


Developing the Scholarship of Ecclesiastical and Ecumenical Engagements in African Pentecostal Studies



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ABSTRACT

Engaged scholarship (also known as scholarship of engagement) is an approach to developing knowledge that values the interactions between the academy and the relevant communities. This article uses this approach to develop the scholarship of the ecclesiastical and ecumenical engagement (EEE) framework as an approach to Pentecostal studies in the African context(s). This paper argues that knowledge systems in African Pentecostal studies cannot be developed without taking into cognizance the relevant Pentecostal communities, such as churches and ecumenical organisations; otherwise, such studies become disengaged with reality or simply become epistemologies of the ivory tower. The contribution of this study is that the EEE framework can enhance African Pentecostal studies through knowledge developed from the local churches and African Pentecostal ecumenical bodies =. The study makes further propositions on the possibility of using the EEE framework for the development of Pentecostal union in the African context. The aspects of engaged scholarship are studied using a literature review in qualitative research to apply them to ecclesiastical and ecumenical engagement within the broader context of African Pentecostal studies. The purpose of the study is to demonstrate that the EEE framework plays an important role in ensuring that knowledge systems are informed by experiences from the churches and ecumenical bodies within the context of Pentecostal studies in Africa. The study found that the EEE framework can play a role in bridging the gaps between the practitioners of faith and the academy through engagement with African Pentecostal churches and ecumenical organization within African Pentecostal studies.

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INTRODUCTION

The phrase African Pentecostal studies is used here to distinguish it from African Pentecostal Theology because of its ability to cover the scope of Pentecostal studies beyond theology. African Pentecostal studies can also be used to generally refer to studies and approaches to African Pentecostalism.¹ This is the same reason academic societies such as the Society of Pentecostal Studies² (SPS) and the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism (GloPent) have adopted the same approach to reach out to

¹ Nimi Wariboko, "Pentecostalism in Africa," Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History, 2017, <https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-120>.

² Kenneth J Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Society for Pentecostal Studies: Reading and Hearing in One Spirit and One Accord," *Pneuma* 37, no. 3 (2015): 317–39.

non-theologians.³ Similarly, the newly established Southern African Society of Pentecostal Studies (SASPS) has followed the same route in accommodating interests in Pentecostal scholarship by non-theologians. After all, scholars such as Anderson et al, Vondey, and Mittelstadt et al have demonstrated how Pentecostalism is a field of study that can be approached in both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary ways.⁴ Anderson puts it this way:

Probably more than most other subjects, Pentecostalism has been studied in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary way, and no discipline can rely on its resources exclusively. Social scientists, with their emphasis on empirical evidence, are essential for a proper understanding of Pentecostalism. The literature on Pentecostalism has been enriched by the proliferation of social scientific studies since the 1960s, particularly in the disciplines of social history, anthropology, and sociology.⁵

African Pentecostal studies are budding with the potential to make an impact in theological studies, anthropology, media studies, and history. Yong and Alexander add other disciplines such as “ethics, missiology, religious studies, and cultural anthropology.”⁶ All these demonstrate the rise and the impact of African Pentecostal studies. In the South African context, there is an emergence of Pentecostal scholars located in various universities, such as the University of South Africa, the University of Johannesburg, North-West University, and Stellenbosch University, who are engaged in African Pentecostal studies. The same can be said in other regions in sub-Saharan Africa, where there is an emergence of Pentecostal scholars doing African Pentecostal studies. This article does not dwell much on these developments. The point being made here is that as this field is growing from these interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, there is a need for the development of various frameworks in which African Pentecostal studies can be approached.

The African Pentecostal studies have sparked the interest of both insiders and outsiders who have developed various non-exhaustive theoretical frameworks in different disciplines mentioned above. However, the research gap that the current study fills is in the development of a framework that will be able to enhance African Pentecostal studies by encouraging engagement with churches and ecumenical organisations, hence the need for the EEE framework. In developing this framework, the article is divided into five main sections. The first section introduces the scholarship of engagement as a relevant approach to the EEE framework. The second section will be dedicated to the development of an EEE framework to identify its aspects that are helpful in African Pentecostal studies. The third section will demonstrate how the EEE framework enhances African Pentecostal studies through an engagement of local Pentecostal churches. The fourth section is a discussion of the value of the EEE framework in engaging ecumenical organisations in the Pentecostal movement. The fifth section highlights some challenges that the EEE framework would face, particularly in engaging national and international ecumenical bodies. This study will also demonstrate that the EEE framework is relevant for avoiding Pentecostal studies of the ivory tower that are less interested in cutting-edge research.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literature review in qualitative research by looking at the relevant sources on engaged scholarship or scholarship of engagement. The work of Ernest Boyer is important in this article as the foundational source that helped conceptualise this framework. However, the study is not only interested in the conceptualisation of this framework but also its application to African Pentecostal studies. Therefore, in applying engaged scholarship to African Pentecostal studies, the study develops a framework as Ecclesiastical and Ecumenical Engagements to articulate the engagement of the Pentecostal churches and ecumenical organisations in such studies. Therefore, the selection of literature is limited only to African Pentecostal studies in the 21st century. This is literature mainly focused on the approaches to African Pentecostal studies by various scholars interested in the field. However, some sources that looked

³ William, Kay and Anne Dyer, *European Pentecostalism*, vol. 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

⁴ Allan, Anderson et al., *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, vol. 10 (California: Univ of California Press, 2010).

⁵ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁶ Amos, Yong and Estrelida Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (NYU Press, 2011).

at the Pentecostal studies outside of the African contexts are considered for their relevance to the current study. The literature analysis is used to analyse the relevant literature for the study in the main themes of engaged scholarship, ecclesiastical and ecumenical engagements, and African Pentecostal studies. This study did not engage any human participants; however, it has outlined the important ethical issues to look at when engaging faith communities.

DISCUSSION

Scholarship of Engagement

A scholarship of engagement has been defined as the sharing of the resources of the academy with civil society to address cutting-edge issues with the different communities in local contexts.⁷ An engaged scholar is aware of the cutting-edge topics in their field as a result of their engagement with the community. This means this approach is developed with the primary purpose of forging an interaction between the academy and the communities. However, scholars of the scholarship of engagement, such as Boyer and Baker, do not speak generally of interactions but of those that are aimed at addressing the important issues in these communities.⁸ The scholarship of engagement is a call for scholars to look beyond the theorisation of concepts to connect to the rest of society in their scholarship. This enables scholars to be able to understand their work at a deeper level by being informed not only by the theories they have read but also through the experiences of the communities. The scholarship of engagement is important to change the mindset of people in perceiving the institutions of higher learning and scholarship as isolated communities. Scholarship of engagement bridges the gap between the academy and the communities by drawing the former closer to the latter. Boyer points out that when scholarship of engagement is in place, “Campuses would be viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands but as staging grounds for action.”⁹ Hence, Boyer made a call for us to reconsider scholarship or places of learning as an ivory tower, but rather as a place of engagement between the academy and the communities.¹⁰ This is not a call to tamper with academic freedom as Chantler suggests, but rather a means to ensure that scholarship is connected with the realities of communities.¹¹ Therefore, a scholarship of engagement should be defined as a space where there is meaningful collaboration between the academy and the communities without compromising academic independence. In scholarship, engagement does not mean that the scholar has to agree with all the discoveries; there is a space for engagement in agreeing or disagreeing with them.

The scholarship of engagement does not tamper with the specificity of the discipline but rather is done within the context of a specific discipline. In his other article, "The Scholarship of Engagement", he points out that discoveries during engagements can be understood within the broader context.¹² However, before these discoveries are taken to broader contexts, there is a need to understand them within the specific context of the discipline. The scholarship of engagement is not done generally, and this is what differentiates it from community engagement. Scholarship of engagement is done with the discipline or specific field in mind. This means that when embracing this approach, there should never be a fear of losing the essence of a specific discipline. The scholarship of engagement does not engage communities in general terms but looks for specific communities relevant to specific fields. For example, there is no need for an engineer to engage the church, but an engineering firm to understand the field practically. Therefore, there is a need to embrace the scholarship of engagement to differentiate between general engagements and engaging communities for scholarship. The recognition of the discipline is important even for the emerging disciplines. An engaged scholar makes an effort to confine their engagement to a discipline, even if it is an emerging one. However, this should not be misunderstood as undermining interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches in the scholarship of engagement. The point being made here is that engagements should not be done in a vacuum but with discipline in mind. This does not

⁷ Ernest L Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. (ERIC, 1990).

⁸ Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*.; Derek Barker, “The Scholarship of Engagement: A Taxonomy of Five Emerging Practices,” *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 9, no. 2 (2004): 123–37.

⁹ Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*.33.

¹⁰ Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. 33.

¹¹ Abigail Chantler, “The Ivory Tower Revisited,” *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 37, no. 2 (2016): 215–29.

¹² Ernest L Boyer, “The Scholarship of Engagement,” in *Building the Field of Higher Education Engagement* (Routledge, 2023), 15–25.

mean undermining, for example, what Silka et al conceptualise as the value of working with other disciplines to avoid assumptions of the specific discipline.¹³

Another matter that differentiates the scholarship of engagement from community engagement is that the former is done with the primary purpose of producing knowledge in the field. Backer says that the embracement of the scholarship of engagement comes with the recognition that “research, teaching, integration, and application scholarship incorporate reciprocal practices of civic engagement into the production of knowledge.”¹⁴ However, other scholars such as Bowen and Graham argue that the scholarship of engagement should not only be concerned with knowledge production but also act on the discoveries established from their research.¹⁵ This means that scholars should not use communities for knowledge transformation without any aim of transforming those communities through their scholarship. Therefore, knowledge production must not only benefit the academy but also the communities as well. This brings the scholarship of engagement into a closer relationship with the action research, where knowledge production propels certain actions to be taken that will benefit both the academy and the communities.¹⁶ Therefore, this approach is relevant for its implementation in the Pentecostal communities. However, to my knowledge, an engaged scholarship has not yet been used to develop an EEE framework. In this article, engaged scholarship is used to develop an EEE framework as a viable one for the African Pentecostal studies in the section below.

Framing Ecclesiastical and Ecumenical Engagements in Pentecostal Studies

This article uses the scholarship of engagement to develop a scholarship of ecclesiastical and ecumenical engagements, which this study will call an EEE framework. Given the first principle of the scholarship of engagement on the interactions of the academy and communities, it means that the EEE framework is developed on the interactions of Pentecostal scholarship and the ecclesiastical and ecumenical organisations. But we also need to pay attention to the second principle, which is addressing the cutting-edge issue. This means that Pentecostal studies should not involve far-fetched issues, but issues that are closer to the ecclesiastical and ecumenical organisations. The development of the EEE framework is done based on the principle of scholars working beyond the theorization into working with communities. This is important in Pentecostal studies as scholars will be able to draw much from the experiences of ordinary people in churches and ecumenical organisations. The EEE framework is developed by recognising that Pentecostal scholarship is not an isolated activity, but is done in conjunction with or through the association with communities in this context, the ecclesiastical and ecumenical organisation. Therefore, Pentecostal scholars are called upon to forge a connection between their studies and the church to have meaningful engagements that will enhance Pentecostal studies. This strengthens the ability of Pentecostal studies to be informed by local contexts where the study is undertaken rather than far-fetched scholarly outcomes.

An EEE framework in the context of Pentecostal studies is developed on the principle of adhering to the specific discipline or field of study. Hence, this article specifically engages the ecclesiastical and ecumenical organisations within the Pentecostal movement so that the discipline does not lose its essence as discussed above. This is important in avoiding engaging communities from a general point of view. This means that a scholar in Pentecostal studies should be able to differentiate between visiting a church for fellowship and visiting a church for scholarship; the two should not be confused. This is because, in the development of the EEE framework, there is a need to move specific issues that concern the field or the discipline. This means that even within Pentecostal studies, there is still a need for the scholar to decide, even if their discoveries are within anthropology, theology, or history, for example. However, as highlighted in the previous section, this does not stop a Pentecostal scholar from working beyond their discipline to enhance the quality of their engagements, but also to avoid any possible biases based on their

¹³ Linda Silka et al., “Moving Beyond the Single Discipline: Building a Scholarship of Engagement That Permeates Higher Education.,” *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry* 11, no. 4 (2013).

¹⁴ Barker, “The Scholarship of Engagement: A Taxonomy of Five Emerging Practices.”

¹⁵ Sarah J Bowen and Ian D Graham, “From Knowledge Translation to Engaged Scholarship: Promoting Research Relevance and Utilization,” *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 94, no. 1 (2013): S3–8.

¹⁶ Michelle Fine et al., “Critical Participatory Action Research: Methods and Praxis for Intersectional Knowledge Production.,” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 68, no. 3 (2021): 344.

assumptions. This opens up an opportunity for the scholarship of engagement to be done from an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspective, as pointed out in the introduction.

The development of the EEE framework is based on recognising the importance of knowledge production as informed by the discoveries from the engagement. The EEE Framework within the Pentecostal studies means that this will enhance the knowledge production, which is important for understanding the phenomenon of Pentecostalism as it grows in the 21st century. This knowledge production from an EEE framework is important in Pentecostal studies for the discoveries to inform the practice of Pentecostalism. This results in a continuous interaction between the academy and communities, where research is informed by experiences and the experiences also inform the research in Pentecostal studies. Knowledge has been produced in the last decade on Pentecostal studies in the African context. However, this can be enhanced by the scholarship of engagement as the same would issue the production of knowledge that emanates from the churches and the ecumenical organisations. The next section discusses the connection of the EEE framework in engaging the local Pentecostal churches.

EEE framework in local Pentecostal churches

The EEE framework is relevant for African Pentecostal studies, developing knowledge systems as derived from the local churches in the Pentecostal movement. Anyone doing Pentecostal studies in the African context should be aware of the different churches that exist in the Pentecostal movement. The EEE framework, as proposed in this article, is implementable to the sub-traditions of the Pentecostal movement in the South African context. These Pentecostal churches are the contextual framework in which the Pentecostal theology is being practiced. The Pentecostal churches are the context in which theologies such as pneumatology are practiced.¹⁷

Writing from a Ghanaian perspective, Dijk Rijk points out that the theology of the spirit, together with pneumatic experiences such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing, can be studied in the context of the Pentecostal churches.¹⁸ The same can be engaged in a meaningful way through the EEE framework. Lovemore Togarasei, writing from a Zimbabwean context, speaks of Pentecostalism that started as a movement from liturgical practices within Pentecostal worship, such as clapping of hands, shouting, preaching, dancing, singing, and so forth.¹⁹ These liturgical practices are also important for historicizing, theologising, or even anthropologising through the use of the EEE framework. It is therefore the work of a Pentecostal scholar in African Pentecostal studies to develop theories from these practices and experiences. This is an important task in African Pentecostal studies for the Pentecostal scholars to engage Pentecostal churches as opposed to just learning about Pentecostalism from books, hence the importance of the EEE framework.

A Pentecostal scholar in African Pentecostal studies should be aware of the different strands of Pentecostalism in the African context. This is an important aspect of the EEE framework, as discussed in the previous section, that scholarly engagements cannot be done in a vacuum. Therefore, it is important for the Pentecostal scholar to first be aware of the different sub-traditions that exist in the Pentecostal movement. The EEE framework applies firstly to classical Pentecostal churches. These churches are found in sub-Saharan Africa in different contexts such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and so forth. According to Kevin Roy, in South Africa, churches such as the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Full Gospel Church, and the Assemblies of God can be considered classical Pentecostal churches.²⁰ The same exists in countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Kenya. In the Ghanaian context, a Ghanaian scholar like Peter White classifies churches such as the church of Pentecost as a classical Pentecostal church but not a missionary church, as it was not started by Western missionaries.²¹ The same can be said of the Zimbabwean Assemblies of God, which can be considered classical even though it was started by the

¹⁷ Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, vol. 3 (Brill, 2009).

¹⁸ Rijk Van Dijk, "Pentecostalism and Post-Development: Exploring Religion as a Developmental Ideology in Ghanaian Migrant Communities," in *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa* (Springer, 2012), 87–108.

¹⁹ Lovemore Togarasei, "Modern Pentecostalism as an Urban Phenomenon: The Case of the Family of God Church in Zimbabwe," *Exchange* 34, no. 4 (2005): 349–75.

²⁰ Kevin Roy, *The Story of the Church in South Africa* (Lancaster: Langham Publishing, 2017).

²¹ Peter White, "Pentecostal Mission Spirituality: A Study of the Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana," *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 44, no. 3 (2016): 251–62.

Zimbabwean, Ezekiel Guti.²² In this way, this study defines classical Pentecostalism not only in terms of foreign missionary foundations but also as the earliest Pentecostal churches in a specific country. Therefore, in Africa, a Pentecostal scholar should be aware of the classical Pentecostal churches that were not started by foreigners to engage them relevantly through the use of the EEE framework.

It is also necessary to be aware of the neo-Pentecostal churches, which are defined as the churches that have emanated from the classical Pentecostal churches but have retained the fundamental practices of the Pentecostal movement. This study would not refer to these church sects as Heath has done so in his book, *Persuasive Patterns and Strategies in the Neo-Pentecostal Movement*,²³ but rather to newer forms of Pentecostalism in Africa as Anderson has done so in many of his works.²⁴ In the South African context, church historians such as Thabang Mofokeng classify such churches as “Grace Bible Church” as a neo-Pentecostal church.²⁵ This current study would not classify Grace Bible Church as an African Independent Church in the same way it would, for example, churches like the Zion Christian Church. Neo-pentecostal churches also exist elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. The EEE framework is relevant for engaging the neo-Pentecostal churches to avoid mixing them with classical Pentecostal churches. It is also important to make distinctions between neo-Pentecostalism and charismatic renewal.

The Charismatic renewals are movements that exist in mainline Christianity in churches such as the Roman Catholic church, the Anglican church, the Lutheran church, and others, but do practice the gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly the speaking in tongues.²⁶ The charismatic renewals and other charismatic churches make up the charismatic movement, as Peter Hocken calls them.²⁷ Charismatic churches in the South African context would be the churches that have no links with classical Pentecostalism but practice charismatic gifts such as speaking in tongues; these should be differentiated from the neo-Pentecostals. Lastly, a Pentecostal scholar in African Pentecostal studies should be aware of what is called new prophetic churches, which are a stream of Pentecostalism existing in countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana.²⁸ Quayesi Amakye and Cephas Omenyo did extensive work on these churches in the Ghanaian context.²⁹ Similarly, Ezra Chitando framed these churches as prophetic Pentecostalism in the Zimbabwean context.³⁰ These churches are known for using prophetic titles, prophetic objects, prophetic deliverance, prophetic consultations, and prophetic.³¹ The knowledge of these different strands of Pentecostalism in Africa is important in engaging the Pentecostal churches using the EEE framework.

Engaging ecumenical Pentecostal organisations

The EEE framework is relevant for engaging the ecumenical bodies within the Pentecostal movement. In the ecumenical bodies, Pentecostal scholars can learn from different Pentecostal churches with different

²² Sunungurai D Chingarande et al., *Matarenda/Talents in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism: Empowerment, Gender and Development in an African Movement*, vol. 40 (Brill, 2021).

²³ Robert Wever Heath, *Persuasive Patterns and Strategies in the Neo-Pentecostal Movement* (Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma, 1973).

²⁴ Allan Anderson, “New African Initiated Pentecostalism and Charismatics in South Africa,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 35, no. 1 (2005): 66–92.

²⁵ Thabang R Mofokeng, “‘The Weird You Shall Always Have’: A Historical Look into the Causative Factors behind Neo-Prophetic Scandals in South Africa,” in *The Use and Abuse of the Spirit in Pentecostalism* (Routledge, 2020), 24–52.

²⁶ Maranda Hassett, “Charismatic Renewal,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 301.

²⁷ Peter D. Hocken, “Charismatic Movement,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van der Maas (Grand Rapids Rapids Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 477–519.

²⁸ Mookgo Solomon Kgatle, *Pentecostalism and Cultism in South Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Mookgo Solomon Kgatle, *Prophecy and Politics in South African Pentecostalism: A Pentecostal Political Theology in Postcolonial Africa* (Cham: Springer Nature, 2023).

²⁹ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism in Ghana's New Prophetic Churches,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal theological association* 35, no. 2 (2015): 162–173. Cf Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, “Let the Prophet speak: A study on trends in Pentecostal prophetism with particular reference to the Church of Pentecost and some neo-Pentecostal churches in Ghana.” PhD diss., University of Cape Coast, 2009. Cf Cephas Omenyo, “Man of God prophesy unto me: The prophetic phenomenon in African Christianity.” *Studies in World Christianity* 17, no. 1 (2011): 30–49.

³⁰ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism in Ghana's New Prophetic Churches,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 35, no. 2 (2015): 162–73; Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, “Let the Prophet Speak: A Study on Trends in Pentecostal. Prophetism with Particular Reference to the Church of Pentecost and Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana” (University of Cape Coast, 2009); Cephas N Omenyo, “Man of God Prophecy unto Me: The Prophetic Phenomenon in African Christianity,” *Studies in World Christianity* 17, no. 1 (2011): 30–49.

³¹ Kgatle, *Pentecostalism and Cultism in South Africa*.

approaches at the same time. The ecumenical bodies become a great point of contact for the Pentecostal scholar to engage in a more meaningful way with the Pentecostal community. Therefore, attending ecumenical meetings organised by Pentecostal churches can become an important aspect of the EEE framework in African Pentecostal studies. This is a starting point, particularly when a Pentecostal scholar is interested in the broader understanding of the whole Pentecostal movement in the African context.³² It is in the ecumenical engagements through the EEE framework that the practices of different sub-traditions of the Pentecostal movement would be clearly defined. This can also become very useful to the Pentecostal scholar when working with several Pentecostal churches. Rather than meeting them at different points, they can be found in one ecumenical organisation where the Pentecostal scholar can engage them through the EEE framework at one point. When engaging the Pentecostal ecumenical bodies, the Pentecostal scholar has, for example, an opportunity to learn new practices from newer movements as opposed to always relying on the research of other scholars on former movements, for example classical Pentecostal churches. Therefore, an ecumenical engagement is necessary for the Pentecostal scholar to be able to learn from different Pentecostal churches through the use of the EEE framework.

A Pentecostal scholar in African Pentecostal studies can enhance their studies by engaging the ecumenical bodies, such as the Evangelical, Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches Fellowship of Southern Africa (EPCCFSA), whose primary purpose is to:

To pursue the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God among believers until the church exercises the authority of God's kingdom over all spheres of society by providing a framework for fellowship, dialogue, and cooperation.³³

A Pentecostal scholar engaged in African Pentecostal studies can learn from the engagements with organisations such as the International Federation of Christian Churches, which has the primary purpose of serving as a Spirit-led Body of Churches and Ministries that, although respectful traditions rely on and operate on the shifting and flow of the Holy Spirit. As the Ecclesia, we are determined to set a new standard of Service, Leadership, and Accountability. This new form of leadership seeks not to destroy or swallow the identity of the church, but to uplift, inspire, enhance, and impart to bring about a spiritual transformation. All pastors, Churches, and Ministries operate independently on the local level but are united to fulfill our destiny as a tool of Empowerment and unity to the Body of Christ so that **we** may effectively build God's kingdom on earth.³⁴

According to Anderson, this body, although its name suggests that it is generally for all Christian churches, is dominated by many charismatic churches in South Africa. Anderson continues to say that its former president was Ray Macauley, but it is now headed by Bishop Musa Son, the founder and pastor of the Grace Bible Church.³⁵ Lately, another ecumenical organization has been formed called the South African Union Council of Independent Churches (SAUCIC), whose mandate is to unite all independent churches in South Africa, of which many have a Pentecostal orientation.³⁶ All these new developments are important for engagements using the EEE Framework within African Pentecostal Studies.

EEE framework: a national and international challenge for African Pentecostal studies

There are two challenges for the use of the EEE framework, especially when it comes to the ecumenical bodies. Bongmba states, "Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa variously self-identifies as ministries, fellowships, or churches, and is conspicuously estranged from 'creedal traditions' of mainline churches and the institutionalized forms of ecumenism."³⁷ While this has, to a certain extent, caused the Pentecostal movement to expand, on the other hand, it is the same aspect of not belonging to ecumenical bodies that causes the Pentecostal churches not to have a sense of belonging and accountability. Among the sub-

³² Allan H Anderson, "Types and Butterflies: African Initiated Churches and European Typologies," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25, no. 3 (2001): 107–13.

³³ Mookgo Solomon Kgatle, *African Pentecostal Theology: Modality, Disciplinarity, and Decoloniality* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

³⁴ Kgatle, *African Pentecostal Theology: Modality, Disciplinarity, and Decoloniality*.

³⁵ Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

³⁶ Kelebogile Thomas Resane, "African Zionism and Its Contribution to African Christianity in South Africa," *Scriptura: Journal for Biblical, Theological and Contextual Hermeneutics* 119, no. 1 (2020): 1–16.

³⁷ Elias Kifon Bongmba, *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

traditions of Pentecostalism in Africa, new prophetic churches top the list of non-affiliation to ecumenical bodies, as prophets in these churches are only accountable to themselves or their families.³⁸ Consequently, some prophets in New Prophetic Churches become a law unto themselves, such that nobody can correct them. Arthur explains that “[s]ince these churches operate under no supervisory body, they have often created additional tension, as they do not abide by the directives of the Pentecostal ecumenical bodies.”³⁹ Vondey adds that “the diversity of Pentecostal perspectives on the church allows at best for multiple theologies of the church that reflect both the tensions within the Pentecostal movement and the challenges of ecumenical reconciliation.”⁴⁰ However, this current study argues that although there are differences among Pentecostals, they can still find common ground for working together in an ecumenical way. If indeed all the strands of the Pentecostal movement highlighted in the preceding sections are founded on the fundamental theology of the spirit. This can easily become a common ground for Pentecostals working together. However, the point made here is that this lack of participation in ecumenical bodies presents a challenge to the implementation of the EEE framework.

The first challenge is that most of the Pentecostal churches in Africa are not part of the ecumenical bodies nationally. This is surprising because in what Nel calls the early ecumenical organisation, Pentecostals came together from different places to worship in for example Azusa Street Revival.⁴¹ It is, therefore, very astonishing that most Pentecostals in the 21st century would not want to be part of the ecumenical bodies in their nations. Asamoah-Gyadu, writing from a Ghanaian perspective, points out that although Pentecostalism in its early inception was founded on the grounds of being able to bring people together, lately “there is are seeming inability to work transparently with existing ecumenical communions.”⁴² This is visible in many regions in Africa where many Pentecostal churches do not want to be part of the broader ecumenical bodies in their nation. Very few Pentecostal churches in South Africa, for example, are part of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). It is only churches like the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Grace Bible Church that are part of the SACC. Hence, the Pentecostal voice is missing when there are important theological issues to discuss nationally. The second challenge emanating from the first challenge is that these Pentecostal churches would therefore not be part of the global ecumenical bodies. Very few Pentecostal churches are part for example, the World Council of Churches (WCC). It is only churches like the Apostolic Faith Mission that are part of the WCC. Many other Pentecostal churches in South Africa and elsewhere are not part of the WCC. Therefore, when a Pentecostal scholar attends an event of the WCC, they would not learn much from the Pentecostal perspectives emanating from the African context.⁴³ This is surprising because, as Asamoah-Gyadu correctly points out, Pentecostalism is already making an impact in global Christianity.⁴⁴

There are several reasons for the Pentecostals not to engage in ecumenical bodies such as SACC and WCC. One such reason is their emphasis on the theology of the Spirit, which, according to Nel, they wanted to use to distinguish themselves from others. Nel points out that “Pentecostals separated themselves further in ecumenical exclusivity, viewing their rejection by the churches as a sure sign of their closeness as the Spirit’s vehicle for returning the nations to God before the end times dawn.”⁴⁵ However, exclusivity and staying away would not bring any change. On the contrary, this separates the Pentecostal movement further away from other Christian traditions. But another reason speaks directly to the fractures that exist in the Pentecostal movement itself. Nel explains further that “the occurrence of internal divisions and fractures, reflecting the many disagreements on practice, doctrine, church politics, elections of leaders, and personalities. Classical Pentecostals (‘first-wave’ Pentecostals) are divided into Holiness Pentecostals, ‘Baptistic’ Pentecostals, and Oneness Pentecostals.⁴⁶ To date, many Pentecostal

³⁸ Kgatle, *Pentecostalism and cultism* 32

³⁹ Justice Anquandah Arthur, *The Politics of Religious Sound: Conflict and the Negotiation of Religious Diversity in Ghana*, vol. 86 (LIT Verlag Münster, 2018).

⁴⁰ Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: A&C Black, 2012).

⁴¹ Marius Nel, “Pentecostal Ecumenical Impulses: Past and Present Challenges,” *In Die Skriflig* 52, no. 1 (2018): 1–8.

⁴² J Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘Hearing in Our Own Tongues the Wonderful Works of God’: Pentecost, Ecumenism and Renewal in African Christianity,” *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 35, no. 3 (2007): 128–45.

⁴³ Shane Clifton, “Ecumenism from the Bottom up: A Pentecostal Perspective,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47, no. 4 (2012): 576–92.

⁴⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘Hearing in our own tongues the wonderful works of God” 133

⁴⁵ Nel, “Pentecostal ecumenical impulses” 3

⁴⁶ Nel, “Pentecostal ecumenical impulses” 3

churches have different names that they use, which sometimes become a factor for non-ecumenicity. Another reason is the lack of presentation of Pentecostals and their theology in many of these bodies. Whereby when Pentecostals become part of an organisation such as SACC, they feel not represented by the organisation. However, the more they stay away, the less there will be representation in organisations such as SACC and WCC. Hence, the importance of joining these is to have proper representation rather than to always start their ecumenical bodies. These are important aspects of the African Pentecostal studies for the implementation of the EEE framework.

EEE framework: an engaged Pentecostal studies

The EEE framework is important for African Pentecostal studies to avoid epistemologies drawn from the ivory tower. In other words, the lack of engagement of Pentecostal churches and ecumenical bodies results in a knowledge production that is very elitist and does not speak to the issues on the ground. To achieve engaged African Pentecostal studies, Pentecostal scholars need to engage both Pentecostal churches and ecumenical bodies. Second, there is a need to address the cutting-edge issues emanating from those engagements that Pentecostal scholars would have with Pentecostal churches and ecumenical bodies. Third, there is a need to produce research emanating from the discoveries made from the engagements. Lastly, the research produced by Pentecostal scholarship should help address the important matters in the Pentecostal movement. This creates a continuous relationship between the academy and the Pentecostal movement, where one learns from the other. Furthermore, the Pentecostal scholar should not be discouraged by the absence of many Pentecostal churches in bodies like the SACC and the WCC. The few Pentecostal churches that are represented there should serve as motivation for the Pentecostal scholar to engage the ecumenical movements at national and international levels.

CONCLUSION

This article made a unique contribution to African Pentecostal studies through the development of an EEE framework using the scholarship of engagement. This is a necessary framework given the rising interest in African Pentecostal studies from disciplines such as theology, anthropology, media studies, and others. The article identified the research gap of the lack of engagement of local churches and ecumenical bodies in African Pentecostal studies. This research gap was filled here by the development of an EEE framework. This framework is relevant for the engagement of local Pentecostal churches in different communities in the African context(s). The framework is relevant for the engagement of ecumenical organisations such as the International Federation of Charismatic Churches (IFCC), the South African Union of Independent Churches (SAUCIC), and others. Therefore, the EEE framework can be used in future studies as an approach to African Pentecostal studies that will help Pentecostal scholars avoid disengaged Pentecostal studies from a discipline such as mentioned above. This framework changes how we approach African Pentecostal studies, as the same should be studied through the EEE framework, particularly in ecumenical studies. The framework will play an important role in the future of African Pentecostal studies by helping theologians understand how to engage Pentecostal communities and the ecumenical organisations.

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