual beacons for salvation; the Holy Spirit within the ecological motif; Jesus’ second coming and ecology motif, as well as nature and the healing motif.

## 6. THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD HOLDING THE UNIVERSE

The lyrical content of Hymn 2 is aptly titled: “kudzai mambo/glorify the King”.  
Stanza 3:

Ana masimba/all powerful, wakaisika Nyika/creator of the earth  
nezvinhu zvose zvirimo/ and all in it, Wakaitsigira nomurairo/holding by  
his law Wakaikombera nemvura yose/surrounded with water.

Similarly, Hymn 7:

Jehovha une masimba /Jehovah you are all powerful, Zvose zvakasikwa  
nemwi/everything was created by you, Muri ishe wavo vose/you are the  
Lord of all people. Ivo vari pakudenga/those in heaven.

According to Hymn 8,

Wakasika zvose zvinhu/you created all things, Iwe, Mwari wega/you  
the only God, Pasina wakayamura/no one helped you, Kuzviita kwako/  
it is your doing. 2. Aya makomo amire/these stone standing, Akasikwa  
newe/are created by you; Akamira akasimba/they are standing firm,  
Nokutsigwa newe/sustained by you.

The lyrics in hymns 2, 7 and 8 show the role of God in the universe as holding together all ecology. While this is true theologically, scientific evidence shows that ecology is increasingly degrading (Watts *et al.* 2018). Historically, science and theology view cosmology from different perspectives; in the context of ecological crisis, paying attention to scientific ecological knowledge provides information to gain spiritual insight into what God is doing.

More is needed to alleviate the ecological crisis than God's omnipotence singing. African Pentecostals should sing and respond to ecological preservation. Hymn 8, stanza 4 “*Wakasika munhu iwe/you created man, Nokufana newe/in your image; Ukavapa zvinhu zvose/and gave them everything, Zvikavakodzera/they need.*” The lyrics show how God created everything and handed it to humanity. In the book of Genesis, God instructed man to till the land and take care of it. The stewardship of God towards his creation was entrusted into man's hands. Like all other people, African Pentecostals have an equal duty to preserve ecology. Echoing a similar sentiment, Swodoba (2011) advises Pentecostals to acknowledge the importance of being accountable to the heavenly kingdom and participating in the earthly kingdom.

Another purpose of creation in the sampled hymns is summed up in hymn 9 as glorifying God:

Ndinoshamiswa kwazvo/I am incredibly amazed 2. Kana ndarangarira/ when I remember, Mabasa okudenga/ works in the heavens;Kana ndarangarira/when I remember, Mabasa apanyika/work on earth;Inobuda misodzi/my tears come, Kana ndafunga iwe/when I think about you. 4. Rumbidza iwe denga! /praise you, Heaven!Rumbidza iwe nyika!/praise you, earth! Rumbidza iwe gungwa! /Praise you sea! Nesu ngatirumbidze! /Let us all praise.

Further, one stanza in Hymn 6 states:

Mukudzei Mwari' Mukudzei iye Mwari Navari kudenga/let us glorify the God of heaven; Mukudzei iye Mwari/glorify God, Navari kudenga/God of heaven. 3. Iwe zuva/you sun, newe mwedzi/you moon, Mukudzei iye/ glorify God; Nemiwo imi nyenyedzi Mukudzei iye/and you stars. 4. Iwe moto newe chando/you fire and you snow, Mukudzei iye/glorify him;Iwe chando you snow, newe bute/, Mukudzei iye/glorify him. 5. Nemhepo inovhuvhuta/and blowing wind, Chimukudza iye/glorify him; Newe ita izwi rake/and you be his voice, Paunozonzwika/when you are heard.

Viewing creation as an agent of glorification has an ecological perspective. How nature is destroyed should cause an alarm that it no longer glorifies God. Practical solutions to take care of nature are required. According to Rakes (2016), Pentecostals need a new mindset to deal with the environmental crisis and combat climate change. Based on this suggestion, African Pentecostals are encouraged to pay attention to ecotheology and social relations, worship liturgy and ecology mindset whose reflection is the glory of God.

Some hymns have profound descriptions depicting heaven as being a better place to be than earth. Hymn 77:

Kudenga kuna Baba Kwakanaka kwazvo/heaven where God is, is a beautiful place;Pakudenga kuna Baba/heaven where God is, Kwakafara kwazvo/is a happy place. 2. Hakupindi chakaipa/no sin enters, Kana chiri chimwe/even a single sin, Hakupindi zvokurwara/no sickness enters, Nechirwere chimwe/even a single sickness.

This resonates with the following lyrics. Hymn 114:

pahusiku weutsvene 1. Mwari hweutsvene Kune nyika iri kure glorious God there is a country very far, Yakajeka nyeredzi yaTenzi/it is bright by the Lord's star.

Hymn 79 also describes the beauty of heaven:

Jerusalem, musha wangu/Jerusalem, my home, Musha wakanaka Kana ndapedza mabasa/a beautiful home, when I finish my work, Ndinoenda kwauri/I will go to it.3. Ndingatye here kurwadza?/can I fear

pain? Ndingatize kufa?/can I fear death? Kwete ndinoenda kuKenani/  
no I will go to Canaan, Nyika yandinoda/the land I love. 5. Jesusarema  
musha wangu/Jerusalem my home, Wandinotsvakisa! Kana ndasvika  
kwauri/ I desperately look for when I get there, Ndichafara kwazvo/I  
be happy.

In addition, Hymn 80:

nzvimbo yakanaka/good place 1. Nzvimbo yakanaka!/good place!  
Musha waJehovha/ God's home. Denga ramatenga/heaven of heaven,  
Denga routsvene/home of righteousness, Iyo nzvimbo yakanaka/it is  
good palce, Ndinoenda rinhi kwairi? /when shall I go there?

The theme depicting heaven as a beautiful place makes believers yearn to go there someday. Pentecostal dispensational eschatology views the world as a temporary place (Williams 2018). Arguably, such beliefs about "heaven" by African Pentecostals make them not afraid of the destruction of the world because there is a place to go after the resurrection. However, the ecological crisis is a 21<sup>st</sup>-century phenomenon, and heaven is yet to come. Hence, the theology of going to heaven continues to make this earth a temporary place. The question is: What should be done in the meantime? The beauty of nature should not be pictured as though it dwells in a distant future but begins in the present.

## 7. NATURE OBJECTS AS SPIRITUAL BEACONS FOR SALVATION

Some of the sampled hymns describe nature as spiritual beacons to salvation. Hymn 4 titled "*Mwari muri zuva redu/God you are our sun*" has stanza 1, which articulates that

Mwari muri zuva redu/God you are our sun, Rinopenya pazuru/you  
shine in heaven; Asi mweya ungaone paunozofamba napo/but the spirit  
may see the path to walk on.

Metaphorically, the sun is used to describe the salvific nature of God. African Pentecostals have an imminent missional campaign to save the world. While ecological objects help depict nature as aiding the salvation plan, it sidelines the ecological discourses, pointing out that nature only exists to save humanity. African Pentecostals, therefore, are encouraged to adopt the approach of attempting to save both the souls of humanity and their dwelling place.



Hymn 42 describes the salvation story of animals:

Ndinochema Ishe Mwari/I cry to you 2. Ndiri hwai/I am a sheep, ndarasika I am lost; Nganditsvakwe/look for me, ndidzoswezeve/return me;Ndiri pasi pamapako/I am under the caves,Chindironda Ishe wangu/look for me my Lord. 3. Ndakarasa nzira yako/I neglected your way,Ndikarega tsitsi dzako/lost your mercy, Ndikakwira pamikwidza/ climbed on hills,Ndikanyura pakaipa/sunk in sin. 4. Pane rima rakakomba/there is intense darkness, Buda Zuva rakanaka!/come beautiful sunshine,Ngandipinde pane nzira/let me go where there is a way,Ndiponiswe/to be saved, Ishe, Jesu/Lord Jesus.

The lyrics show that God uses nature to feed and hide livestock. It follows that ecology should not be destroyed. As African Pentecostals sing this hymnal song subconsciously, they profess to protect, save, and manage ecology.

According to Hymn 13,

farai vatendi. 1. Farai vatendi mangwanana ano/rejoice believers this morning, Muponisi wevanhu wazvarwa/your saviour is born; Chikudzai rudo rwakakomba/exalt the great love: Shoko radzakauya naro/the word they brought, Kuti Mwari waponwa nyenya/that God is born of flesh.

Hymn 24:

Changamire Muponisi/sir saviour 2. Gwayana raMwari baba Tonamata kwauri/ sheep of God we worship you;Ropa rakaparadzirwa Isu vakarasika/blood that was shed for us the lost.Vanhu vako vose/ all your people, Ishe Vakatengerwa nzwimbo/Lord bought them a place;Vakazarurirwa musuwo Webako rokudenga/he opened the door of heaven.

Christians may rejoice that Jesus came to “save us”, but how good will that be if our climate is in crisis and in need of salvation from destruction and degradation? One such way to destroy nature is by allowing greenhouse gases produced by human activities to continue causing exponential temperature increases (The Causes of Climate Change 2020).

African Pentecostals’ salvation is solely linked to the regeneration of the spirit, soul, and body. However, when it comes to nature, there is a suggestion from Hymn 5, stanza 3, that

Zvinhu zvose zvipenyu Zvinoponiswa naye/all things alive are saved by him:Tsitsi dzake ihuru Dzinoitirwa isu/his grace is excellent which is done to us.

In this hymn, African Pentecostals are influenced by Paul's concept of "new creation in Christ" as outlined in 2 Corinthians 5:17. This concept easily connects the believer to the will and purpose of God and not necessarily to saving ecology. When God decided to execute the salvation of humanity, he sent his son Jesus without anyone calling him. As explained by the lyrics in Hymn 14:

Hossana wokudenga 1. Hossana wokudenga/Hossana in the heavens,  
Ndoimba nezwi rangu/I believe in your word, KuMwana waDavid/to the  
son of David, Wauya Kwandiri/he came to me, Hosana, ndiyamure  
Pakurema kwangu/Hossana help me in my sins: Wauya asadanwa  
Muponisi wangu/he has come without being called.

However, with spiritual salvation, the ecological crisis consciously calls for all Christians to respond urgently.

If God was willing to save humanity by sacrificing his only begotten son, as succinctly put by Hymn 21:

tsitsi hedzi dzamira dzoga/ grace stood alone 2. Ishe waburuka  
kudenga/the Lord stepped down from heaven, Akazova munhu  
kuvanhu/he became flesh among people, Akava diramhamba redu/he  
became as sacrifice to us, Pamuchinjikwa/at the cross,

then he would want to save ecology through those he saved. Since ecological crises are caused by humanity, they reflect societal actions. Proper salvation is accounted for by how believers change their moral behaviour. The growing ecological crisis results from poor moral consciousness towards God's creation. Good theological and moral consciousness makes believers partner with God in protecting ecology. Therefore, it is appropriate to state that the future of dealing with the ecological crisis lies with Christian maturity. While what delineates maturity remains vague, African Pentecostal worship liturgy is encouraged to incorporate transformational ecological theologies. This entails putting into practice the Pentecostal ecotheology "as the theology that can go beyond the anthropocentric focus of salvation towards the salvation of the non-human" (Kgatle & Chigorimbo 2024:1). The practice should involve the participation of the clergy, laity, and believers in discussions and developing further ecological theologies that centre on climate change and development matters.

## 8. THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN THE ECOLOGICAL MOTIF

The Holy Spirit is represented in symbols of nature. Hymn 35:

Mweya Mutsvene waMwari/Holy Spirit you are God 2. Uya Mweya kufanana Kupenya kwezuva/come to Holy Spirit shining like a sun;Vhenekera moyo yedu/ shine upon our hearts, Onisa kuipa/you burn sin. 4. Uya serimi romoto/ come as ambers of fire,Pisa moyo yedu/burn our hearts, Tichive zviteuro Kuna Ishe wedu/so we become prayerful to our Lord.5. Uya Mweya kufanana Dova rokudenga/ come Spirit like dew, Mwoyo isingabereke Ive namapudzi/ heart which does not bear to have fruits.6. Uya senjiva yedenga/come as a dove, Utibvumbamire Nemapapiro orudo/cover us with wings of love, Noruregerero/ with forgiveness.7 Uya sedutu remhepo/ come as a wind, Netsitsi nengoni/with grace and mercy, Kuti vanhu vakuone/ so people can see, Nokupenya kwako/with your brightness.

Other symbolic elements such as oil and wind are believed to reveal the nature of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers believers, and African Pentecostals strongly believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by their speaking in tongues. Pentecostals have vivid “pneumatological imaginations” that permeate everything they do, making it their Christian story and experience (Yong 2005:201).

Whilst one interacts with the subject of nature and worship, one would ask about the extent to which the Holy Spirit interacts with nature. The above lyrics indicate that the pouring of the Holy Spirit only targets nature and not animals. However, Joel 2:28 suggests that the Holy Spirit would be poured upon “all flesh”. The immediate reaction to the phrase “all flesh” is to imagine slaves, masters, and all humanity, excluding animals. Yong (2005:300) suggests that “all flesh” includes animals. In his argument, Yong points out that the Noachic Covenant in Genesis 9:8- 17 shows that a blessing was also given to animals. As a departure from the popular anthropocentric favouring human glossolalia, Rizzo (2024:67) argues for “animal glossolalia”. He explains that animals engage in a unique form of spiritual expression of the Spirit. There are many instances in the Bible where the Holy Spirit would manifest using inanimate objects, including animals. The creation account in Genesis 1:2 shows the Holy Spirit hovering and brooding upon the waters. In this case, African Pentecostals’ view of the Holy Spirit provides a positive attitude towards ecology because the Holy Spirit participates in both nature and the believers’ lives. The Holy Spirit is the power that connects God, human beings, and ecology. Therefore, the importance of ecology in the matrix should be placed at the same level as the importance ascribed to human beings.

In some of the hymns, the Holy Spirit is revealed as presenting fire in the hearts of believers. Hymn 36:

Simudza kufunga kwedu/raise our thinking 2. Iro zuva rokuuya/your day of coming, Ngarisvike zvino/let it come now; Kuti iwo moto wako Usvike kwatiri/so your fire may reach us.

Further, the Holy Spirit presents notions of peace. Hymn 56:

ngandibereke mapudzi 1.Ngandibereke mapudzi/let me bear the fruit, Ayo oMweya Mutsvene/of the Holy Spirit, Ohunhu nokururama/of a good character, Nduramo nomwoyo chena/of a clean heart

The fruits of the Holy Spirit enable a believer to bear fruits that enhance righteous living, respect, and love for one another. The presence of peace in any nation fosters a mindset of development. Sande (2017:1) argues that the Apostolic Faith Mission could develop a theology that “emphasises the sanctity of work, materialism and a conducive habitat environment”. The quest to ask the Holy Spirit and use him within the church has become the hallmark of African Pentecostals. According to Machingura (2011), the speaking in tongues motif (glossolalia) has made the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe attract a considerable following. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is believed to bring peace to a believer’s soul. True peace, therefore, should permeate all areas of a believer’s life, including his/her habitat.

Peace and social justice work together to make the world a habitable place. African Pentecostal charismatic social justice ought to have a role in projecting peace, healing, and reconciliation. Thus, African Pentecostals should aim to practise a theology that enhances God’s justice regarding natural resources. Humanity is part of ecology. Therefore, Pentecostal ecotheology must move marginalised people to the centre of the political, juridical, and economic sectors of society. The peace from the Holy Spirit should not only deal with the troubled soul, but also extend towards protecting the environment. The Pentecostal social justice issues in Pentecostalism should be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit (Gelpi 1994). Religions have a role in dealing with violence, reconciliation, and peace-building.

Wealth and resource distribution are part of social justice. African Pentecostals must consider eco-justice and justice to the changing world when they accumulate wealth. Moving out of poverty requires strategically reviewing how nations manage and distribute natural resources. Proper distribution of resources facilitates the enjoyment of a good life on earth. According to Haggai 2:8, all the gold and silver belong to God.

Further, understanding the African Pentecostals’ teaching of wealth

transfer is critical. Part of the teaching is that the wealth of unbelievers can be handed to believers (Prov. 13:22). Yong (2012:16) suggests that the best way to look at prosperity theology is from a “religious economy”. However, the downside of African Pentecostal prosperity theology is that it creates conflict and pressure on the resources by causing competition for goods and services. While there is a negative connotation to prosperity theology, the positive side is that it also proffers an opportunity to broaden the narrow scope of classic Pentecostal eschatology of future prosperity for “this-wordly” eschatology.

## 9. JESUS’ SECOND COMING AND ECOLOGY MOTIF

The notion of the second coming of Jesus is articulated in the sampled hymns. Hymn 191

dyara mangwanani 1. Tiende tidyare/we will go when we seed, tirege kuzeza Zuva rinouya/ not fearing the coming day, tichazorora Tichapiwa tose mubairo yedu/ we will rest, we will be given the price for our labour, Tichafara tose nokufarawo/will be happy and rejoice.

The second coming of Jesus Christ brings to light the existence of another world order. It is generally believed in Christendom that everything we see in ecology will be destroyed. This popular belief portrays a negative attitude toward ecology whilst emphasising the spiritual. According to (Yong 2011:10), the “materiality of salvation” in Pentecostalism focuses on the healing nature of the Spirit in the individual life. Therefore, African Pentecostal eschatological beliefs hold that all ecology will be destroyed.

The hymn titled *Wauya wauya mucheki Mukuru (Here comes the Harvester)* warns of the coming destruction of ecology:

Wauya wauya mucheki Mukuru/here comes the Harvester. Zvinhu zvatinooona zvose zvichatsva/all things that we see will burn) Makomo mapako zvichanyongodeka/mountains, caves will disappear) Zuva richadzima, mwedzi uchaperera/the sun will darken, the moon will vanish) Vakaipa vachashaya pekuwhanda/ the evil will not find a place to hide.

The ecological destruction motif negates the value of nature favouring the future spiritual eschatology. According to Hymn 74, the destruction of the end time is a frightening moment:

1 Chinhu chinotyisa kwazvo/it is a frightening event, Zuva rokupera/ the end days;Kana Ishe achitonga/ when the Lord is judging, Kokupedzisira/ for the last time.

Environmental degradation, deforestation, and ozone destruction are visible signs of the end of the times. According to the United Nations (2019), only 11 years are left to save the planet from irreversible change meaningfully. However, the hymn shows what needs to be feared instead of the end-time judgement by God. These two paradigms show the crossroads in which we find ourselves as humanity.

Instead of paying attention to the Genesis creation narrative where God was involved in the cosmos, the African Pentecostals seem to favour the annihilation *mundi* (destruction of the world). Pentecostals' eschatological position is understood through their "talk about heaven" whereby the aspects of seeing loved ones who have died, hope for physical healing, and a desire to see Jesus (Waddel 2009). African Pentecostals' apocalyptic perception limits the idea of taking care of ecology. While awaiting the eventual eschatological destruction of the entire ecology, African Pentecostals should strive to contribute to a sustainable ecology. It would help if African Pentecostals provided as much emphasis on ecological matters as they do on essential spiritual knowledge. In this ecological crisis, African Pentecostals' theological teachings should encourage an understanding of God's care for humanity and his ecological creation.

## 10. NATURE AND HEALING MOTIF

The healing motif is expressed well in the sampled hymns. Hymn 48:

una vanhu vako 1.Una vanhu vako/you have your people, Mwari Kudzo dzose nguva/ at all times; Unovachengeta iwe/you keep them, Pane nzvimbo dzose/all the places. 2. Kana voyambuka nzizi/ when they cross rivers, Uve navo iwe/be with them; Kana vapiswa nemoto/when they are burnt with fire, Vanochengetwa newe/you keep them.3. Pavanokutambudzika Vanosimba newe/in suffering you make them strong; Napane zvinovaruma/you protect them when bitten, Unovachengeta/you keep them.

The lyrics in this hymn reveal that God will support his children who are going through the vicissitudes of life. African Pentecostals treat healing as having salvation and prosperity underpinnings. Nature is given to humanity as a source of healing (for example, herbs and trees produce healing). Perhaps, the eschatological warning given in Hymn 71,

kwasara makore 1. that Kwasara makore, Nenguva shomana, Tinoenda kuna avo, Vari kumakuva/a few years and very little time is left, before humanity goes to the grave,

is a correct interpretation of what is happening to our ecology. Thus, ecological discretion calls for transformational eschatology and inclusive pneumatology to produce a robust environmental ethic. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the Israelites experienced similar effects on the environment, which, however, were more localised than the current global crisis. The description in Isaiah 34:9-17 shows a land burnt and uninhabitable to human beings, degraded soil, and contaminated water. Such a description matches the findings by Marlow (2009), who described an increase in the world's pollution levels.

The prosperity gospel prominent within African Pentecostals encourages believers to appreciate the value of their ecology. Prosperity theology is materialistic, focusing on divine providence and wealth accumulation. It also goes beyond poverty, but it is spiritual (Ayegboyin 2004). African Pentecostals view prosperity as a form of salvation and healing from sin. Their freewill offerings in church, sacrificial seed-giving, and tithes are encouraged, in order to harvest God's blessings. This good news inevitably brings a positive value to ecology. Infusing knowledge of salvation as wealth can take ecological sustenance as vital (Golo 2013). African Pentecostals have a divine responsibility to be good stewards of natural resources. According to Romans 8:22-24, the resources are moaning and waiting for healing. This scripture portion arguably reveals that God's creation should be managed and is waiting for Christians to manage it. The ecological crisis is a cry for healing. From a biblical theology perspective, Christians are a conduit of peace and healing. This is pictured in the book of Job 12:7-10:

But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; 8 ask the earth's plants, [a] and they will teach you; and the sea fish will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is every living thing's life and every human being's breath.

The African Pentecostal domineering theology should not only be in spiritual deliverance but must also deal with natural preservations. The African Pentecostal healing motif must accommodate divine healing of the body and ecology stewardship. Hunter (2000) questions Pentecostals' rationale for individual divine healing when they have so much poverty regarding ecological sustenance and environmental health. Therefore, in the context of ecological crisis, the starting point of healing should be with ecology.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS

This article echoes the ecological crisis level and calls for all hands on deck, especially African Pentecostals, to be more active in ecological discourses because of their continued growth and zealous missiological thrust. African Pentecostals should continue to overcome their pneumatological dispositions and engage in the “other-worldly” (earth-based/earthly), dealing with the earthly ecology crisis. Although African Pentecostals have not developed a clear ecotheology, the overall disposition is toward eco-pneumatology, which is the relationship of their ecotheology to the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. This article argued that the starting point to developing effective African Pentecostal ecotheology should be identifying and amplifying any ecological notions used consciously or unconsciously by the church. The 56 hymnal worship songs sampled and interpreted as conversations show that the African Pentecostal hymnal worship songs have many notions of ecology which need aligning to speak to the contemporary ecological crisis. Therefore, the urgency of the ecological crisis is calling for appraising what the church is already doing or using and magnifying it. In a way, we must bring theology and ecology together within the church’s worship space. Ecology should be integrated as a form of holistic worship.

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