



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### IDENTIFICATION OF GROWTH STRATEGIES AMONG PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN ZIMBABWE

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#### ABSTRACT

Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe are growing at a fast rate and growth strategies are of paramount importance. A number of strategies are employed by individual churches at a different rate. The rate at which a certain strategy is used determines the growth of the church in terms of numerical growth, financial growth and spiritual growth. The main growth strategy that Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe use is that of evangelism. healing and care ministry are also employed as major growth strategies after evangelism. Church planting amongst Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe is a result of mostly evangelism outreaches. Numerical growth is witnessed in most of the Pentecostal churches. This consists of the youth, adults and the elderly with the youth usually being the majority. This aspect is shown in their evangelistic strategies which are done consistently throughout the year. Some of the church members, especially the new comers are ferried to church using church vehicles and/or buses. A number of people are attracted to the church through evangelistic outreaches which are dynamic and filled with action. There is also numerical growth due to the other growth strategies that emanate from special Sundays. It can be concluded that these special Sundays assist Pentecostal churches in continually attracting old and new members to church.

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## INTRODUCTION

Some authors use the term healthy as opposed to growth (Warren., 1995:16; 2002; 2005; Wagner, 1996) since it is envisaged that growth automatically follows if a church is healthy (Warren, 2002). For the purpose of this study the term growth is used. The other author Schwarz focuses on qualitative instead of numerical growth. For the study on Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe, numerical, financial and spiritual growths are focused on. McGavran (1990) highlighted that church growth evolved into three definitions; growth in numbers, church planting and finally a Bible-based ministry that was data driven in strategy which focused on determining principles and methods of evangelism. Warren (1995:49) identified five dimensions of church growth that churches grow warmer through fellowship; deeper through discipleship; stronger through worship, broader through ministry and larger through evangelism. These dimensions are supported by a biblical scripture in Acts 2:42-47 which says the following about first church at Jerusalem:

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

The Christians in the above scripture fellowshiped (relationships), edified each other (encouraged), worshipped (prayed), ministered (worked) and evangelized (reached out) and the results were growth. Can this be said of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe?

According to Miles (quoted in Jang, 2011) para-church groups such as Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Women Aglow and the 700 Clubmen and women's fellowships contributed to church growth. He went on to identify the Sunday school and the focus on internal and spiritual growth as other factors.

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Warren (2002) believes that every church is driven by something; tradition, finances, programs, personalities, events, seekers and buildings. The church driven by tradition maintains status quo and change is resisted while the personality driven church looks up to the leader as the driving figure and the major problem is once the leader leaves or dies the church comes to a standstill (Warren, 1995:77-79). The study explored various strategies that Pentecostal Churches use for growth purposes such as church planting, numerical growth, spiritual growth and social responsibility.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) stated that research can be classified as positivist if there is evidence of formal propositions, quantifiable measures of variables, hypothesis testing and the inferences about a phenomenon from a representative sample to a stated population. Interpretive research assumes that our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools and other artifacts. Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) pointed out that interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges. It attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Boland 1985, 1991; Deetz 1996; Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991).

The mixed methods (pragmatic) approach was adopted in this study where methods are integrated within a single study (Creswell, 2009). Pragmatism is therefore not committed to one system philosophy and reality; researchers have freedom of choice of methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes; do not see the world as an absolute unity; truth is what works at that time (Cresswell, 1998). The mixed methods approach is therefore, flexible, uses multiple methods of data collection and analysis in order to bring out a true meaning. It uses both the deductive and inductive approaches and uses methods which appear best suited to the research problem without being caught up in philosophical debates. These are methods to expand the scope or breath of the research to offset the weaknesses of either approach alone (Blake, 1989; Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989; Rossman & Wilson, 1991 cited in Driscoll *et al.*, 2007). According to Testa, Mueller and Thomas (2003), the major reasons for using the mixed methods approach are that the approach enhances precision of the words and narrative; the answers can be broader and more comprehensive because the researcher is not focused on a single approach and finally the researcher can provide strong evidence for a conclusion and corroboration of findings. In the research the mixed methods approach played a complementary role as well as the 'synergetic' role where a research question can be concluded fully through the mixed approach technique. The pragmatic approach therefore realises that every method whether in data collection, analysis or both has its limitations and therefore different approaches can be complementary Pragmatic research uses qualitative research to inform the quantitative portion of research studies or vice versa (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). In the Pentecostal church setting both the qualitative and quantitative approaches are important in order to get as much

reliable information as one can and also to come up with meaningful and balanced conclusions. Both methods reduce the element of bias. The mixed methodology as discussed by Onwuegbuzie & Leech, (2005), allows for triangulation (seeking convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon), complementarity (seeking elaboration, enhancement, illustration and clarification of the results from one method with results from the other method), development (using the results from one method to help inform the other method), initiation (discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to reframing of the research question) and expansion (seeking to expand the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components).

According to Yin (1994), bringing qualitative and quantitative evidence and methods strengthens the case study method. Some important relevant aspects the positivist and interpretivist approaches were used as they describe and explain features of reality from different perspectives using questionnaires, in-depth interviews and observations (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Interviews and observations may not enable the researcher to generalize and draw broader conclusions as these techniques are limited as to whether the same things happen to other individuals in similar circumstances (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Stangor, 1998). Questionnaires on the other hand have the ability of gathering a wide range of complex information on individuals or organizations on a comparable basis (Veal, 2005). Collis and Hussey (2009) indicate that the questionnaire method is appropriate for a study aimed at finding out what respondents say they do, think or feel while trying to make a generalization from a sample to a population. The researcher adopted the mixed methodology having realized that to get to a comprehensive conclusion a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques are needed in this research. Misinterpretation, superficial answers and unwillingness to give real opinions are some of the shortcomings of questionnaires which can be addressed by using interviews and observations. The main advantages of using the mixed methods approach in this study were that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods (Creswell, 1998), results from one method can help develop or inform the other method (Green, Caracelli & Graham, 1989), one method can be nested within another method to provide insight into different levels of units of analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) and can serve a larger, transformative purpose to change and advocate for marginalized groups (Mertens, 2003).

The methodology that would provide a suitable pragmatic fit in the case study in this research was the grounded theory initially the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded theory is a methodology that seeks to construct theory about issues of importance in people's lives (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach acknowledges the importance of a multiplicity of perspectives and truths (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) which is in agreement with the pragmatic approach followed in this study. The common characteristics of the grounded theory that are addressed in the research are; theoretical sensitivity (level of insight into the research area, treatment of the literature (interweaving literature throughout

the study), coding, diagramming (uncovers the emergent grounded theory from the field of inquiry) and identifying the core category (Mills et al, 2006). The researcher selected Pentecostal churches that are different in sizes but similar in their doctrine. The researcher used pseudonyms; biggest, bigger, big1, big2, small1 and small2 on the names of the churches in order to protect the research participants. However permission was obtained from the founder members to carry out this research using their church as a case study.

The researcher then selected the churches based on the following criteria: the church should be in Zimbabwe and should have been in existence for the past ten years by the time this study started in 2010 and should have branches locally, regionally and internationally. The church should believe in the Pentecostal doctrine of salvation, Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, healing, deliverance and tithing. The other criteria is that the church category should be registered with the relevant Ministries in Zimbabwe and be affiliated to the governing board of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe; the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ). Following the above criteria six churches were selected which were given pseudonyms for identification purposes starting from the biggest to the small ones. The terms biggest, bigger, big1, big2, small1 and small2 were used. The biggest and bigger churches existed before the Zimbabwean independence while the rest emerged after independence. The case study approach allowed the researcher to use multiple sources of data collection techniques and in this research observations, in-depth interviews and questionnaires were used as the main methods and documentation mainly for triangulation purposes.

### Sampling

The research was conducted using six case studies on Pentecostal churches using the purposive or theoretical sampling approach where the researcher felt that the cases suit the researcher's focus of enquiry that is the study on the influence of leadership on Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. It would be difficult to study all Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe as they are many and do not fall under the researcher's criteria. The researcher chose the purposive sampling technique to allow for parameters and to enable the study to be done extensively. The researcher's position on sampling is further highlighted by Mason (2010) noted that theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position and most importantly the explanation or account which you are developing. Theoretical sampling is concerned with constructing a sample which is meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory and explanation. Choosing a study sample is an important step in any research project since it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to study whole populations (Marshall, 1996). Sampling methods allow researchers the ability to reduce research costs, conduct research more efficiently (speed) and provides for greater accuracy (Latham, 2007). A proposed sample size should take into account the aim of the study, the intended statistical analysis technique, the expected variability within the samples and the anticipated results (Hussey & Hussey, 1997;

Marshall, 1996; Clegg, 1990). Marshall (1996) states that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question and the number of required subjects usually becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data (data saturation). This notion is supported by Mason (2010) who argues that qualitative samples must be large enough to assure that most or all of the perceptions that might be important are uncovered. Sample size in the majority of qualitative studies should generally follow the concept of saturation, whereby the collection of new data does not shed any further light on the issue under investigation (Mason, 2010). Qualitative sampling usually requires a flexible, pragmatic approach using a flexible research design and an iterative, cyclical approach to sampling, data collection, analysis and interpretation (Marshall, 1996).

### Data Collection

Case studies use a variety of data collection techniques with multiple sources of evidence, a strategy which brings about data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003 & Remenyi et al., 2005:165). This approach allows the researcher to use multiple sources of data collection techniques and in this research observations, in-depth interviews and questionnaires were used as the main methods and documentation mainly for triangulation purposes. Data was collected using the convergent design where quantitative and qualitative data are collected separately yet concurrently and merged at the point of interpretation (Creswell, 2009). The strategy validates one form of data with the other form and transforms the data for comparison or addressing different types of questions (Creswell & Clark, 2007), augments and explains complex or contradictory survey responses (Driscoll et al., 2007). Use of the different methods of data collection allowed the researcher to view issues from a multiple sources and perspective so as to enrich the meaning of a singular perspective. The study used interviews, questionnaires and observations. Document analysis was used for triangulation purposes. The use of multiple methods adds strength to the findings as the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The dominance of one method or the other varied depending with the research focus at that particular instance.

### Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the management and analysis of quantitative data. Reliability was assessed using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha on the SPSS. The reliability of a scale indicates how free it is from random error (Pallant, 2011:6). Internal consistency is the degree to which the items that make up the scale are all measuring the same underlying attribute (Pallant, 2011:97), with Cronbach's coefficient alpha being the most common used. Significance testing (Bryman & Bell, 2003) was used as part of examining relationships between two or more variables. The degree of freedom ( $\delta f$ ) and the probability (*p-value*) were used as part of the test results where if the probability is low ( $p < 0.05$ ) then one has a statistically significant relationship whereby the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted and the alternative

hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is rejected. If the probability of obtaining the test statistic is higher than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), the relationship is not statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Descriptive analysis transforms raw data into a form that is easy to understand and interpret (Zikmund, 2000). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for quantitative data with the following outcome; summarized data tables, frequencies, measures of variability, hypothesis testing, and inferences about a population characteristic, significance tests, regression analysis and ANOVA were used for quantitative data analysis using the SPSS Package. All tests were done at 0.05 level of significance. If the level of significance (P-value) was less than 0.05 the null hypothesis was rejected. If the P-value was greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis was accepted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The response on growth strategies in descending order for the biggest church is evangelism and healing (92), care ministry (91), prophecy (90) and prosperity gospel (87). The bigger church's response on growth strategies in descending order is evangelism (74), prophecy (69), healing and care ministry (66) and finally prosperity (45). Big 1's response in descending order is evangelism (37), care ministry (28), prophecy (22), healing (16) and prosperity (9). Big 2's response was care ministry (33), evangelism (32), prophecy (29), healing (27) and prosperity (10). Small 1's response in descending order is evangelism (39), healing (37), prophecy (36), prosperity and care ministry (33). Finally Small 2's response in descending order is evangelism, prophecy and care ministry (10), healing (7) and prosperity (6). The Chi-square test indicated that there is no significant association between name of church and growth strategies ( $\chi^2=27.1$ ;  $df=20$ ;  $P=0.13$ ). However within the big churches some strategies significantly contribute to the growth of the church than others (big1  $\chi^2=20.8$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p<0.05$  and in big2  $\chi^2=13.4$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p=0.01$ ) with evangelism and care ministry being the main growth strategies employed in these big churches.

Table 6.1 indicates that members agree with the church doctrines with the most popular being salvation, deliverance, healing and speaking in tongues. The results also show that there are significant differences across the Likert Scale with most members in all churches strongly agreeing (average 4.7 on the scale) on the main church doctrines asked (Kruskal-Wallis test,  $P<0.05$ ). The church with the highest level of agreement is biggest with 4.8 on the scale and small2 had the lowest level of agreement with 4.5 on the scale. Most members agreed to the doctrine of salvation, deliverance and healing at 4.8 on the scale whereas prosperity scored 4.5 on the scale. 66% indicated that they were attracted to church due to the spiritual aspect which covers healing, prayer, sermons and the love and care by the church. This is followed by family and friends at 16% who already have been attending that particular church and either invites the participant or the participant decided to follow them for one reason or another.

The third aspect is the social aspect with 8.5%, where the church has been serving in the community in a tangible way that one gets attracted to a church such as visiting the sick at home and in hospitals, caring for orphans and donating to various needs in society. The physical [meaning visual appearance such as church decorations, property, cars] and leadership aspect are the last two with 6% and 2.8% respectively. Through interviews and observations from the participants; the founders, the leaders and the followers it was revealed that church growth is measured the number of people that one has as members; the finances of the church, the assets of the church, churches planted and the love and care that is exhibited in a church. The number of people was indicative of the growth strategies that were followed. The most popular strategies that the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe use are that of evangelism and care ministry.

### Evangelism and Care Ministry

The churches have departments of evangelism that are specifically for preaching to the people and bringing them to church to become part of the church.

**Table 1. Members' views on salvation, deliverance, healing, Holy Ghost and prosperity**

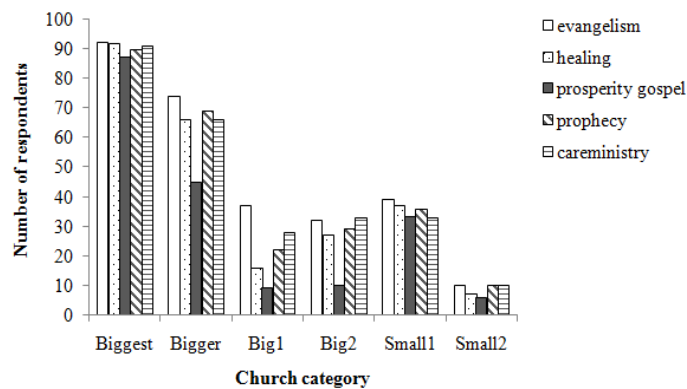
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Healing	559 [82.3]	97 [14.3]	18 [2.7]	2 [0.3]	3 [0.3]
Deliverance	567 [83.5]	90 [13.3]	13 [1.9]	3 [0.4]	6 [0.9]
Speaking in tongues	538 [79.2]	95 [14]	36 [5.3]	5 [0.7]	5 [0.7]
Salvation	570 [83.9]	92 [13.5]	14 [2.1]	3 [0.4]	0 [0]
Prosperity gospel	462 [68]	114 [16.8]	79 [11.6]	14 [2.1]	10 [1.5]
Baptism by emersion	537 [79.1]	110 [16.2]	25 [3.7]	2 [0.3]	5 [0.7]
Prophecy	505 [74.4]	113 [16.6]	52 [7.7]	2 [0.3]	7 [1]
Holy Spirit	506 [74.5]	104 [15.3]	53 [7.8]	11 [1.6]	4 [0.6]

\*Numbers outside the brackets represent the frequency and numbers inside the brackets are percentages

**Table 2. What attracted you to this church?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Spiritual aspect	451	66.4	66.4	66.4
Physical aspect	42	6.2	6.2	72.6
Social aspect	58	8.5	8.5	81.1
Leadership aspect	19	2.8	2.8	83.9
Family and friends	109	16.1	16.1	100.0
Total	679	100.0	100.0	

Figure 1: Growth strategies employed by pentecostal churches



The department is led by a pastor for evangelism. The aim is to attract all types of people; the poor and disadvantaged, the youths, the business people, the professionals and the elderly. Evangelistic outreaches are ongoing activities and the researcher participated in some of the outreaches where a group of people go out to a certain area and start preaching to the people using various methods such as door-to-door outreaches where they gain access to people's homes, or one-to-one witnessing, where they find anyone to talk to about God, or a crusade where they gather people in either a building or an open place and preach to those gathered. The researcher noted that during the outreach meetings the people that do the outreaches carry pamphlets which have the name of the church, the founder member's name, scriptures from the Bible that relate to salvation and a section where people fill in their names and contact details. The founders went on to say the forms assist departments to follow up on those people and to visit them and teach them more things about God. The pamphlets assist the people with contact details of the church

The second popular growth strategy that was mentioned was care ministry which they said covered hospital visits, caring for the marginalized and the disadvantaged and attending funerals. During the interview these words were used jointly by the participants especially the founders. The researcher would get such statements "As a church visiting the sick, those in prison, caring for the poor and being there when they are bereaved matters if the church has to be influential in the community". The care ministry division is normally led by a care ministry pastor who then incorporates other people from the church to form a structure. The researcher learned from the founders that the care ministry feeds needy people; the elderly, the orphans, widows and widowers. The groups have different names depending on the church, such as compassion ministry, orphanage centre, disabled helping hand association and single parents' ministry. They also pay school fees for some children and empower people to start on various projects evidenced by sewing projects, poultry projects, farming projects, carpentry, cookery and names that were supplied to the researcher for those who benefitted from the payment of school fees. It was mentioned that by so doing a number of people are attracted to the church. The founders mentioned that they usually spearhead or mobilize funds, food and clothing through various ways, such as donations from members and non-members, engaging in income-generating projects and acquiring land where they grow maize, vegetables and other crops as deemed

fit. The founders and leaders mentioned that there are teams that go to visit hospitals regularly. The teams visit anyone in hospital irrespective of their religious background. They comfort the people, leave gifts and food and they pray for them. They also leave pamphlets and write down names of those that 'get born again'. This exercise of visiting the people is an ongoing exercise even when someone has been discharged. They explained that by doing this they not only attract the sick person to church but attract families, relatives and friends that would visit the sick as they mingle with them. The researcher noted during her focus group and during testimony times in the churches under study that some people mention that they came to know about the church because they were or their family member was visited in hospital. One of the churches under its 'Celebration Health Ministry' has partnered with various organizations including the government by bringing in medicines that are needed in the major hospitals of Harare, Chitungwiza, Mpilo and United Bulawayo Hospital. The same church also partners with other organizations so as to bring free medical attention to people such as operations as reported in the local newspaper;

*'The Department of Ophthalmology, University College of Health Science together with Celebration Health and the Ministry of Health and Child Care in partnership with Coca Cola Central and East Africa, Delta Corporation and Schweppes Zimbabwe will be conducting cataract operations and consultations for any other eye conditions free of charge at Chinhoyi Provincial Hospital' (The Sunday Mail Business, 2014: B13).*

The founders also mentioned the need for them to visit prisoners and some churches have a separate prison ministry. They highlighted to the researcher that this is not a benefit to the church only but to the nation. The churches get permission, usually in writing from the prison authorities. The authorities then allocate a time when the church can visit and speak to the prisoners. When the teams make visits to prisons they talk to all prisoners in that prison complex as sometimes they are grouped together for such purposes or talk to them one-on-one. The teams preach the Gospel and discuss with the prisoners the importance of receiving Christ, following God. By so doing some prisoners make their own decisions to follow God and to be good citizens. Bibles and pamphlets are distributed to them and also gifts such as groceries. When some of them come out of prison they link up with the person (from a particular church), that visited and spoke to them while they were in prison. In one of the case studies the researcher was allowed to listen to a conversation that a recently released prisoner and a member of the church that had visited him was having. The released person was asking for where they can meet on Sunday so that he goes to church and also for medical assistance. The researcher observed that already a relationship had been built. Evangelism is one of the major strategies that the churches use as the mission of the Pentecostal churches is the salvation of souls as quoted in Matthew 28: 19 - 20. This evangelistic approach is done through care ministry, healing services, deliverance and prophecy. These approaches as the findings reveal attract people to church thereby making the church to grow numerically. The findings indicate that 66% are attracted to church due to the spiritual orientation. When asked about

these spiritual aspects which comprises aspects such as healing, deliverance and prophecy and also the social aspect which is related to care and support. The tools that are utilised in these evangelistic or growth outreaches are departmental ministries such as the men, ladies, the youth, children special Sundays, television ministry (broadcasting services), campus ministry, dinners. Crusades and conferences.

### Men's Ministry

The men's ministry is targeted towards men in church. The meetings are done on a regular basis, usually on a monthly basis. The founders told the researcher that men are supposed to be 'in the fore-front, they are heads of families' as mentioned in the Bible in Ephesians 5 verse 23, *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church*. In that respect it is considered important to equip the men in terms of business, professions, running families and supporting the church which they put as 'the work of God'. During such meetings men fellowship with one another and get to know each other apart from on a Sunday. The researcher observed that during men's meetings they are already prearranged topics that are covered and it is during that time that the founder speaks to them concerning the vision of the church. The meetings assist men to be able to make decisions to support the vision of the church financially, materially and spiritually. The men also cover practical lessons such as handling family conflicts, running businesses and the value of education. Different churches have different names for men's ministries such as Husbands Agape Fellowship, Men of Integrity Fellowship, Total Men and Mighty Men Groups.

### Ladies' Ministry

The ladies ministry is run by the founders' wives and is given names depending on the vision of the founder's wife. Some of the names are Gracious Women Fellowship, Woman Unlimited, Precious Stones, Today's Woman and Maximized Lifestyle International. The ladies ministries are not independent of the church so ultimately they support the vision of the founder. The founders' wives arrange the meetings which are done usually on a monthly basis. The founders' wives control these meetings with the assistance of the pastors' wives. The aim is to build a woman that is balanced materially, financially, physically and spiritually. The researcher noted that during the meetings, the founder's wife or the pastor's wife chair such meetings and are at liberty to invite other speakers whom they feel are suitable and can empower women.

The ladies do a number of practical things that empower women such as sewing, cookery, legal issues such as laws to do with wills and inheritance, starting and running businesses, raising up children, dealing with family issues and the importance of education. The founders' wives narrated that their aim is to build an independent self-confident woman who is an asset to the church, the community and the nation. The women in turn empower each other as the composition of them includes prominent businesswomen, professionals and ordinary members. The biggest church encourages its members to '*work talents*', a concept which encourages women especially to work with their hands and generate income (Guti, 2011). The projects that they are involved in are diverse, from selling

sweets to farming and other ventures. The '*working of talents*' assist the members to upgrade themselves financially in their homes and also the church or any projects that the church embarks on. The founder of the church has a saying that encourages people to work talents which says in one of the local languages, Shona, '*Midziyo yakadhakwa ngaibude mumba*' (Interviewed on 30 January 2013 in Harare). What this literally means is that some properties in people's homes need to be replaced and to do that one needs to work towards that hence the concept of '*working talents*'. The women are also engaged in income generating-projects, outreach activities; they go camping, visit the sick, the prisoner and attend funerals which support the vision of the church as given out by the founders. They have teams that go out to do these outreaches.

### Youth and Children's Ministries

The youth ministry has a youth pastor who caters for the young people. The youth pastor runs the ministry under the umbrella vision of the founder. The founder's vision is adopted to meet the needs of the young people. The youth leaders mentioned that this group is important in the church since it attracts young people both within and out of the church. It is according to the leaders a vibrant, dynamic group that needs a lot of creativity in order to successfully run it. It is used as an evangelistic strategy attracting and appealing to other youths outside the church. The young people meet regularly as a group and also meet in combined meetings with the elderly. The children's ministry serves children usually up to Grade 7 that is around the ages of eleven and twelve. The children's ministry also has a leader or a pastor heading the ministry. The children are grouped in groups according to ages and taught accordingly. The leaders alluded to the fact that whatever programs they put in place, they do that in line with the vision of the church and consult with the founder and other leaders especially during leadership meetings.

### Conferences

The founders arrange for conferences and they said that during such meetings a number of practical teachings are taught and various people are invited to speak and to demonstrate in their areas of expertise such as finances, leadership, families and businesses. The conferences last from three days to two weeks and are advertised in the media, National television, brochures and pamphlets and by word of mouth. During that time a programme packed with various speakers both locally and internationally will be provided with a speaker taking at least two sessions. The programme would have some of the following included; the business session where renounced business people are invited such as Nigel Chanakira, Dr Shingi Munyeza, Roderick Chipoyera, Minister Obert Mpfu, Pastor Tom Deuschle amongst many others; musical extravaganza with popular artists such as Zimpraise, Benjamin Dube, Takesure Ncube, Sebastian Magacha, Liberty Ticharwa, Keke Phoolo, Solly Mahlangu, Mrs Shuvai Wutawunashe, Mathias Mhere, Mr and Mrs Charles and Olivia Charamba, Joyous Ministry and in-house music groups. There are also teachings in line with the theme of the conference. The theme as the leaders put it would be in line with the vision of the church and the goals that the founder would want to achieve such as Holy Ghost Invasion, Apostolic/Prophetic Conference,



World Changers Conference, Deeper Life Conference, Arise and Shine, Increased Moves of God and Divine Encounters, Open Heavens, Rekindling the Fire of Pentecost and Prosperity. The founder therefore uses his creativity in line with the vision and in some cases the year's declarations to come up with the theme for the conferences, the speakers and the budget together with the ways of fundraising for the conferences. Declarations are given by the Founder towards the end of the year before the beginning of the New Year. The declarations are meant to guide that particular church throughout the coming year. One example of declarations were the ones declared on 30<sup>th</sup> November by the Founder of the big 2 church at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo. He stated that the following were the declarations for the year 2013:

*A year of increased moves of God and Divine encounters, a year of jubilee, a year of solid foundations, a year of great faith and finally a year of prosperity and blessings.*

An average of three conferences is held by an individual church per year. There are leadership meetings that would be held just prior or after the conferences. These meetings are aimed to equip and ground the leaders from different places, locally, regionally and internationally. They are also meant to improve on relationships and for the founder to get feedback from the various leaders under him. Some of the growth strategies that are used are special Sundays such as healing Sundays, prophetic Sundays, impartation Sundays, Family Sundays Appreciation Sunday to mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law. All these special Sundays are advertised before they take place and are open to anyone.

### Special Sundays

During a healing Sunday, the sick are invited and members of the church assist in bringing people from their families, their friends, workmates and anyone they would have invited. The service will focus on praying for the sick, the demon possessed, the mentally ill and those that emotionally unstable in both their minds and behaviour, such as the hurting, those that are bitter and have problems forgiving those that hurt them, and those that are desperate one way or another for example desperate for jobs. These are usually charged services emotionally and physically, as the researcher has herself participated in such services between 2010 and 2013 on several occasions in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Masvingo, Gweru and Bindura. A lot of emotions come out and through the preaching of the word of God and the laying on of hands people testify of getting healed. Those that may not get healed do not give up, they persist until there is what is called a 'breakthrough', meaning until someone is healed. On a prophetic Sunday, people are encouraged in a number of ways. The prophetic leader, that is the one leading the service can say something like this 'weeping may endure for a season but joy comes in the mourning'; which is a quote from the Bible (Psalm 30:5) and a person or people who may be going through a hard period will quickly identify that the prophetic is speaking about them. The prophetic person is defined as the person who sees in the future. A lot of expectation and excitement is created during such services as people would shout 'Amen, Halleluiah, Glory Glory' and people would run upfront to be prayed for. The

researcher would hear such words after the service from the congregants or the followers

*"today it was my day, I had a major breakthrough" or "God moved on my behalf" or "I never thought this would happen to me, it's a miracle" or "I feel relieved" (30 November 2011, Bulawayo, big 2 church category).*

All these statements allude to the fact that something good would have happened to them. The family Sunday is where people come together as a family normally people bring gifts for each other. The gifts are exchanged during the time of the service. There is usually a preaching to do with the importance of families and the roles that each one plays in a family. There is also a time to pray for family members, marriages and other things that matter to families. The researcher noted in a number of such meetings, members of the families reconciling and 'forgiving each other'. Impartation Sundays are held in order to transfer something to someone, which they call 'transference of the right spirit'. The church believes that a person such as a preacher, business person, a person influential in the academic field such as a vice chancellor of a university can impart or transfer some of what he has to other people. This is only done by Godly influential people as the church believes that a wrong spirit can also be transferred. The impartation is usually after a teaching or a preaching.

### Vision Dinner

Other growth strategies including vision dinners. These are held usually once a year at the end or beginning of a new year. The founder brings direction and focus to the coming year by declaring the things that the church will run with in line with their vision. The researcher was shown a number of the declarations which differ from year to year but are closely linked to the church's vision. Some of the declarations are, 'year of missions' meaning people will be sending out as missionaries so the declaration prepares people for such assignments. Some of the declarations are; 'A year of God's favor' so the founders would explain what they mean and the followers would live in such a way as to attract favour on a number of issues in their lives or 'A year of possessing the land', which encourages people and the church to buy properties. It was pointed out to the researcher that these declarations excite people, give them hope and position them strategically at church, work, and in society. This according to the founders instills a spirit of hard work and focus which was concurred by some of the participants of this study, the leaders and members of the different churches. These declarations run for a year, some even more and it is not unusual to hear testimonies from people about what God would have done to them in line with the declarations. Someone, for example, may stand up and share to the whole church that he got an influential post through the Grace of God and he/she can surely attest to what God spoke through a declaration on governmental anointing or God's favour which were declarations that the Founder gave to them at the beginning of that particular year.

### Churches Planted

The founders highlighted that uppermost in their vision is to see the Gospel spreading to nations as commanded by the Bible

under the 'great commission' in Matthew 28: 19-20. In order to achieve that one of the major goals that they embark on is church planting. In all the case studies churches are planted locally, regionally and internationally on a regular basis. Church planting is used as a strategy for growth. It was noted that local churches are more than the regional and internationally ones. The founders explained by saying it is important to have a base and for them the base is as local one as their vision is to reach Zimbabwe with the gospel then reach out for other nations, They base their argument from the scripture.

### Finances of Churches

The finances of the church according to the founder members are administered at the head office with a qualified finance or accounting officer. The churches are non-profit organizations and their major sources of finance are tithes and offerings. The followers are taught on tithing and offering when they join the church. The tithes are 10% of their gross income and offerings are free offerings where people give the amount that they wish. Tithes are not an option though the founders were quick to say not everyone gives of their tithes, between 10% and 30% give of their tithes to the church. One of the scriptures from the Bible that is used on the issue of tithing is Leviticus 27:30,

*A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithes, he must add a fifth of the value to it The entire tithe of the herd and flock – every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod – will be holy to the Lord (NIV).* The other scripture in the Bible is in Malachi 3:10, *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house (NIV)*

The founders and the leaders explained that as people get to understand biblical teachings on tithing and are grounded in the Word of God, tithing to those people is not a struggle. They went on to say those followers that tithe are usually loyal to the church and the activities and projects that the church is involved in. The founders mentioned that the collection procedure of tithes is transparent; some use envelopes where someone writes their name on and the amount they are tithing or the members go directly to the church office and pay their tithes directly to the finance officer who then give a receipt as proof of payment and records the name and the amount details in the tithing records. By doing this the founders are also able to establish the number of tithers and allows to record growth rate as well. The leaders in their various church branches follow the same principles of recording of tithes in their various stations and account for the usage of the money.

### The Assets of Churches

The founders and the leaders put emphasis on church assets as a sign of growth and influence. They regarded church assets as owning buildings, properties and vehicles. The biggest church owns multiple buildings, properties and a number of vehicles and buses compared to all the others. However all the church categories are thriving to get more in terms of church assets. The buildings, properties and vehicles are written on them the names of the church with the logo, the function and the place

such as 'Evangelism, Masvingo Region', ZEGU University, HHI Gwanda Church or AFM Harare Province. The founders of all the church categories mentioned that for any growth to take place there is need of church vehicles and for leaders to be allocated vehicles for the job that they are doing. There are various activities that require use of vehicles such as evangelism, hospital visits, funerals, prison visits, conferences and crusades. In all the church categories there was some form of a building project section that would specialize on acquiring assets for the church and in building projects. The churches raise finances for buildings and purchasing of vehicles from within the church among its church members. Most churches have committees that spear-head these activities. The committees are in-house and usually are accountable to either the founder or the pastors that they are under. The handling of assets is recorded by some churches in their constitutions and regulations manuals. In the Finance & Procedure Manual of the big 2 church it is recorded that all church assets shall be recorded in a fixed assets register and all church assets shall be used for bona fide church functions only, no equipment shall be hired or borrowed unless approved on special circumstances by the local pastor and every local church shall ensure that all property is insured to the degree that the local Finance Committee shall decide (HHI, 2013). The bigger church category records in its constitution that no fixed property shall be purchased sold or mortgaged or otherwise alienated without the written consent of the Local Board of Elders, the Provincial Council and the Apostolic Council.

### Church Projects

There are on-going building projects in all church categories. "A strong base is important", these would be the words of the founders to the researcher. When they speak of a strong base they will be alluding to a church building that is needed where people worship from. The biggest and bigger church already has what they call a strong base though they are still building in various cities and rural areas physical church structures. The majority of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe rely mostly on renting which is quite expensive and the need to build their own churches. The construction of churches depends on the availability of funds. Some of the churches that are under construction are shown below.

The founders went on to say in order to influence the nation in all spheres politically, economically, spiritually and physically, the biggest church has established a university, schools and hospitals. The leaders of the church are involved in assisting the fundraising towards these projects at their church level. Funds are fundraised from church members through pledges and donations, in either cash or kind. The researcher witnessed ten of the fundraising activities from the different church categories and heard some members mentioning that they were going to donate bricks towards the building, others door frames and others pledging towards building a certain section of the building. They are a number of incentives to attract pledges and donations towards the building projects. Some of these incentives are to do with a section of the building being named under the person that donates a certain amount, names of donors included on the walls after completion of the building and other rewards such as offer of holidays to resort areas such as Victoria Falls.



## Entrepreneurship

There are projects that are directly targeted towards the followers and leaders in order to empower them financially and materially. The building projects and the income-generating projects are separate and normally led by different leaders. The followers and leaders are involved in income-generating projects which in turn if successful bring financial gain to the church, the community and the followers. The income-generating projects range from sewing, welding, farming, poultry, cookery, jam-making, carpentry, working of talents and painting. The church founders and the leaders under them believe that once an individual experiences financial freedom that should trickle also to the church, thereby increasing the church's income and widening the sources of income for the individual. The researcher was shown buildings especially under the biggest church category that were built using funds rose from income-generating projects. Various names are given to the income-generating projects as seen fit by the founder, the founder's wife or the leaders.

## Spiritual Growth

The findings indicate that spiritual growth is measured through the following major aspects:

- **One's understanding of the Bible**

The level of growth in the church can be measured by how one understands and interpret the bible. Bible schools have been established where believers are taught the Bible. The Bible schools accommodate beginners' level up to the advanced levels which include the prophetic element in them. People are taught systematically for an average of four years. The researcher noted that all the six church categories have their own bible schools which cater for their own congregants. Some of the bible schools are registered with the Ministry of Education while others are not.

The aim of the bible schools is to produce a holistic person who understands the Bible and can also teach it to others. The bible schools are attractive as they are tailor- made to suit the times that individuals find convenient to attend, be it evenings, weekends and some weekdays. The Bible school curriculum differs from one church to another. The bigger church offers a three-year diploma in Theology on full-time basis, a three year part-time Diploma in Pastoral Ministry and intend to start an Executive Diploma in Theology. Their mission is to train and maintain God-fearing, Spirit-filled and relevant Christian leaders through teaching and interaction using global innovative and comprehensive theological programmes in the local and global context (Madawo, 2013). The big 2 church offers part-time studies; a certificate in Biblical studies in the first year, in the second year they offer a Diploma in Biblical studies, the third year covers a Diploma in Pastoral Studies, the fourth year is a Diploma in Prophetic Studies and the fifth year is the Diploma in Apostolic Studies. Their mission is to train and develop for ministry saints who are diligent, steadfast, immovable, mature, responsible, obedient and bold enough to preach the Word of God (Nyathi, 2013). The Bible schools have different names such as Africa Multinational for Christ

College (AMFCC), Harvest House International (HHI) School of Ministry and Living Waters Theological Seminary.

- **Attendance to church gatherings**

Most churches have regular meetings such as main services which are normally held on a Sunday then prayer meetings during the week. Apart from the regular meetings there are also special meetings such as conferences and seminars. The attendance for mid-week meetings is lower than on a Sunday.

- **Involvement in church activities**

The churches have a number of church activities such as fund-raising projects for building a church, schools, university or for other purposes as the church sees fit. There are also departmental activities such as couples' meetings, weddings and funerals, youth services, ladies and men's meetings as discussed above. Social activities include sports, camping and prayer retreats.

- **Position in the church**

Positions in the church are normally occupied by those who qualify according to Biblical principles. The founder of the biggest church pointed out that true leadership is in character and went on to say that Godly character is better than outstanding gift (Guti, 2007). Guti (2011) pointed out that a person that qualifies to be a leader is one that is saved, born again, Spirit filled, speaks in tongues and teaches believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit as written in scriptures in Acts : 8; 2: 4 and 10:46. The positions range from cupbearers or ushers to elders in the church with various titles such as apostles, teachers, evangelists, pastors, prophets, bishops and deacons. From the interviews contacted with the founders and leaders, the emphasis was that one cannot get to be an elder or a leader if they are immature spiritually or they are still novices. The leadership styles of many of the leaders is in such a way that they want to produce results, build relationships and build a reputation for them and the church which a majority of the participants mentioned as supportive and empowering type of leadership.

- **Management of one's life**

One of the major thrusts of the church is to build people that are balanced in every aspect of life. The major teachings of the bible and the church are to build a responsible citizen who is wise and fears God as recorded in Proverbs 9: 10; *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. From the researcher's observation and the findings from participants when asked what the major benefit is for them in being part of the church, one of the participant from the biggest church giving a testimony on a Sunday morning in Bindura on 13 October 2012 said; *"the church changed me to be a better person than I was. My life is now meaningful. I believe I am alive today because of the teaching, love and care from the people in this church"*. This was a summary of what many respondents alluded to. On probing further it was clear that the respondents were alluding to the fact that they now manage their life better than before; some saying that before they had very little care of their

families but now they do, or they used to spend money recklessly but now they save in order to invest in properties and many other positive things.

#### • Sacrifice

Sacrifice was mentioned across the respondents in different dimensions. The researcher found that the founders sacrificed of their life, time and money. They experienced a number of challenges personally and from other people that did not want the Pentecostal church. Some had to go without basic needs such as food, clothes when they initially started the church. The founder of the biggest church put it as follows: *I was left with one pair of trousers and a jacket but I could not see it because of great miracles and many people being saved. There are temptations which I encountered that were very difficult for me to understand as to why God allowed them. I was greatly persecuted because of God's work. (Guti, 2009; 2011)*

Most of the leaders spoke of sacrifice on two levels: the first one when they were asked by the founder to start a church in another area usually new to them. For some that meant moving the whole family and for others it meant leaving their jobs. They mentioned that the decision was hard but they had to sacrifice knowing as they put it 'that this was the call of God upon my life'. The second part of sacrifice was when they actually started the church, usually starting from scratch to find followers and finding a building to worship in which requires money and other resources. The leaders also mentioned that when planted in those places sometimes in the rural areas where people are poor, the expectations of the founders do not change; they expect the leader to have followers using the strategies that they have learned and also being innovative; they expect the leader to find a place to worship which does not bring any disrepute to the name of the church and they also expect the church to grow financially, spiritually and materially. The leaders faced different challenges depending on their location. Those for example in the rural areas or in the western areas of the cities may not be financially stable because the followers may not be as well off as those in towns. This apart from accessibility may be the reason why most Pentecostal churches are clustered in city centres. The followers mentioned sacrifice in terms of money and time. For the followers they found that church was not only a place where one receives sermons from the preacher but they as followers were expected to give of their money in form of tithes, offerings and kind in order for the church to grow. The money that they give assists in paying church staff including full-time pastors and to carry out other projects.

#### Conclusion

Pentecostal churches use evangelism as the main strategy for church growth. This finding was substantiated by members as they strongly agreed on salvation and healing which are related to evangelism. At any evangelistic meeting and ordinary church services the issue of salvation is uppermost within Pentecostal churches. This is in agreement with a study by Jang (2011) who articulated the importance of evangelism by saying that evangelism is the most important responsibility of a church. Warren (1995) goes further to say that evangelism is

more than our responsibility; it is our privilege. The same aspect of evangelism becomes the core of Pentecostal churches as supported by the Bible as the great commission in Matthew 28:19 which states that:

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

This strategy is followed by care ministry. According to Jang (2011), loving and caring for the neighbor makes a church healthy. The third being healing and prophecy. Again drawing from several scriptures in the Bible especially the books of Matthew, Mark and John, healing of the sick was an important aspect during Jesus' life and continues to be in Pentecostal churches as guided by the results. The aspect of healing is always interwoven with miracles and deliverance (Maxwell, 2006), hence miracle services that are carried out in Pentecostals as found during interviews and observations with many participants quoting *Matthew 10 : 8*; "Heal the sick [healing], raise the dead [miracles] and cleanse those who have leprosy [deliverance]". Mkwanazi asserts that the gifts of the Holy Ghost; prophecy, spiritual healing, discernment and interpretation have provided the Pentecostal movement with its allure and its phenomenal growth, particularly in the Third World (Nyathi, 2013). Braun (1971:105) stated that elements like healing, persistence, patience and reconciliation should be implemented.

These results are supported by the views of participants on what attracted them to church with the main one being the spiritual aspect which covers salvation, prayer, healing and prophecy and the second being the social aspect which covers the care ministry. The gospel of prosperity is not one of the major strategies that Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe focus on. The results therefore conclude that the aspect of love and evangelism are aspects that drive the Pentecostal churches. Warren (1995) identified five purposes of healthy churches; loving the Lord with all your heart, loving your neighbor as yourself, going and making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to obey.

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