

**PROPHETS OR PROFITEERS? AN INTERROGATIVE STUDY OF THE SELECTED CONTEMPORARY
PENTECOSTAL PROPHETS IN ZIMBABWE IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT**

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“One fundamental and recurrent criticism was the so-called “man of God” was in fact, the “man of gold.” Where many made reference to “prophets,” it was more accurate to talk about “profits.” Critics maintained that proponents of prosperity theology were in fact deeply (exclusively) interested in their own prosperity at the expense of members of their congregations.”(Chitando 2013)

“Also in some churches you hear that a husband and his wife are prophet and prophetess... Ah, zvino ndozvazvinoitwa here vakomana? Bhaibheri ndozvaraiita? (Is that how it is; is that what the Bible says?) We now have more prophets than ordinary people.”(Robert Mugabe 2012)

“There are pastors who steal from congregants in the name of God. Individuals should worship God directly instead of relying on the so-called “men of God.” They parade as pastors to entice people to give them offerings or tithes for their personal enrichment. Most of such become rich in three days...” (Robert Mugabe 2017)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the selected contemporary Pentecostal prophets in Zimbabwe in the context of development to establish whether they serve either as prophets or profiteers. It is a selective explorative enquiry on these contemporary religious figures because they are overwhelmingly many in the religious space in the country. The study draws inspiration from the Biblical version of prophecy in the Old Testament especially the eighth century canonical prophecy. The divergence in scholarship is centred on two strands: the evangelical-traditional school and the liberal-contemporary school. The evangelical perspective is pro-prophets inclined whilst the liberal school is the pro-profiteers slant. The convergence of the two parallel positions in debate shows that the liberal school arguments outweigh the evangelical one. It is scholarly sound to refer to these religious functionaries as profiteers rather than prophets because of their emblem agenda of gospelreneurship. The study is mirrored on the sociological cum liberation approach which permeates the justice agenda in the Bible. This study draws lessons from the message of Micah of Moresheth-a canonical biblical prophet which was then transposed to the contemporary reality in Zimbabwe for fostering development.

Keywords: Prophets, Profiteers, Contemporary Pentecostalism, development, Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

Just before the dawn of the Zimbabwe crisis, Zimbabwe witnessed an upsurge and uproar of mushrooming Pentecostal movements propelled by young energetic prophetic luminaries in the likes of Emmanuel Makandiwa of the United Family International Church (UFIC), Walter Magaya of the Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Ministries (PHD), Uebert Angel of Spirit Embassy Ministries (SEM) but now newly called Good News Church and many others. As deduced from the captions drawn from Ezra Chitando-an academic of high renown and Robert Mugabe-the former President of Zimbabwe respectively, there is divergence among various people on the appropriate identity of such religious personalities whether to refer to them as “prophets” or “profiteers.” Although critics generally make accusations against such individuals that they stage manage miracles to lure congregants to follow them in a bid to enrich themselves through seeding of money, tithes, offerings, pledges, and donations, there are some who are spongy adherents of these contemporary Pentecostal prophets. The fact that there is no consensus in scholarship and divergence in people’s perceptions on the subject matter on the appropriate designation of such charismatic figures so an investigative study is worth undertaking. This is a selective study because we have so many contemporary Pentecostal prophetic figures who claim to possess power to perform miracles of varying levels of sophistication (Chitando et.al 2013). Focus of this study is on the ‘trio’ prophets as mentioned above because of three reasons namely: popularity, power and prowess (nehandaradio.com/2015/05/24). Firstly, the study would define and clarify key words. Secondly, the role of prophets from the Biblical evidence would be examined. Thirdly, discussion would be to establish whether such personalities are prophets or profiteers. Fourthly, lessons would be downloaded from Micah of Moresheth who prophesied in Judah during the eighth. Lastly, a conclusion would be muted. What follows now is defining and clarification of terms.

DEFINING AND UNPACKING OF KEY TERMS

Defining and unpacking of key terms in this study is very crucial for that would cultivate a better understanding of the subject matter. Terms to be defined and clarified are: development, profiteer and prophet. The three words are going to be defined in coherence. First, the term “development” is defined variedly by scholars depending on their understanding of the word. According to Nsanganira (2011) the term “development” is a concept and multi-faceted phenomena. Although its history goes back to the antiquities, development exceptionally preoccupied states after the Second World War in the late 1940s. These have since then been efforts for social, political and economic progress all over the world facilitated by the quick technological evolution. There are numerous definitions propounded by different individuals to the word “development.” Different scholars have advanced more or less the same arguments pertaining to this rather wide concept but there is no consensus. There is need for this study to develop a working definition to quell the challenge of the lack of consensus among scholars on defining the term. The working definition in this case therefore would serve as a mirror for this piece of work. Generally, the word development in simple terms means the process of developing or being developed. The synonyms for the word development are growth, evolution, expansion, enlargement, progress, success, blooming, blossoming or booming (Cambridge Dictionary 2017). The list is recurring. From the synonyms, one can deduce that development has to do entail a change for the better but can this insight from the above dictionary give us an all -inclusive and encompassing definition of the word? The Business Dictionary brings to the fold four definitions on the word as follows:

- The systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements.
- An extension of the theoretical or practical aspects of a concept, design, discovery, or invention.
- The process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions.
- The process of adding improvements to a parcel of land, such as grading, subdivisions, drainage, access, roads, utilities(www.businessdictionary.com).

From the Business Dictionary, one can deduce that the term “development” is a process for change which is propelled by various facets chief among such being knowledge which is both scientific and technical. From the definition, can one say that the word “development” has been defined holistically?

At this moment then, the study should tape the definitions of the word from various scholars. Vianney Nsanganira (2011) avails definitions from four different scholars commonly given in scholarship as follows: Tayebwa (1992) states that “development” is a broad term which should not be limited to mean economic development, economic welfare or material wellbeing as per Tayebwa, development in general includes improvements in economic, social and political aspects of whole society like security, culture, social activities and political institutions. According to Todaro (1981) refers to development as a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social systems. He continues to argue that development is a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combinations of social, economic and political process secured the way of obtaining better life. Similar to the one given by Tayebwa, Todaro’s definition is applauded for its wider view of the development concept as related to social, economic as well as political changes in the society. Nevertheless, a careful analysis reveals that each level, a country can have different definitions of development. Just because development is a multi-dimensional process involving qualitative and quantitative changes in social, political and economic domains of society and it is undertaken essentially to lead to a better state of life. According to Perroux (1978), defines development as "the combination of mental and social changes among the population which decide to increase its real and global products, cumulatively and in sustainable manner." Rodgers (1990) adds "development is a long participatory process of social change in the society whose objective is the material and social progress for the majority of population through a better understanding of their environment."(available at <https://rosekerleyblog.wordpress.com>). All definitions given above are insightful and very important for this study and would be crystallized to mould a working definition of the term “development.” Overall, the working definition for the term “development” means a process of holistic transformation of society to cater for both human and animal beings. For the sake of this study, prophets should serve as propellers of development as they are endowed by God with supernatural powers to holistically transform society in woord and daad (Madzokere 2014).Second, the term “profiteer” just like the term “development” suffers from the same problem of lack of agreement by scholars on a single precise definition. Generally the word “profiteer” means make or seek to make an excessive or unfair profit, especially illegally. This also mean in simple terms someone who overcharges, racketeer, make an excessive/illegal profit or make a fast/quick buck, make a quick killing. It is crucial to know that the word “profiteer” is ambiguous for it can serve both as a noun and verb. The following linguistic paradigm is interesting: Noun/verb: profiteer; the past tense: profited; past participle: profited; gerund or present participle: profiteering. The synonyms are: extortionist, racketeer, exploiter, cheat, money monger, thief, black marketer

(Cambridge Dictionary 2017). This means one who takes advantage of the situation of the suffering poor people to sell goods in scarcity and make exorbitant profits to the detriment of others. On the sake of this study, a profiteer is someone who steals from congregants or others in the disguise of worshipping God. Such a personality's gospel is first and foremost targeting profits not prophecy. This definition goes in tandem with the core message in the two captions above of Ezra Chitando and Robert Mugabe respectively. Third, the term "prophet" has been defined widely in Biblical Scholarship in particular-Old Testament but like the other two terms covered above it also suffers from the problem of lack of consensus among scholars on an appropriate definition. Etymologically, the term "prophet" is in Hebrew-nabi and in Greek-prophetes (Bishau and Mazodze 2010, Madzokere and Machingura 2015, Pashapa 2017). For the above quoted scholars defining the word "prophet" faces many hurdles and the chief among them is ambiguity, heterogeneity and interchangeable usage of the term with the terms hozeh and roeh respectively in the Bible which seem to convey a distorted meaning of the word.

To try solving this problem of coming up with a precise definition, a working definition would be muted. Overall, the term "prophet" means a "messenger of God in times of crisis" (Dube 2003). Such a definition is adopted here from an academic of high repute because of its relevance to the subject under study. Prophets should serve as a voice of the voiceless addressing the evil in society like pre-canonical and canonical prophets of Ancient Israel in the Bible. They served as bridges for the communication linking role between the general populace and the supreme being-Yahweh. Prophets who serve as agents of God should speak against political, social, economic and religious injustices in society to enable people live holistic lives characterized by peace, love and justice. This is the core duty of prophets hence such is expected of the contemporary Pentecostal prophets for the realization of development in an impoverished and doomed country. From defining and clarifying terms, the book chapter examines the role prophets as recorded in the Bible in particular the Old Testament.

THE ROLE OF PROPHETS-THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Tucker (1987) raises three crucial questions which are vital to consider as we examine the role of prophets in the Ancient Israelite society. What did it mean to be a prophet in ancient Israel? What was the prophetic role or institution in Israel? What might it mean to the church and the contemporary prophets today? From Tucker's thought provoking questions, one can deduce that the contemporary prophets and the church have the role to play in the transformation of society for the realization of development in our own context. For Peterson (1987), prophets have been understood in most scholarly discussions as individuals of diverse tags ranging from priests, charismatics, ecstasies, poets, theologians and politicians the list is recurring. For him, there are quite simply a myriad of ways to identify what it really mean to be a prophet whether referred implicitly or explicitly. A summary for the general role of the prophets in the Old Testament would serve as a point of departure for a study on contemporary Pentecostal prophets in Zimbabwe. Peterson's six-fold models summaries the role of prophets in the Bible is as follows:

- The prophet is a person who has had a special sort of religious experience and/or a special sort of relationship to the deity (Gunkel and Holcher as chief proponents).
- The prophet is a person who speaks or writes in a distinctive way (Gunkel as chief proponent).
- The prophet is a person who acts as a prophet in a particular social setting (sitz im leben)-(Sigmund Mowinckel as the chief proponent).

- The prophet is a person who possesses distinctive personal qualities, namely, charisma (Max Weber-chief propagator).
- The prophet is an intermediary between the divine and human worlds (Ross, Kohler, and Muilenburg as chief proponents).
- The prophet is a person who has a distinctive message which is centred on justice (*mispat*) and righteousness (*sedeqah*) (Peterson 1987). Such a distinctive message would be emphasized when the study considers lessons to be drawn from one of the eighth century canonical prophets-Micah of Moresheth for the realization of development in Zimbabwe.

From an examination of the role of prophets in the Bible, one can easily deduce the importance of these prophetic figures in the social, political, economic and religious well-being of the people in society. From focusing on the role of prophets in the Bible, the study interrogates contemporary Pentecostal prophets to establish whether they are fit to be called either prophets or profiteers.

‘MEN OF GOD OR MEN OF GOLD?’ WHAT IS THEIR APPROPRIATE TAG?

As once alluded in the introduction of this book chapter, the proliferation of contemporary Pentecostal prophets and their adherents took place from about 2009 the year the fortunes of Zimbabwe were revived due to the signing of the Global Peace Agreement (GPA) between rival political parties-Movement for Democratic Party led by Morgan Tsvangirayi (MDC-T), Movement for Democratic change led by Welshman Ncube (MDC-N) and Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) of Robert Mugabe to try address the political, social and economic crises in the country (Mlambo and Raftopolous 2009). A detailed discussion on the GPA or Government of National Unity is beyond this study but Tatira and Marevesa (2011) explored on this subject with vividness. For Ezra Chitando and others (2013) the mushrooming of such contemporary Pentecostal prophets with Pan-African connections (having spiritual god fathers from West Africa) in the cosmopolitan Harare and other cities saw the sudden transformation of the religious landscape in a fundamental way in Zimbabwe. Chitando and others (2013) observed that responses to their presence shows divergence some people acknowledging them as true prophets whilst others castigate them as “gospelprenuers” who after money. Are contemporary Pentecostal prophets’ men of God or men of gold? First reason for undertaking this study is the apparent divergence in the reception of such prophetic figures. Second reason for undertaking such a study comes from Chitando and others (2013) insight that, “there is a general consensus that scholars from biblical and religious studies must invest in studying them.” Third and last reason for undertaking such a study is the quest to find out whether these contemporary Pentecostal prophets follow the same traits of the biblical prophets who championed social justice (*mispat*) and righteousness (*sedeqah*) in Israel and Judah (Madzokere forthcoming).

The interrogative study of such selected contemporary Pentecostal prophets-the likes of Emmanuel Makandiwa of UFIC, Walter Magaya of PHD and Uebert Angels of SEM/GNC would be propelled by two schools of thought-the evangelical (traditional) and liberal (interrogative) one. The two schools have direct divergence on how they treat the subject matter on one end the evangelical traditional school argues that these contemporary Pentecostal prophets are men of God who are inspired to undertake prophetic activities just like the Old Testament and New Testament prophets. However, the liberal

school argues that these contemporary Pentecostal prophets are men of gold (profiteers) who propagate prosperity gospel for their own personal prosperity not the prosperity of the kingdom of God. They neither target the prosperity of their congregants and God but bend to satisfy their selfish egos. This study therefore debates these two parallel positions with regards the appropriate tag of these contemporary Pentecostal prophets. The evangelical school's arguments are hinged on the Biblical criteria for distinguishing true from false prophecy namely: the call, ecstasy, professionalism, miracles, prediction and fulfillment, blind nationalism versus realism, moral uprightness and teaching obedience to Yahweh (Machingura and Machingura 2015, Vengeyi 2013). As observed by scholarship, these biblical criteria have its own strengths and weaknesses so this study would pick on two crucial weaknesses-one on the criteria and one on the evangelical school position. The chief weakness on the criteria as observed by the scholars is that there is no definiteness in the criteria on distinguishing true from false prophets as set in the Bible just like trying to distinguish weeds from wheat at the earliest stage of growth (Matthew 13:24-43, RSV). The chief weakness of the evangelical traditional school is the problem of traditionalism and rigidity to change. The view that no one should have a critical perception on the contemporary Pentecostal prophets because they are the custodians of such movements hence determines what should be done or not so prophets are the gods of their respective adherents. Due to rigidity and traditionalism the evangelical school regards the contemporary Pentecostal prophets as 'men of God' yet a critical view of such a position by the liberal school shows that the appropriate tag for such prophetic luminaries is 'men of gold.' The liberal school argues that the contemporary Pentecostal prophets are profiteers. Their arguments are many but this study would crystallize them into five major ones namely: empire building, anointing gimmick, religious tourism disguise, nepotism and blind nationalism. These five characteristic tenets of the contemporary Pentecostal prophets serve as catalysts not antidotes to underdevelopment.

- **Empire Builders Argument**

The contemporary Pentecostal prophets are empire builders not builders of the Kingdom of God. The term "empire building" means the practice of obtaining more power, responsibility, or staff within an organization for the purposes of self-aggrandizement (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2017). Such a term is commonly used in business circles. In such contexts, empire building is the act of attempting to increase the size and scope of an individual or organization's power and influence. In the corporate world, this is seen when managers or executives are more concerned with expanding their business units, their staffing levels and the dollar value of assets under their control than they are with developing and implementing ways to benefit shareholders. Empire building is typically seen as unhealthy for a corporation, as managers will often become more concerned with acquiring greater resource control than with optimally allocating resources. Corporate controls imposed by a company's board and upper-level management are supposed to prevent empire building within a corporation's ranks. The failure to screen out empire builders can lead to corporate actions that do not necessarily provide the best growth opportunities for a corporation and its shareholders, such as acquisitions made to boost the control of the company's executives (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/empirebuilding.asp>). With reference to this study contemporary Pentecostal prophets are building their power base through seeding, tithes and offerings. Machingura (2011) observes that critics dismiss modern day Zimbabwean prophets/esses like Makandiwa, Magaya, Passion, Uebert and Beverly Angel as fake money making prophets/esses who take advantage of the level of poverty, unemployment, and disease in Zimbabwe and become prosperity 'gospellers' for self-aggrandizement. These contemporary Pentecostal prophets/esses are emerging in a context

characterized by social, political, cultural, economic and religious turmoil (Mambo 2016). Their message of prosperity goes in tandem to the broader population's suffering, squalor and abject poverty. The contemporary Pentecostal prophets manipulate the suffering situation of the generally impoverished Zimbabwean populace to unscrupulously steal them of their money. The above scholar asserts that these contemporary Pentecostal prophetic figures parade and miraculously put gold nuggets in the congregants' pockets; they still collect offerings, tithes and groceries from the poor. Paradoxically, these charismatic filthy rich luminaries never condemn corruption, mismanagement of resources and violence that is the daily motto in Zimbabwe (Madzokere and Machingura 2016). These contemporary Pentecostal prophetic functionaries are not true messengers of God but profiteers.

- **The Anointing Gimmick Argument**

These contemporary Pentecostal prophets are only called profiteers based on empire building but the anointing gimmick. These preachers of prosperity gospel have now gone wild and berserk to speak of the 'anointed everything' during their crusades, judgment nights and boozy services (Murava 2016, Bulla 2015). The anointed items range from oil, clothes, pens, toothbrushes, pencils, rulers and books. The extreme cases these days are situations where a prophet speaks of anointed condoms and anointed underwears which bring to disrepute the church (Mambo 2016). This 'anointing everything' gimmick enable these contemporary prophets to make abundant profits from items they just buy for cheap money only to sell them at exorbitant prices. These prophetic luminaries are not accountable to anyone so they just as they will to become millionaires in three days (Mugabe 2017, Mambo 2016). When they amass so much monies, it is not put to use that will benefit the church and its congregants but the prophet, relatives and his close friends. Such nepotic tendencies characterize such contemporary Pentecostal movements prevalent in Zimbabwe. Mambo (2016) observed that the majority of the people in Zimbabwe seek refuge in the church because of the suffering prevalent in the country. The contemporary Pentecostal figures take advantage of the deplorable, hopeless and despair situation of the people to make a killing from the anointed items, offerings and tithes brought by congregants to receive a blessing from the men of God. Material possession and miracles dominate the vocabulary of these contemporary Pentecostal personalities. The anointing gimmick makes the contemporary Pentecostal functionaries profiteers rather than prophets.

- **Religious Tourism disguise Argument**

Beside the empire building and anointing gimmick arguments, the contemporary Pentecostal prophetic individuals are profiteers based on the religious tourism disguise argument. Religious tourism is a topical subject these days especially in Zimbabwe where religion has proved to be attracting many tourists in the country (Tshuma 2015). Although topical and vital; it has been now become a blessing in disguise to the Church for it has brought more disadvantages than advantages according to this study. The term "religious tourism" commonly referred to as faith tourism, is a unique type of tourism, where people travel as individuals or in groups for pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure (fellowship) purposes. The world's largest form of mass religious tourism is that taken by the Moslems when they visit Mecca for an annual Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia (Stoddard 1997). Chagonda who is head of corporate affairs -Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) observed that religious groups should constantly hold conferences across the country as religious tourism has proved to be essential in growing the economy through steering up both domestic tourism and increased arrivals (Tshuma 2015) His remarks were congruent to

what was taking place in the religious atmosphere in Zimbabwe in the 21st century. Walter Magaya of Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Ministries held a conference in Harare which attracted tens of thousands of people-local and diaspora ones. Emmanuel Makandiwa of the United Family International Church leader Prophet in August also held the “Judgment Night 3” at the National Sports Stadium that was estimated to have attracted over hundred thousand congregants local and diaspora ones (Tshuma 2015) Through such gatherings, the prophetic figure makes a bumper harvest of offerings, tithes and seeds from congregants. It is not the prophetic luminary alone who reaps a bumper harvest but the country for these same congregants would book in hotels and lodges scattered in country. They would again visit especially diaspora ones the tourist places scattered all over Zimbabwe. This way religious tourism is a blessing in disguise. Chagonda (2015) commented that this was a great boost to the economy which was in its doldrums. His sentiments are as follows:

“Religious tourism is good as the country experiences large volumes of people visiting. People coming from around the globe do come into the country and some of these people later visit some of the tourism sites of their choice. Through these religious conferences domestic tourism is also steered up as people across the country do come and converge on a particular city and economic activity, that is, an increase in the circulation money in that particular place will be improved,” (Tshuma 2015)

However, besides promoting the secularization of the Church, religious tourism serves as a catalyst in perpetrating the exploitation of the poor congregants by the profiteers who can on one conference get million and millions of dollars. This study therefore argues that the contemporary Pentecostal personalities are profiteers who masquerade as prophets but in actual fact they are ‘men of gold’ who make money from the hopeless Zimbabwean masses.

- **Nepotism Argument**

The appropriate type of prophecy pursued by the contemporary Pentecostal personalities should be termed, ‘nepotic.’ Therefore this study argues that beside the empire building drive, anointing gimmick enigma and the religious tourism disguising tool, the nepotic type of prophecy characterizes the contemporary Pentecostal figures. Defining the term nepotism would pave way for the cultivation of a better understanding of this argument. The term “nepotism” means favoritism granted to relatives or close friends, without regard to their merit. Nepotism usually takes the form of employing relatives or appointing them to high office in different social set ups-church, politics, business (Cambridge Dictionary 2017, Merriam Webster Dictionary 2017).This study argues that nepotic type of prophecy dominates the Pentecostal prophetic movements especially the trio-Emmanuel Makandiwa, Walter Magaya and Uebert Angel. A critical observation of these churches-UFIC of Emmanuel Makandiwa, PHD of Walter Magaya and SEM now branded GNC (Good News Church) of Uebert Angel and others in these boozing Pentecostal groups testify to nepotism as the common practice. A question often asked: Is the wife of a prophet a prophetess? (Ncube 2016). The leaders of the United Family International Church are Prophet Emmanuel and Prophetess Ruth respectively. In the Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Ministries the leaders are Prophet Walter Magaya and Prophetess Tendai whilst in the Spirit Embassy Ministries now Good News Church the leaders are Prophet Uebert and

Prophetess Beverley (Ncube 2016). Is this due to God's genuine call of these wives into ministries or its through impartation of the spirit from the so-called powerful husbands? Is this not typical nepotism? The definition of nepotism as given above spell it all that it is the advancement of relatives into any office with other reasons other than personal worth(merit).Is this not typical of what is dramatized here in the three above? Although the three-Makandiwa, Magaya and Angel claim that they have the power to impart some portions of their power basing on Biblical evidence of 2 Kings-Elijah and Elisha, Exodus-Moses and the elders, critics argue that this idea of "anointed couples" has nothing to do with the impartation claim neither a call but a gimmick for gospelprenuership (Ncube 2016). This study argue in tandem with critics that such type of prophecy is typically nepotism of highest order diplomatically undertaken to make sure what is earned remains under the control of the family. The three contemporary Pentecostal prophets are not true prophets but profiteers and their wives are fit to be called "cows of Bashan" like the wives of the Kings and the rich in Ancient Israel who were attacked by Amos-the prophet from Tekoa (Amos 5:2ff) who encouraged their husbands to oppress the poor whilst they were enjoying luxury lives in Israel just like what these prophetesses are doing in Zimbabwe.

- **Blind Nationalistic Argument**

Apart from the four suggested arguments-empire building, anointing gimmick, religious tourism disguise and nepotism, the contemporary Pentecostal prophets are profiteers because they are blind nationalistic personalities. The definition of the term "blind nationalist" is someone who preaches peace where there is unrest, speaks of hope in a hopeless situation, speaks of joy in the midst of sorrow and preaches light in times of darkness. In simple terms, a blind nationalist is a non-realist who is blind to the reality of life (Merriam Webster 2017, Cambridge Dictionary 2017).In the context of Biblical prophetic studies, a blind nationalist prophet was regarded a false prophet who prophesied a message to make the recipients happy in spite of the reality on the ground (Jeremiah 27:1-7, 28:10-12-the clash between Jeremiah and Hananiah and 1 Kings 22:1-40-a clash between Micaiah ben Imlah and Zedekiah (Madzokere and Machingura 2015).On one hand true prophets-Jeremiah and Micaiah ben Imlah spoke of punishment for sin whilst the other two false ones-Hananiah and Zedekiah spoke of blessings in the midst of people's sins. In the context of this study, contemporary Pentecostal prophets preach prosperity in the midst of hunger, poverty, disease, unemployment and social injustice (Machingura 2011). They preach peace where there is violence; they preach prosperity where there is hunger. Although the elite rich live in plenty, the poor languish in stinking and abject poverty. Powerful politicians and these prosperous contemporary prophets work hand in glove to oppress the poor populace. In this case therefore these contemporary Pentecostal luminaries and powerful influential politicians are "accomplices in evil." (Madzokere forthcoming).If prophets who should be the conscience of the politicians work in co-horts with politicians to oppress the masses, then one can safely refer them as false prophets. In this case therefore; these prophetic figures are real profiteers rather than true prophets who serve as catalysts to the impoverishment of the masses hence promoting underdevelopment instead of development.

"PROPHECY JUSTICE!" DOWNLOADING LESSONS FROM MICAH FOR FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

The prophet Micah of Moresheth like Isaiah of Jerusalem, Hosea and Amos prophesied in Judah in the eighth century BCE-the golden era (Gunda 2010). He was called to minister to the people of Judah the Southern Kingdom). He prophesied during the reign of Ahaz, Jotham and Hezekiah (1:1). Generally, Micah is referred to as a "prophet for justice (6:8). Socially, there

was a massive gap between the rich classes and poor ones. Poverty was reigning in the lives of the ‘have-nots’ as compared to the ‘haves’ (Madzokere 2016). There was serious enslavement of the poor (peasants). Politically, there was a significant rise of Tiglathpileser-King of Assyria in world of politics in the 8th century. Assyria was a super-power but there was general peace and tranquility among stronger and weaker nations. Economically, there was economic boom because trade and industry was on the peak but the rich manipulated the poor. Corruption was rampant. Nepotism was the game of the everyday just like in Zimbabwe (Madzokere 2016). Religiously, there was great immorality among the elect of Yahweh. Priests were corrupt. Prophets were prophesying for money/cash. Commercialization of the Word of God (3:1ff) .His prophecy of attack on the rich was being done in solidarity with his own poor folk in Judah (identity issue). ‘Birds of the same feathers fly together’. The rich lived in a life of plenty and luxury whilst the poor were living in abject (stinking) poverty. There was an enormous gap between the rich and poor-rich becoming richer whilst the poor becoming poorer living in gloom (2:1ff; 3:1ff) (Madzokere 2016).Micah’s message of justice (mispat) enables one to download some four vital lessons namely:

- Political justice-Micah attacked the rulers of Judah who were perpetrating political injustices on the powerless Judeans. He preached political justice to foster development in Ancient Israel. Where there is political justice, there is peace and tranquility. Peace and tranquility enables people to carry out their daily activities without any disturbances. In Zimbabwe at the moment, there is a lot of political injustice in the country perpetrated by the leaders and that is serving as an impediment to development (Madzokere 2017). From this, leaders of the country and other political players should learn the vitality of political justice for the realization of development in Zimbabwe.
- Social justice-Micah observed that there were gross social injustices in Judah perpetrated by political, social and religious players. The poor were becoming poorer whilst the rich were becoming richer because those who were powerful were not equally distributing the resources of Judah so he preached social justice. There is a lot of social injustice in Zimbabwe masterminded by social, political, religious and economic players which hinders development (Madzokere and Machingura 2015). From this, the above players should learn from Micah the importance of social justice for development to take place.
- Economic justice-Just like political justice and social justice, economic justice is also vital in any society for development to take place. Micah attacked the rulers, prophets, priests, business people for promoting economic injustices in Judah. He advocated for economic justice so that societal resources were distributed equally among the people and would enable each person enjoy the available resources for holistic living which serve as a precursor for development (Madzokere forthcoming).
- Religious justice-There was a lot of religious injustices in Judah during Micah’s time. Religion was commercialized during the eighth century. The Prophets were prophesying for money (3:8).Micah preached justice (mispat) and righteousness (sedeqah) to the people of Judah because there was empty religiosity (Madzokere forthcoming). Paradoxically, in Zimbabwe as this study proffered, contemporary Pentecostal prophets connive with the politicians to oppress the general populace just like the false prophets during Micah’s time. This is why most of these contemporary Pentecostal prophets’ worship services are thronged by key politicians in the country. Considering that religion is a powerful force in Zimbabwe, there is need for Zimbabweans across the religious divide to reconcile orthodoxy and orthopraxis which is in totality-religious justice. Religious justice, political justice, social justice and

economic justice are catalysts to development so downloading lessons from Micah serve as an eye-opener for development to be realized in Zimbabwe.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one could raise one crucial question: What then is the appropriate tag for the contemporary Pentecostal prophets in Zimbabwe? The appropriate designation for the contemporary Pentecostal prophets-Emmanuel Makandiwa, Walter Magaya and Uebert Angel is profiteers not prophets. The arguments raised by the liberal school of thought above hold water that these prophetic luminaries are men of gold not men of God. They are gospelrenuers, money mongers or shona-makorokoza/magweja (gospellers) as evidenced by their empire building drive, anointing gimmicks, religious tourism disguise, nepotic tendencies and blind nationalistic tenets. From the working definition of the term “prophet” is someone who is God’s messenger in times of any form of crisis. Can one safely say that these contemporary Pentecostal prophets are really messengers of God to the people of Zimbabwe? Knowing that Zimbabwe is a country in deep crises-political, social, economic and religious, why are these charismatic figures working in co-horts with those in the business of oppressing the masses? Why are they accomplices in evil in Zimbabwe? (Madzokere forthcoming). From this study’s reflection on the role of prophets in the Bible, one crucial role of prophets was to preach and live a distinctive message of social justice (mispat) and righteousness (sedeqah) as was demonstrated by the eighth century prophets-Amos, Hosea, Isaiah of Jerusalem and Micah of Moresheth. In Micah 3:5 Micah condemned false prophets of his time who were prophesying for money and this is typical of these contemporary Pentecostal prophets in Zimbabwe who are into building personal empires not God’s. The whole business of profiteering by the contemporary Pentecostal prophets serves as a catalyst to underdevelopment because an individual prophet amasses a lot of wealth at the expense of the majority congregants. Instead of them being the conscience of the political, social and economic players in the country just like the selected pre-canonical and canonical prophets in the Bible, they decided to pursue this business of profiteering which serve as an impediment to the development of the Zimbabwe. Prophets build their own empires rather than building the kingdom of God that is why they are ranked among the richest in the Zimbabwe.

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