

The Evangelicalisation of Black Pentecostalism in the AFM of SA (1940–1975): A Turning Point

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Abstract

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of South Africa, a Pentecostal denomination founded in 1908 by an American missionary, John G Lake, attracted a large following of blacks in South Africa from its inception. This denomination contributed a large body of Zionist churches to the African Independent Church movement. Among its black members before and during the 1940s, it was Zionist-like—only undergoing changes between 1943 and 1975 resulting in it becoming outright evangelical. This was a turning point in the history of the AFM and black Pentecostals specifically, as it brought this large body of followers culturally closer to the dominant evangelical expression of Pentecostalism in the denomination. This article looks into reasons behind the changes as well as how they were carried out. Primary sources, available at the AFM archives, and secondary sources such as theses, articles and books with a bearing on the topic have been consulted. The article contributes to the growing body of South African Pentecostal history.

Keywords: Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM); black Pentecostalism; Evangelicalism; missions; Zionism

Introduction

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of South Africa was established in 1908 in Johannesburg as an evangelical Pentecostal church. According to David Bebbington (in Eskridge 2006), Evangelicalism is a movement within Protestantism which holds a belief that effort must be made to preach the gospel (activism) which at its centre is Christ as sacrificed at the cross (crucicentrism)—the consequence of which is life-



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change (conversionism), and the Bible is generally approached literally, especially the New Testament. Eskridge (2006) differentiates this movement from traditional Protestantism by locating its origins in “the revivals of the 18th and 19th century North Atlantic Anglo American world.” Pentecostalism, on the other hand, is a movement that insists on bringing back into modern church life, the first century apostolic pneumatological experiences such as divine healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues (Anderson 2004, 108). The AFM is both evangelical and Pentecostal in terms of the definitions above. On the contrary, black Pentecostalism in the AFM showed remarkable theological and phenomenological similarity to the developing independent black Zionist movement until the 1950s and 1960s. Processes of evangelicalisation of black Pentecostalism began in earnest between 1943 when discussions about a new policy governing the black church started and 1975. In this article, primary and secondary literature was scrutinised in an attempt to answer the following questions: Why did black Pentecostalism cease to be Zionist? How was this achieved and with what consequences?

Before indicating how the above questions will be attended to, a word concerning the use of the term “black” is necessary. Firstly, “black” stands in a binary relationship with “white” as signifiers of racial categories designating people of African and European ancestry respectively. This is the primary use of the term “black” in this article. Secondly, this term draws from a Bikoist definition of “black” and “blackness” as emerging from racially oppressive experience of Africans in which a call to consciously struggle to be human in their own terms, while asserting equality with the historically dominant race is made (Tafira 2014, 192). Using the term in this second sense highlights the imbalanced racial power dynamics people so designated experienced, even in the context of the Christian church.

In answer to the questions above, the article briefly compares Zionism and black Pentecostalism in the AFM and discusses the cessation of Zionist-like practices among black AFM Pentecostals. It also explores the reasons for cessation of Zionist-like practices and the mechanics behind the cessation. Lastly, consequences associated with the changes within black Pentecostalism will be discussed before concluding. This article will argue that the attitude and actions of white missionary leadership of the AFM were crucial to the demise of what Khathide (2010, 44) calls “Zionist tendencies” in black Pentecostalism—hence, its evangelicalisation. The missionary interventions instituted between 1943 and 1975 constituted a turning point in black AFM, resulting in the current evangelical expression in the movement.

Zionism and Black Pentecostalism

According to Pretorius and Jafta (1997, 217), Zionism was a Christian movement founded by an Australian, John Alexander Dowie, in 1896, in Chicago, USA. Dowie stood in the Holiness tradition that derived from Methodism (Pretorius and Jafta 1997,

217). He was a renowned faith healer whose newsletter, *Leaves of Healing*, spread across the world and won converts to his theology and practices (Pretorius and Jafta 1997, 228). The first proponent of Dowie's teachings in South Africa was Johannes Buchler. He introduced these teachings to his brother in law, Edgar Mahon (Pretorius and Jafta 1997, 217), as well as Pieter le Roux who was then serving as the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) missionary in Wakkerstroom (Oosthuizen 1987, 20). Le Roux's departure from the Wakkerstroom DRC Zulu mission congregation in 1902 and his joining of Dowie's Zion Church created the first black Zionist congregation in South Africa (Anderson 2004, 107). By 1904 when an American Zionist leader, Daniel Bryant, took over the reins of Dowie's organisation in South Africa, Le Roux had already raised black leaders who were responsible for Zionist congregations in various areas near Wakkerstroom (Dowie 1904, 855). Le Roux, together with these leaders and their congregations, joined the Pentecostal movement of John Graham Lake in 1908, based in Johannesburg (Oosthuizen 1987, 21). Lake was formerly a deacon in Dowie's church who, though embracing Pentecostalism, remained a firm believer and advocate of Zionist theology and practices (Blumhofer 1986, 4; Lapoorta 1996, 169; Pretorius and Jafta 1997, 217). Le Roux's Zionist-turned-Pentecostal congregation in Wakkerstroom retained the Zionist appellation (Lapoorta 1996, 169). By the end of the second decade of the 20th century, a number of black Zionist leaders had left the AFM for their own church organisations (Anderson 2004, 107). At this time, Le Roux had become president of the AFM (Els 2007, 56). The church had begun to operate as a white church with a black mission department, stifling black leadership development by putting whites in charge (De Wet 1989, 279).

In the period before, during and after their association with Pentecostalism, the Zionists considered smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, use of medicine, and eating pork as taboo (Maxwell 1999, 251). These were some of the distinctive teachings and practices of Dowie's Zionist Church to which black Zionists added the practices of "carrying holy staffs, wearing robes and sashes, and conducting their worship services barefoot" (Sundkler 1976, 48). Arguably, these additions might have arisen from their reading of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. This argument in itself does not detract from the fact that these practices seemed to address a deeply felt need among these traditionalist black believers. The black members who remained behind when the Zionists left the AFM had similar beliefs and practices, as is evident below. The 1922 AFM Native Conference that was held at the AFM Mooi Street Tabernacle in Johannesburg resolved to block anyone who smoked, drank alcohol, used medicine or ate pork, from entering its ministry (AFM Native Conference 1922). The pronouncement of the AFM Native General Conference of 1929 against the wearing of "church uniform, crosses and use of holy water" (AFM Native Conference 1929), all of which were already "customary" by then (Klaver 1965, 16), is also telling. The constitution promulgated in 1946 for use in the black AFM, mentions "waistcoats, clerical collars, cords, sashes, surplices and carrying of crosses" (Burger and Nel 2008, 243). Khathide (2010, 44) describes black Pentecostals in the AFM Natal during the

1950s as inclined “to follow more the teaching[s] of the Law in the Old Testament than ... the New Testament.” He provides the “long hair and long beards” of the men as an example and concludes that the AFM in Natal had “strong Zionistic tendencies” (Khathide 2010, 44). All these practices, which the AFM leadership was against, located black Pentecostalism in the AFM to be religio-culturally part of the black Zionist movement (Larbi 2002, 146).

The shared historico-theological background in the AFM and Alexander Dowie’s Christian Catholic Church in Zion informed both black Pentecostalism and Zionism (Maxwell 1999, 251). Added to this, their members came from the same socio-economic class that was poor and mostly rural (Burger and Nel 2008, 133; Hwata 2005, 113; Madise 2001, 124; Togarasei 2005, 350). As such, their connection to the African traditional religio-cultural background was strong and did contribute to their response to the gospel and practice of Christianity (Madise 2001, 124; Togarasei 2005, 372). Whereas black Zionism was free to contextualise the gospel because of being under black leadership, black Pentecostals could only do so by seizing opportunities presented by the inadequacies of white missionary control. De Wet (1989, 124) mentions vast distances, lack of vehicles and shortage of missionary manpower as obstacles to effective missionary control over the black AFM in the 1920s and 1930s. What De Wet (1989, 125) then describes as black Pentecostals “preaching what they could in the absence of white missionary input” due to the above challenges, was a seizing of opportunity to contextualise the gospel. Notwithstanding the similarities between black Pentecostalism and Zionism, they differed in that the former was under white supervision and the latter was independent (Burger and Nel 2008, 233). This difference was at the centre of the different trajectories these two movements later took, with the result that the gap between them widened.

Black Pentecostalism Ceases to be Zionist-like

Between 1943 and 1975, the most gruelling battle for the soul of black Pentecostalism in the AFM ensued. It appears that the issue revolved around whether black Pentecostalism was going to remain Zionist-like or become evangelical. This was literally a black and white issue but in an institutional context defined by white Pentecostal understanding and practices, as Burger and Nel (2008, 33) have pointed out, such as monopolisation of power by white missionaries. The white understanding and practice of Pentecostalism was an expression of evangelicalism, an important point to remember when considering the battle for the soul of black Pentecostalism. Of course this made sense, as Mathole (2005, 182) writes that Pentecostalism originated in American evangelicalism, albeit black. Accordingly, Lapoorta (1996, 172) and Amanor (2013) consider Pentecostals to be evangelicals. Nichol (1966, 3) classifies their doctrine as evangelical and agreeing with him is Larbi (2002, 145), who clarifies that Pentecostals are evangelicals who emphasise charismatic gifts. Therefore, Pentecostalism ticked every box in Bebbington’s hallmarks of evangelicalism identified

as “crucicentrism, conversionism, activism and biblicism” (Eskridge 2006, para.3). In the AFM, whites were custodians of this form of Pentecostalism.

To speak of a form of Pentecostalism when referring to what whites in the AFM practised, allows for acknowledgement of other forms such as the one found among black Pentecostals before the period under consideration. Mathole (2005, 184) calls this “white form” evangelical Pentecostalism. Hollenweger (1972, 165) refers to the black form characteristic of those churches whose founders left the AFM, which this article argues to have also existed among the black members of the AFM, as Zionist Pentecostalism. White missionaries and denominational leaders refused the classification of Zionism as Pentecostal (Bond 1974, 14; Hollenweger 1972). This refusal to consider the Zionist expression of the Pentecostal faith as valid lay at the heart of the crisis precipitated over black Pentecostalism in the 1940s. Despite the resistance put up by black Pentecostals from as far back as 1929, their Zionism crumbled such that Bond (1974, 14) could mention in 1974 the disdain with which black Pentecostals in the AFM and other related denominations regarded Zionism. This was because they had become evangelical.

Reasons behind the Demise of Zionist Pentecostalism in the AFM

The following reasons were deduced from the historical record and will be discussed: a belief in white custodianship and black apprenticeship; aberrant black response to the gospel; affront to the quest for white Pentecostal respectability; and the threat of black Pentecostal agency.

White Custodianship and Black Apprenticeship

Although the Southern African Pentecostal movement emerged from a revival at a black church in Doornfontein, the fact that it was conducted by white preachers who later encouraged Ethiopian churches to join, aided by government’s requirement that black churches must be under white supervision, contributed to the idea of whites as custodians of Pentecostalism and blacks as their apprentices. This explains why the AFM had 500 ministers of whom 350 were black by 1911 (Lake 1911, 7) but only three were included in the mission governing council, even then, as assistants to white leaders. From 1917 to 1961, the mission governing council became a whites-only structure. The presence of black ministers so early in the history of the movement was made possible by the fact that they were not new converts. Men like Fred Luthuli, Joel Ngobese, Daniel Nkonyane, Edward Lion, and so forth, had been ministers for a while in the Zionist Church of Pieter le Roux and Edgar Mahon before they came under the fold of the AFM (Sundkler 1976, 56–57, 65). Letwaba, Moroane and some 45 ministers in the Orange Free State and many others came from the Ethiopian Church movement (De Wet 1989, 62; Morton 2016, 2; Sundkler 1976, 55).

These men soon translated Pentecostalism into a fast-growing “indigenous movement” (Burger and Nel 2008, 201), informed by the African religio-cultural world resulting in a peculiar form of Pentecostalism called black Zionism (Anderson 2005, 69). For Pieter le Roux, the emergence of black Zionism pointed at the need for blacks to be controlled for fear of what they would do “when left to themselves” (Sundkler 1976, 50). The consequence was deprivation of meaningful leadership roles beyond the congregational level (Morton 2016, 8). The reservation of leadership roles to whites with the concomitant domination of blacks in church circles was sometimes justified by appealing to lack of maturity of the latter, which in some instances, went hand in hand with suspicion of black apprehension of the gospel.

Aberrant Black Response to the Gospel

As teachers and guardians of proper response to the Pentecostal gospel, the missionaries watched in dismay the appearance of robes, sashes, long stick crosses, and so forth, among black Pentecostals. Confronted with these, Pieter le Roux’s reaction was to want to excommunicate all who he deemed responsible for this aberrant behaviour (Sundkler 1976, 51). Daniel Nkonyane was the leader of the first group to champion this supposedly “aberrant behaviour.” His leaving the AFM in 1910 gave the missionaries a momentary relief only, as Elias Mahlangu soon introduced white robes and walking barefoot during church services, especially during Holy Communion (Anderson and Pillay 1997, 231). This group left in 1917. Although between then and 1929, it appears that nothing was said about the practices of black Pentecostalism, the 1929 conference regarded it as “custom,” albeit unacceptable, the issue “of wearing long white blouses, robes, and carrying of crosses” (Burger and Nel 2008, 243). The 1943 Missionary Conference ruled against all these, deeming them unscriptural (De Wet 1989, 107, 112). It codified its decisions into a “Handbook for the Natives” in 1946. From then on “the issue of special garments for believers” found itself “often discussed in the meetings of the different councils of the black Section” (Burger and Nel 2008, 245) and the intention was to eradicate these practices.

Affront to the Quest for White Pentecostal Respectability

Despite the British winning the 1899–1902 war against Afrikaners of the two Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal), the Afrikaners dominated the politics of the Union of South Africa and later the Republic. The growing popularity of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1940s led to the National Party winning the 1948 elections. The AFM, with the majority of its white members being Afrikaners, embraced Afrikaner nationalism (Anderson 2004, 10; Watt 2001, 67–68). According to Burger and Nel (2008, 147), the church encouraged its white members to participate in community structures. Some of its young educated Afrikaner pastors introduced architectural and liturgical changes more in line with the Afrikaner Reformed Churches in the quest for respectability and acceptance (Maxwell 2006, 45).

With this in mind, it appears as if the discouraging of any appearance of “Zionism” among black Pentecostals in general, and specifically the condemnation of black Pentecostal prayer women with their church uniform (De Wet 1989, 107), served the purpose of cleaning up how the AFM was seen and received by the Afrikaner state and society (Maxwell 2006, 45). The view of the 1949 Native Conference that the wearing of church uniform was “confusing,” because Zionist Churches also wore it (Burger and Nel 2008, 243), serves as evidence when seen in light of the statement Burger and Nel (2008, 226) make. They write that “[g]overnment officials of the Native Affairs Department in some districts mistakenly viewed unregistered Native churches and their practices as being sponsored by the AFM, to the detriment of Overseers and their work.” It appears that the only people to be confused by the wearing of church uniform were the government officials and maybe missionaries also, as it is unthinkable that the wearers of this uniform could ever be confused by it.

Black Pentecostal Agency as a Threat to White Control

The persistence of Zionist peculiarities among black AFM Pentecostals was precisely because of the AFM’s commitment to the ministry of all Spirit-baptised believers, the adaptable nature of Pentecostalism that makes it take whatever shape dictated by the culture and context of the recipients and the exercise of agency by these black believers. Seeing the above in the light of De Wet’s (1989, 125) statement about the rapid spread of the Pentecostal gospel over Southern Africa and white missionary inability to supervise the movement, black agency resulting in the kind of Pentecostalism described earlier makes sense. De Wet (1989, 129) records the leadership’s concern for the quality of Bible knowledge by black Pentecostals “as early as 1920.” Interestingly, nothing official came out of these concerns until Elias Letwaba, who was as concerned, established a training facility for the black ministry in 1924 (De Wet 1989, 130; Erasmus 1996, 3), at a time when whites did not think ministry education appropriate for Pentecostals. Through their exercise of self-agency, black women Pentecostals wore their blue and white church uniform to protect the dignity of the poor among them, to challenge each other to regular church attendance and overall “compliance with certain spiritual standards” as well as to facilitate ease of identification (Molobi and Mahlobo 2008, 46; Molobi, Skhosana and Kekana 2008, 69).

Taking opportunity of the fluidity inherent in Pentecostalism, blacks indigenised the gospel. This act left the white missionary leadership of the AFM unimpressed and wanting to reclaim control. The words of Pieter le Roux to Sundkler (1976) when asked about his reactions to the innovations that began in Wakkerstroom in 1910, are telling. Sundkler (1976, 50) records that Le Roux “was disappointed” and felt that it needed to be “feared what blacks would do when left to themselves.” These words, spoken in 1940, seem to have a sense of “see what has transpired since then” which at the time, the white opinion was negative on developments in this sector as seen in Sundkler’s 1948 work which was revised in 1961. Attempts at reclaiming control started as early as 1910 with Le Roux’s wish to excommunicate Daniel Nkonyane for pioneering what

later became black Zionist peculiarities (Sundkler 1976, 50). Later, various councils came on board in an attempt to stem the tide of innovations common to both independent Zionists and black Pentecostals (Burger and Nel 2008, 245). By so doing, white missionary leaders privileged their own understanding and culturally conditioned responses over those of blacks in a manner uncharacteristic of the accessible and adaptable nature of Pentecostal spirituality. In church and society where whites were guardians of blacks, and responsible for the Christianity of the latter, the violation of this characteristic of Pentecostalism and the agency that takes hold of this characteristic appeared justified.

Black Pentecostalism Sheds off Zionist Expressions

The interventions of white missionary leadership of the black AFM took the form of mobilisation of institutional machinery to pronounce against Zionism, educate for an evangelical future and support evangelistic and church planting campaigns in furtherance of the new evangelical order. These are discussed hereunder.

Use of Institutional Authority

In the first decade of the AFM, no authoritative structure pronounced on the then developing Zionist peculiarities among black Pentecostals, but individuals such as Pieter le Roux and Samson Ntanzi did. Sundkler (1976, 150) records that Pieter le Roux had objected specifically to the carrying of holy staffs by the Nkonyane group. Ntanzi, an evangelist ordained in 1916, spoke against the wearing of uniform in the meeting between the Native Conference and the Mahlangu group in 1915 (Klaver 1965, 18). Even in the 1940s, Ntanzi remained resolute against the wearing of a church uniform. Although the 1920 Native Conference had the wearing of collars, long white robes, waistcoats, and feet-washing on its agenda, it was only in 1929 that such an authoritative body made pronouncements against these. By then these practices had already become a “habit” among black Pentecostals (De Wet 1989, 107; Molobi 2008, 7). No record exists of these issues being further engaged with by a council or conference between 1929 and 1943, the year in which discussions for a new policy governing the black church started. The promulgation of this policy and instructions in 1945 was a turning point in black Pentecostalism, as its Zionist character came under attack in conferences and councils, which declared it “unscriptural” and “evil”—demanding its attendant practices to cease.

Education

The earlier “aversion to educated ministry” (Hwata 2005, 106), due to fear of what it would do to Pentecostal spirituality, changed in the 1940s (Erasmus 1996). Until then, ministerial education had not been official and mandatory. Burger and Nel (2008, 151) credit the change to the desire of the AFM to be considered an Afrikaner church—the fourth one after the three Reformed Churches. They surmise that the DRC commission

on the AFM, which flagged lack of ministerial training of AFM pastors as an obstacle towards accepting it as a church, might have also played a role in the change of attitude towards ministerial education. During this time, the white AFM was caught up in the ascendant Afrikaner nationalism and had begun abandoning traditional Pentecostal pacifist beliefs, its sectarian exclusivism, and its shunning of social involvement (Burger and Nel 2008, 146–147). According to Burger and Nel (2008, 147), “the Prime Minister and various Cabinet ministers began making appearances at certain services, especially the annual General Conferences” of the white AFM from the 1950s.

The direct result of this change of heart was the founding of the whites-only Apostolic Bible College (ABC) in 1950 and six other Bible schools between 1951 and 1969, where blacks were trained under white principals (Hwata 2005, 106). Fundamental to the educational undertakings for black ministers lay a resolution taken by the AFM in 1944 that it “stood against higher education” and “supported lower education” for blacks (De Wet 1989, 170). This position, applied to broader societal context, agreed with the view of the government then that missionary education trained blacks beyond their expected roles, hence black expectation to access equal rights in white society (Giliomee 2012, 76). Therefore, education that pretended to speak to the situation of blacks while serving the interest of its white architects was implemented in both church and society. This was true also in the AFM. Letwaba’s Bible school, founded in 1924 and held in high esteem by William Burton, the British Pentecostal missionary and author, had closed in 1935 on account of the AFM missionary leadership not finding it useful (Erasmus 1996). One wonders if this finding resulted from their frustration with the existence of Zionist Pentecostalism among black believers, despite the school. In the place of Letwaba’s school, the AFM established a training programme, regarded as official and mandatory, under white principals from then to the 1990s (Erasmus 1996, 93). Its inauguration coincided with the quest to rid black Pentecostalism of Zionist expressions born as a response to African sensibilities in favour of a Pentecostalism sensitive to white missionary ideology. The graduates of this white-led programme became foot soldiers of the evangelisation project under the auspices of white missionaries.

Evangelistic Campaigns and Church Planting

Two main developments critical to completing the demise of Zionism in the AFM were the ministry of Richard Ngidi, particularly his evangelistic activities, and the formation and activities of Reinhard Bonnke’s Christ for All Nations Evangelistic Ministry. These two men championed the new way of being Pentecostal among blacks in the AFM. Richard Ngidi was a convert of the famous Nicholas Bhengu of the Assemblies of God whom Mathole (2005, 184) refers to as a pioneer of evangelical Pentecostalism among blacks. Like Bhengu, Ngidi adopted the itinerant tent evangelism as a church-planting strategy to great effect. In his 20 years of ministry (1965–1985), he “planted 176 churches in Natal,” a figure that far outstripped the number of congregations that existed before he started (Burger and Nel 2008, 256). Taking inspiration from Ngidi, Reinhard Bonnke, who was then an AFM missionary in Lesotho, established Christ for All

Nations Evangelistic Ministry, which added to the AFM new evangelical congregations from 1975 (De Wet 1989, 120; Burger and Nel 2008, 256; Khathide 2010, 82). Khathide (2010, 44) describes this man, Ngidi, as having found Zionist Pentecostalism in the AFM unattractive, hence, his ministry contributed hugely to its eradication.

Consequences

The demise of Zionism in the AFM signalled a turning point from an Africanising to a Westernising trajectory in black Pentecostalism and a weakened agency. The key to understanding the conclusion that black Zionist-Pentecostalism in the AFM represented an Africanising trajectory lies in the concept “agency.” In simplified terms, agency is the capacity to think and materialise one’s own thoughts in accordance with one’s interests (Hewson 2010). Exercising their collective agency over time, black AFM Pentecostals had interpreted the teaching received from Dowie’s Zion Church, which the AFM continued to espouse in addition to Pentecostal pneumatology, through their African traditional world-view and background. Africanising their Pentecostal faith did not preclude adopting practices from any source to speak to their Africanness. Therefore, Zionist-Pentecostalism was African because it drew from the African religio-cultural idiom and the Old Testament. Poewe (1988, 148) notes the common concern of the Old Testament and African religion around visions, dreams, prophecies, dance, praise songs, and according to Walls (1996, 91), taboos. Pentecostalism appealed to the charismatic aspects of African religio-cultural praxis while Africanism appealed to the Levitical aspects of Scripture. The resulting synthesis was what Pieter le Roux had “feared would happen when blacks were left to themselves” (Sundkler 1976, 50), a Zionist Pentecostalism wholly a product of black agency.

There are several grounds for asserting that black Pentecostalism in the AFM took a Westernising trajectory with the demise of Zionism in this denomination. Take, for example, the adoption of itinerant tent gospel campaigns referred to earlier. Ngidi adopted this mode of evangelism from Nicholas Bhengu who, according to Mathole (2005), received his inspiration for tent evangelism from Billy Graham of the United States of America. According to Maxwell (2006, 8), the 1970s ushered in “the born-again movement,” a term used synonymously with “evangelical Pentecostalism” in Mathole (2005). Maxwell (2006, 8) recognises the role played by the Pentecostal missionaries from abroad and South African Pentecostal evangelists in the growth of this born-again movement. In the black AFM, the earliest address on the topic of evangelism was at the 1966 conference in Durban (Bantu Executive Committee Minutes [BECM] 1966, 23). In 1969, the Executive Committee discussed establishing an evangelism fund in 1969 (BECM 1969, 44), followed by addressing a conference held in Pietersburg on “soul-winning” (BECM 1971, 58). The launching of Reinhard Bonnke’s evangelistic ministry within four years of these discussions in the AFM contributed to the popularisation of evangelical Pentecostalism in South Africa and beyond (Mathole 2005, 190). Tent evangelism became conspicuous across most sub-

Saharan African cities during the same period besides preaching in trains, buses, and open air meetings associated with the rise of Western-influenced evangelical Pentecostalism. Clark (2001, 95) writes about “contextualisation and syncretism in African Pentecostalism,” especially in the AFM, and concludes that those with “born-again experience ... are aggressive evangelists.”

Another example of the Westernising trajectory taken by black Pentecostalism in the AFM is the banning of involvement in activities related to African traditional practices. The ambivalence of Zionism, both within the AFM and outside, towards these traditional practices (Anderson 2008, 30), meant that a line needed to be drawn. In the AFM, the missionaries drew this line, from as early as 1929 until the 1967 and 1968 conferences, which respectively addressed “the problem of uniform” (BECM 1967, 30) and “false teaching of Sionism” [sic] (BECM 1968, 35). With the missionary project bearing fruit, Clark (2001, 95) writes about “vehement rejection” of “traditional spirituality” and “many of the AICs doctrinal tenets and spiritual practices.” He further speaks of the “almost unanimous rejection of the ancestor cult and traditional divination” and concludes that “[t]his represents the radical break with the past that ... conversion represents.” Writing in 1974, Bond (1974, 14) attests to the disdain with which black Pentecostals considered Zionists, an attitude which Anderson (2005, 69) blames on missionaries, precisely because they had long regarded the uniforms of the Zionists and their healing methods with suspicion.

Although Clark (2001, 95) thinks that black AFM born-again Pentecostals would reject the idea that they have turned their backs on their Africanness by shunning traditional practices associated with Zionism and African religion, the role of whites in getting the former to abandon Zionism is clear. The link between Zionism and African spirituality and its attendant practices is also clear. So were the beliefs and practices of evangelical Pentecostalism into which whites ushered black AFM Pentecostals, clear. In this new-found Pentecostalism, black AFM members shunned alcohol, ancestors and anything related to them, polygamy, membership of secret societies, the use of symbolic paraphernalia and substances such as uniforms, oil or holy water (Anderson 2008, 30; Larbi 2002, 147–148). The New Testament took a privileged position instead of the Old Testament, which was seen to collude with African spirituality in the creation and sustenance of black Zionist-Pentecostalism. Belief in Holy Spirit baptism continued but added to it was an increased emphasis on discernment of spirits (Larbi 2002, 147). Christ-centredness and an evangelical conception of salvation as an individualist crisis experience, which all truly born-again believers possessed, became normative (Larbi 2002, 147). Interestingly, according to Hwata (2005, 111), with the advent of evangelicalised Pentecostalism, the AFM experienced a reduction in spiritual manifestations such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, and others, all that were associated with a pneumatocentric Pentecostalism characteristic of both independent Zionism and black AFM before the changes.

Conclusion

Black Pentecostalism existed in a Zionist form from very early in the history of the AFM. Already by 1910, when Nkonyane left this church, some practices that came to define the black Zionist movement had appeared. It was only from 1943 that the church made serious efforts to change how black Pentecostalism looked and expressed itself using institutional power, the mandatory ministerial education under white principals and the roles of Ngidi and Bonnke's itinerant evangelistic and church-planting ministries. These interventions together constituted a turning point in the history of the AFM. Following the mentioned interventions, black Pentecostalism no longer exhibited African-oriented Zionism but a New Testament, Western-oriented Pentecostalism. White missionary leaders who, from the beginning, considered themselves custodians of the Pentecostal faith and did not like what black Pentecostals had done with it, curated the transition. Black Zionist Pentecostalism had threatened loss of control by white Pentecostals, which further jeopardised the latter's aspired standing within the triumphant Afrikaner nationalism of the time. It appears that evangelicalisation tamed black Pentecostalism. It stands to be seen what the widespread call for Africanisation, especially of the higher education sector, will do to the Western orientation of evangelical Pentecostalism.

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