

WALTER MAGAYA'S PROPHETIC HEALING AND DELIVERANCE (PHD) MINISTRIES AND PENTECOSTALISM IN ZIMBABWE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ECUMENISM

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ABSTRACT

At the time of writing, Zimbabwe was in the midst of an intriguing expansion of the Pentecostal prophetic sector. There had been a notable increase in the number of predominantly young men exercising the gift of prophecy, healing and deliverance since 2009. After Prophets Emmanuel Makandiwa and Uebert Angel had captured the national imagination, Prophet Walter Magaya entered the scene with gusto. His Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD) Ministries threatened to overshadow his "fellow workers in God's vineyard". In this article, we locate Magaya's PHD Ministries within the broader context of the post-2008 Pentecostal prophetic movement. We describe PHD Ministries, paying attention to the religious, socio-economic and political context in Zimbabwe. We draw attention to the ecumenism that is emerging within the prophetic and healing sectors of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. Overall, we argue that this is a phenomenon that demands serious scholarly attention. The focus on Walter Magaya's PHD Ministries is motivated by the fact that it has attracted thousands of people at its weekly Sunday services in Waterfalls, Harare, Zimbabwe. Further, in 2015, Magaya took his brand of Pentecostalism to Botswana and South Africa. This article addresses the theme of ecumenism to question the



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dominant narrative that places emphasis on tension, rivalry and competition within Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. It analyses how Magaya deploys it to deflect attention from himself and to project a more progressive view of himself.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD) Ministries; ecumenism; Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Religious revivalism and resurgence has taken on new forms in sub-Saharan Africa, with creativity and innovation that are aided by new religious technologies (Biri 2012b, 37). The recent years have seen a boom in new Pentecostal denominations and ministries. They have expanded phenomenally on the African continent (Asamoah-Gyadu 2015; Omenyo 2014), and in the diaspora (Adogame 2013; 2014). Zimbabwe has also witnessed a notable rise of the Pentecostal movement (Chitando, Gunda and Kügler 2013). There are new and fast-growing religious movements in the country initiated by young, predominantly male charismatic leaders (Chitando, Manyonganise and Mlambo 2013, 153). These new Pentecostal movements have challenged and altered the face of Christianity in Zimbabwe. The presence of these young prophets on the religious landscape, as well as their influence in the public space has heightened debate on prophecy, healing and deliverance. While the debate rages on, these new churches have attracted huge crowds, particularly because of the emphasis on prophecy and prosperity.

One particular movement has risen to prominence in the period 2013-2016 in Zimbabwe. Walter Magaya's Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD) Ministries has asserted its presence on the religious scene in general and the Pentecostal sector in particular. Given the importance of education to Zimbabwe, which has seen many pastors and church leaders stampeding to be addressed as "Dr" or "Professor" in order to enhance their social status, it is striking to note that Magaya has chosen the name "PHD" for his ministry. In this article, we explore the impact of PHD Ministries on Zimbabwe's Pentecostal landscape and the larger religious context. Methodologically, information for this study was gathered through participant observation at PHD Ministries' services, particularly at Zindoga (Malvern shops) in Waterfalls, Harare; interviews with participants at services; interviews with critics; as well as interaction with published material and information gathered from live religious broadcasts on the national television. Desk analysis was subsequently pursued. Although the researchers were unable to access Magaya himself for a direct interview, they were able to interact with his close associates, consistent members of PHD Ministries, as well as some who have since stopped attending PHD services for one reason or the other.

In particular, the article seeks to understand how PHD Ministries locates itself within the prophetic Pentecostalism that is becoming increasingly influential in Zimbabwe. It is striking to note that although PHD Ministries has become one of the most significant religious movements in contemporary Zimbabwe, there are very few scholarly publications that examine its emergence and growth. The article also deploys the concept of ecumenism to understand the interaction between Magaya's group and Emmanuel Makandiwa's United Family International Church (UFIC), an equally significant Pentecostal church participating in Zimbabwe's highly dynamic and complex spiritual market. The article's distinctive contribution to new knowledge lies in its analysis of Magaya's strategies to carve a niche for himself in a highly competitive spiritual market. He minimises his rivalry and competition with Makandiwa, posturing as the younger and less experienced "man of God" who is willing to acknowledge the leadership of those who entered the ministry before him. Magaya's approach to ecumenism is also central to his positioning and marketing. The article understands ecumenism as a theological concept that seeks to encourage communion and interaction amongst different Christian denominations and to promote Christian unity. However, there are theological, contextual and institutional challenges characterising ecumenism in Africa (Pillay 2015).

THE ZIMBABWEAN PENTECOSTAL SCENE: AN OVERVIEW

In order to locate PHD Ministries in its proper context, it is important to appreciate the overall Zimbabwean Pentecostal scene. It is our contention that specific religious movements can be understood better if the larger socio-economic and political contexts are analysed. Although it will not be possible to do justice to the complexity of Zimbabwe's Pentecostal scene within the context of this article, there are a number of themes that merit attention. First, while older Pentecostal churches such as the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) and the Family of God (FOG) Church have remained active and influential, the period since 2009 has witnessed a dramatic expansion and intensification of the Pentecostal movement in the country. New churches and ministries have emerged. Some of the leading Pentecostal churches/ministries include Emmanuel Makandiwa's United Family International Church (UFIC), Uebert Angel's Spirit Embassy (rebranded as the Good News Church in 2015) and Magaya's PHD Ministries. All these movements rose to prominence after 2008, the year often characterised as the lowest point in the Zimbabwean crisis (Chitando, Chikowero and Madongonda 2015). This crisis refers to the hyperinflation, massive unemployment, retrenchments and general collapse of the economy since 2000.

Without succumbing to reductionism, it is instructive to note that the upsurge in Pentecostalism occurred in the context of the ongoing social, political and economic crisis (Zimunya and Gwara 2013, 191). One of the most perceptive scholars on African Pentecostalism, Omenyo (2014, 142), writes:

One of the appeals of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement is its ability to respond to the existential and pragmatic needs faced by the modern urban congregations, including domestic and socioeconomic problems. Their emergence in most parts of Africa occurred under conditions of economic, political and social hardship, which were accompanied by economic reforms, low wages and quality of life, the absence of social services, and the withdrawals of the welfare frontiers of the state.

Second, there is an emphasis on prophetic healing and deliverance in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches, like their precursors the African Initiated/Independent/Instituted Churches (AICs) (Chitando, Gunda and Kügler 2014) and other Pentecostal churches on the continent, operate within the “African map of the universe” as the doyen of the study of African Pentecostalism, as the late Kalu (2008) put it. The emphasis on healing and deliverance is one major factor that pulls large crowds to the expanding Pentecostal movement. Massive bill boards, banners and posters announcing the end of suffering, disease, poverty and barrenness dominate the urban landscape in Zimbabwe. The “men of God” (there are a few “women of God”) are charged with the mission of eliminating all forms of suffering and empowering the people of God to experience health and well-being. However, whereas older Pentecostal churches such as the AFM and ZAOGA (for an informative account, see Maxwell 2006), as well as many AICs began operating in the pre-independence period, the attainment of independence in 1980 liberalised the spiritual market further. Economic stability between 1980 and the 1990s saw limited activity by way of new churches. However, after 2000, new churches began to emerge, mostly in response to the deepening socio-economic crisis. This coincided with the significant spread of Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity in the region (Lindhardt 2015, 1). However, it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a detailed account of the history of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism (see for example, Machingura, Togarasei and Chitando forthcoming)

Third, there is a notable shift from the missionary messages which focused on heavenly prosperity to the experience of prosperity in the material present. The young, upwardly mobile and image-conscious Pentecostal prophets criticise missionary Christianity for having placated and soothed a restive African population by promising heaven in the “sweet by and by”. On their part, they preach concrete, material prosperity in the “here and now” (Togarasei 2011). Although there are internal debates regarding prosperity within the movement in Zimbabwe (for example, some older Pentecostal churches contend that the emphasis on “miracle money”, where ostensibly money finds its way into the pockets of those present, is not consistent with the gospel), there is a general acceptance that believers are called

to enjoy this earthly life. Wariboko (2012, 35) indicates that there is no uniform interpretation of prosperity amongst the different Pentecostal preachers in Africa.

Fourth, the emergent Pentecostal prophetic groups respond to the Zimbabwean political contexts in a very direct way. They have demonstrated that Pentecostals are not apolitical. However, they generally tend to support the status quo (although there have been some critical comments from within the movement). This has been achieved through their public participation in some quasi-national events, such as the signing of the “anti-sanctions” document, or the presence of government officials at Makandiwa’s “Judgement Night” events. In addition, through the delivery of prophecies that address the national interest, such as predicting a bloodbath in the event that citizens resort to mass action, Pentecostal prophets have commented on politics in Zimbabwe. Pentecostal prophets also influence political processes through their declarations of a prosperous future, siding with politicians when they denounce homosexuality and when they are invited to meetings to discuss “miracle money” by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Indeed, Dube (2012) argues that even casting out demons is a form of coded political posturing. According to him, the very process of casting out demons is a dramatisation and expression of discontent with the prevailing socio-economic realities in the country.

Fifth, there is branding of specific movements. Given the notable expansion of the sector, there is a real danger that clients/converts may fail to explain (or appreciate) differences between and among the various Pentecostal churches/ministries. Consequently, each one of the Pentecostal churches/ministries has sought to market and brand itself in order to set itself apart from the rest. One obvious way has been through a creative naming process. Among other roles, names serve to distinguish Pentecostal prophetic churches/ministries from each other (Mapuranga 2013). In addition, customised bracelets, T-shirts with distinctive messages, photographs of the leader and his wife and popularising annual themes are some of the branding strategies adopted by the various churches in Zimbabwe. To deploy a marketing concept: founders of these churches and their strategists seek to promote “brand loyalty”. However, as we shall highlight below, this has not prevented a certain level of ecumenism from emerging.

Sixth, there have been controversies surrounding the Pentecostal prophetic movement in Zimbabwe. These include claims of the abuse of funds, the sexual abuse of women (although this is also found in the older movements) (Chitando and Chirongoma 2013), as well as allegations of stage-managing miracles. Despite these challenges, many Zimbabweans continue to flock to these new Pentecostal churches. The prophetic ministries attract people from different social classes, gender and age groups, including the top cadres in politics and the arts. The membership of these younger Pentecostal prophetic churches/ministries is not yet quite stable and there is constant movement within the sector as Zimbabweans seek miracles, healing and deliverance. In addition, most Christians who constitute the bulk of those

patronising the services have been “fished” from other Pentecostal denominations and other mainline/more established churches. Furthermore, some of the emerging Zimbabwean Pentecostal ministries have begun expanding into the region of southern Africa. In the following section, we briefly consider the rise of Magaya and the emergence of PHD Ministries in order to establish how this rise influences and shapes his approach to prophecy, healing and deliverance.

THE RISE OF WALTER MAGAYA AND THE EMERGENCE OF PROPHETIC HEALING AND DELIVERANCE (PHD) MINISTRIES

As is the case with most founders of religious movements (and even political parties), the rise of Walter Magaya is controversial and difficult to plot on a linear scale. Claims of having a Catholic background, being a member of one of the Apostolic groups and attending UFIC services, are all narratives that surround the background and rise of Magaya (when attending a UFIC service in December 2015, Magaya himself indicated that he had attended UFIC services prior to his call to ministry). The PHD Ministries, website reinforces the narrative that PHD Ministries emerged following Magaya's trip to Nigeria in 2012. This oft-repeated story maintains that Magaya visited the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) led by (Senior Prophet) TB Joshua. He wanted TB Joshua to indicate which line of business he was to follow, out of the 80 that he had written down. However, TB Joshua indicated that he (Magaya) was destined to be in the ministry. He started PHD Ministries in October the same year (2012) (www.phdministries.org/about_phd.html).

Magaya has built up the notion that TB Joshua is his “spiritual father”, although TB Joshua reportedly refuted this claim. However, most respondents were keen to associate Magaya with TB Joshua. Other reports also trace the emergence of PHD Ministries to the visit to the SCOAN. During one of Magaya's big services in 2015, “Night of Turn Around 4” held on 06 November, TB Joshua communicated greetings and good wishes to Magaya and the crowd by telephone. This association with TB Joshua has placed Magaya at an advantage, since TB Joshua commands a large following in Zimbabwe. For many, Magaya has become “Zimbabwe's very own TB Joshua”, thereby eliminating the need to travel all the way to Nigeria for healing and deliverance. TB Joshua is one of the leading Nigerian prophets who attract clients from across the globe.

However, another account (Interview with PHD Ministries church members, 07/04/2015) points to the prophecy given by Prophet Angel, calling out Prophet Magaya at a Prophetic Conference hosted by Prophet Makandiwa at Aquatic Complex in Chitungwiza. According to this narrative, Magaya was given a prophetic word by Prophet Angel and was told he was/is a man of God and that he was going to be used by God. This narrative serves to authenticate Magaya's call to prophethood.

The third narrative locates Magaya within the charismatic movement within the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. According to this version, even as a lay Catholic, Magaya was endowed with unique healing powers to the extent that some Catholic priests deferred to him (Interview with PHD Ministries church members, 26/03/2016).

As we shall highlight below, although there are tensions among the young prophets, they have sought to promote a brand of ecumenism whereby they do not challenge each other's stature or legitimacy. The significance of the three narratives is to confirm that the formation of Pentecostal churches and narratives surrounding the founders are complex. As with all narratives, certain dimensions receive emphasis at specific historical moments in order to accomplish particular goals. One of the leading researchers on Pentecostalism, Hollenweger (1972), has pointed out that continued fragmentation is a major weakness that characterises Pentecostals. However, Biri (2012a) observes that in spite of the challenges of fragmentation, Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe is better positioned to promote ecumenism. Below, we therefore, examine the ecumenical orientation that is detectable in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. This is due to the realisation that Magaya emerged in a context where another Pentecostal prophet, Makandiwa, was already a dominant player (Shoko 2015). This article is interested in understanding how Magaya would succeed to market himself in such a context. It argues that Magaya deployed ecumenism as a strategy of positioning himself in a heavily contested spiritual market.

“A CO-WORKER IN GOD’S VINEYARD”: WALTER MAGAYA’S SELF-PLACEMENT ON ZIMBABWE’S SPIRITUAL MARKET

Magaya's PHD Ministries emerged when Makandiwa, Angel, Passion Java and other AIC prophets were already established on the market. In order to attract his share of the market, Magaya presented himself as complementing the work of the other “men of God”, as we elaborate below. Instead of packaging himself as a more accomplished exorcist or superior healer, Magaya sought to project himself as doing the same work that those who entered the ministry earlier than him were doing. Like the biblical Paul whose status as an Apostle was contested (Gal 1:1), Magaya argued that he too had been commissioned to bring liberty to the oppressed and prosperity to the poor. However, he maintained that his ministry was not in competition to Makandiwa and others, but that it would complement their efforts.

The mass movement to Magaya's church was caused by claims of miracles. As we have outlined above, this occurred within the context of the rapid expansion of the Pentecostal prophetic movement in Zimbabwe. Charismatic prophets who preceded him (such as Makandiwa and Angel) were attracting massive crowds in Harare and were visiting other urban areas, popularising their movements. Miracles

were at the heart of these movements. For his part, Magaya arrived on the scene with claims of being an accomplished miracle worker. Among these claims is the report of a Chitungwiza man who had been mentally ill. Ostensibly, Magaya prayed for the man and he was healed. It is claimed that this man had suffered for 30 years. It is further reported that a house was built for this man. It is also reported that a man who was blind for three years was also healed by Magaya (Interview, 12/08/2015).

Magaya attracted the marginalised in society, including sex workers and young women who entertained male patrons as pole dancers in night clubs. This was a distinctive dimension of his ministry in its initial stages. Whereas Makandiwa could attract members of other denominations, many of whom had interacted with him when he led an interdenominational group, Magaya did not have such a strategic base. For us, this represents an innovative approach to mission in Prophetic Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe. The location of PHD Ministries is significant. It is opposite Zindoga shopping centre, a popular place for sex workers, weekend parties and other secular activities. This might represent a direct challenge to these secular activities and an ideal place for evangelistic activities. Sex workers have reportedly been prayed for and delivered from their lifestyles. However, some of the stories, such as the conversion of popular dancers and strippers, attract criticism and controversy for "the man of God". Critics charge that Magaya's efforts at converting strippers, sex workers and secular musicians are not motivated by the divine command to preach the gospel to all, but are a publicity stunt designed to bring his movement into the news (Interview with a Protestant minister, 23/07/2015).

Operating in a context where critics of emergent prophets accuse them of commercialising religion for financial gains, Magaya has sought to project a positive image of himself and his ministry. To begin with, whereas the other young male prophets such as Makandiwa and Angel have been characterised as "young, male and polished" (Chitando, Manyonganise and Mlambo 2013), Magaya has endeavoured to adopt a humble outlook. This has meant that his dressing is not as flashy and his cars are not the top brands (many online critics accuse him of dressing poorly). His operating slogan, "*Mbiri Kuna Jesu!*" (Shona for "glory to Jesus!") expresses an effort to deflect attention from himself to Jesus. Second, Magaya has sought to project himself as a generous benefactor. His ministry has donated to the Zimbabwean national women's and men's soccer teams. Given that soccer is the most popular sport in the country, this has been interpreted as a noble gesture by many citizens. However, some soccer players who are members of mainline or African Independent Churches have complained about being paraded before the cameras as they received the cash donations from Magaya.

Third, the appropriation of contemporary media technologies has contributed to the popularity of Magaya's ministry. One of the most distinctive characteristics of emerging Pentecostal movements in contemporary Africa is that they are techno-savvy (Hackett 1998). They utilise media technologies in order to expand their

ministries and to reach out beyond national boundaries. PHD Ministries maintains a website (www.phdministries.org) and operates a television channel, Yadah TV. Furthermore, major events of PHD Ministries are advertised on billboards, posters and public transport vehicles. In addition, the sole national broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation TV, has often provided live coverage of major PHD Ministries' events. A South African television channel, eNCA (www.enca.com/africa360), produced a special feature programme on Magaya and PHD Ministries in April 2015. The net effect was to ensure that Magaya has become very popular in a short space of time. Media technologies have enabled his movement to expand beyond Zimbabwe.

Fourth, the appropriation of simple and easy to memorise verses, such as, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28) enables many people to identify with PHD Ministries. The PHD Ministries' theme for 2015, "Be fruitful and multiply", has been creatively (critics would say, wrongly) deployed by Magaya to express the quest for prosperity. As used by Magaya, multiplication must be understood in terms of personal advancement in all areas of life, particularly economically. Given the severe economic problems that Zimbabwe has experienced, such a message finds resonance with millions of people. Magaya's biblical hermeneutics avoids complex parsing or analyses of the original Hebrew and Greek words: he simply takes the biblical text and assigns meaning to it in the face of the challenges that the people of God would be facing. For example, in "Be fruitful and multiply" Magaya seeks to encourage all Christians in Zimbabwe to be productive and enjoy abundant life. In 2016, he expanded his interpretation of this verse by venturing into the provision of low cost urban housing to members of his movement and others.

Fifth, by "mining the African view of the universe" (Kalu 2008), Magaya has managed to address the existential issues that most Africans grapple with. Magaya's cosmology is full of spirits and forces that threaten the health and well-being of people. Given that health and well-being is at the heart of indigenous religions (Shoko 2007), Magaya is providing a contextual theology that addresses the fears of most of the African people who utilise his services. He exudes confidence and prioritises immediacy, hence his constant refrain in exorcisms/deliverances: "right now!" Magaya defeats spiritual husbands/wives, the spirit of poverty, marine spirits and other malevolent spirits that prevent individuals and families from enjoying life in abundance. He operates firmly within the African view of reality, but provides Pentecostal solutions to the challenges that those who consult him would be facing. His ecumenical approach comes through when he does not insist on his clients joining his movement. Magaya contends that there is no need for competition amongst the "men of God" since, "the harvest is plentiful, yet the labourers are few" (Luke 10:2).

Sixth, there is a creative use of music by PHD Ministries. Whilst gospel music is quite popular in Zimbabwe (and in the southern African region), Magaya has not hesitated to utilise the services of secular artists to attract and entertain the massive

crowds that attend his services. For him, the end justifies the means. If many people will come to enjoy secular music (although many secular artists try to “sacralise” their music during shows at PHD Ministries) and end up listening to his message, the work of the kingdom of God would have been advanced! Music is a key factor in understanding the popularity and expansion of PHD Ministries in Zimbabwe and beyond.

“SALUTING ELDERS IN THE MINISTRY”: MAGAYA’S DEPLOYMENT OF ECUMENISM AS A STRATEGY FOR GAINING LEGITIMACY?

Biri (2013) argues that the inter-denominational orientation of Pentecostalism through the mother body, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), is significant. It promotes unity within the Pentecostal fraternity by promoting issues that have to do with the nation. This unity extends to other Christian denominations. This inter-denominational thrust is significant to the rise of Magaya and impacts on the significance of Pentecostalism in promoting ecumenism in a religiously plural and secular nation such as Zimbabwe. Once, when Makandiwa hosted a Prophetic Conference in Chitungwiza, the founder of Spirit Embassy, Angel, was present. Angel delivered the prophecy that pointed to the greatness of Magaya (who had not yet risen to prominence) and the ministry he would start. This confirms the ecumenical spirit in the emerging prophetic Pentecostal movement in Zimbabwe. Makandiwa, Angel and Magaya have regarded each other as fellow workers charged with the responsibility of transforming the nation. Although deliverance is a key aspect of their ministries, they also consider themselves as having the task of equipping citizens with the knowledge and skills to contribute towards national development.

Secular economics suggests that when two companies offering the same commodities operate in the same market, there is likely to be stiff competition and hostility. However, Magaya seeks to negate this generally long-held view. He is keen to underscore the point that Makandiwa and Angel supported his rise and that he is, therefore, indebted to them. In his testimonies, he maintains that they provided the “prophetic word” that served as an authentication of his PHD Ministries. We can argue that this authentication and support have led to the formation of a prophetic bloc that comprises the young charismatic Pentecostal preachers. This bloc is characterised by a powerful prophetic ministry that seeks to navigate the socio-economic and political storms of Zimbabweans without boundaries. One of the researchers carried out an interview with a ZAOGA pastor and evangelist. The pastor said:

I also want to go to Nigeria. Makandiwa is a man of God, raised by God to cleanse the rust that had settled in the AFM church. He challenges me a lot. He is young, but look at the miracles that he performs. I have first-hand information because one of the guys in my

deliverance team had a sister who was mentally ill. Makandiwa ordered the sick people to touch his white jacket and she was healed (Interview 8-10-2012).

The support by Makandiwa and Angel to Magaya is reflective of the unity that generally characterises Pentecostal denominations and ministries. The leaders of various Pentecostal ministries organise and hold gatherings that attract clientele of their specific denominations, other Pentecostal churches and also participants from mainline churches. What is new in the rise of Magaya is the support, the authentication through prophecy of giving “birth” to a new ministry. The Prophetic Conference held by Makandiwa, the presence of Angel at this conference, the prophecy of Magaya’s PHD Ministries, tolerance and support given by Angel and Makandiwa, are all signs of unwavering commitment to the enlargement of the body of Christ. This is in spite of the controversy that surrounds prophetic, healing and deliverance claims in the ministries of the three prophets. What is also new is the ecumenical orientation based on the same ideological and theological standpoints. Whereas ZAOGA, for example, downplays its connection to the AFM, Magaya is more forthcoming in expressing his indebtedness to Makandiwa. However, this emphasis on ecumenism could also be a strategy of retaining clients. By broadening the concept of belonging, Magaya makes it easier for Makandiwa’s members to utilise his services (with the hope that the flow is greater towards him, rather than away from him).

Whereas critics have sought to highlight rivalry and competition amongst the leading prophetic/charismatic ministries in Zimbabwe, Magaya himself has sought to downplay the quest for domination. He has utilised a number of strategies to minimise the perceived tension and competition between him and especially Makandiwa (the popular interpretation is that Magaya has “stolen” Makandiwa’s followers). First, as noted above, he has presented himself as a late-comer on Zimbabwe’s prophetic scene. This is very strategic as it has allowed him to salute earlier prophets such as Guti and, although he appeared on the scene as recently as 2009, Makandiwa. As the history of religions has shown, a later prophet can justify his appearance by claiming to “complete” the assignment that was started by earlier prophets. Sidartha Gautama (Buddha) in Buddhism, Jesus in Christianity, Muhammad in Islam and Bahauallah in the Baha’i Faith are good examples of such prophets. Second, in December 2015, Magaya attended Makandiwa’s service and requested that they hold a joint service. This has the effect of presenting Magaya as a moderate and reasonable prophet who acknowledges the ministry of his co-worker, Makandiwa. Third, Magaya consistently calls upon his followers to acknowledge and pray for the ministries of other prophets in Zimbabwe. This also serves to portray Magaya as a true prophet whose focus is to ensure that Christ is preached (Philippians 1:15-18).

For strategic reasons, Magaya presents himself as a highly ecumenical prophet in Zimbabwe. Although he has dismissed AIC prophets as fake (he claims that they are inspired by marine spirits), he has sought to appeal to members of emerging Pentecostal churches, older Pentecostal churches and mainline churches. Embracing

an ecumenical stance enables him to present himself as standing within an old and authentic tradition of healing and deliverance within Christianity. In the spirit of ecumenism, he is able to discourage his followers from openly challenging Makandiwa, while he publicly defers to Makandiwa as one of the prophets who "opened the way" for him. Magaya's public performance of humility, open acknowledgement of Makandiwa's ministry, Angel's prophetic status and ongoing call for partnership rather than competition, have made him a significant player on Zimbabwe's (and possibly, southern Africa's) religious market.

CONCLUSION

Religious revivalism and resurgence has taken on new forms in Zimbabwe. The emergence of new Pentecostal ministries and churches has altered the face of Christianity in the country. While some academics are generally negative in their analysis of new Pentecostal churches (placing emphasis on economic desperation on the part of congregants), the emergence of PHD Ministries in Zimbabwe and its activities in the southern African region testify to the growing visibility and significance of Pentecostalism. PHD Ministries must be understood within the context of the emphasis on prosperity under the banner of prophecy, healing and deliverance. Whereas the concept of PhD used to be associated exclusively with the highest level of academic accomplishment, Magaya has appropriated the term in Zimbabwe's highly volatile spiritual market and has facilitated its association with high levels of spiritual achievement. Through the deployment of the concept of ecumenism, Magaya has sought to minimise tension between Makandiwa and himself, publicly proclaiming that Makandiwa embarked on the ministry before him. By presenting himself as an ecumenical prophet, Magaya has broadened his catchment area, assuaging the concerns of members of older Pentecostal and mainline churches who are criticised by their leaders for attending "extra spiritual lessons". In the spirit of ecumenism, Magaya is able to openly advertise his PHD Ministries, proclaiming: "Let there be light."

NOTES

1. We have not disclosed names of people interviewed and those referred to in the texts in the article out of ethical considerations.

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