

Chapter 14

Religious Pluralism and the Interaction between Pentecostal Christianity and African Traditional Religions: A Case Study of ZAOGA and Shona Traditional Religion



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Abstract This chapter examines critically the implications of the interactions of two religions on religious pluralism in Zimbabwe. It uses ZAOGA as a case study and relates it to the general Shona Traditional Religious (ATR) beliefs and practices. The central argument of this chapter is that Pentecostal Christianity does not uphold the spirit of religious pluralism. In fact, it manipulates the differences that abound between the two by casting them in bad light as a conversion strategy. As a result, the religious landscape is characterized by suspicion and animosity contrary to the pluralist spirit. The chapter begins by treating the pluralist model to demonstrate the anticipated religious environment that should prevail all times to benefit humanity. It proceeds to discuss tenets of ATR followed by addressing the rise of Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe highlighting its propagation strategies. It is at this point that the relationship between Pentecostal Christianity and Shona Traditional Religious beliefs and practices is brought into limelight. The chapter endeavours to isolate key tenets that constitute the rift between the two leading to a relationship that stifles the pluralist spirit in the discourse of religious pluralism.

14.1 Introduction

Most works on the relationship between Pentecostal Christianity and African Traditional Religions (ATRs) have focused on issues related to antagonisms and the possibility of Pentecostal Christianity reviving key ATRs' tenets (see for example

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