

**PART ONE: DOCUMENT**

*Fenza-Doc 6 (July 2009) gave a survey of the 82 churches existing in Bauleni. We are keeping friendly contacts with these churches and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February we had a conference with some pastors of new churches who explained their personal pilgrimage and how they were led to open a new church. The conference was entitled: Zambia's New Churches: the changing face of Christianity. It offered a lively exchange. We are now busy collecting written testimonies of Bauleni Pastors. We intend to put them on our website when we reach about 20 of them. We have also collected a lot of information about this new ways of being Christian. Fr Bernhard has made a synthesis of this research. The full text will soon be found on our website. As it is a bit long, we publish here a short abstract of the first 11 pages, and the complete text of the last 6 pages of this document. The study focuses on Bauleni. But we presume that it is an eye opener of what is taking place in other parts of Lusaka and even of Zambia.*

After clarifying the terminology used by these new communities (*churches, fellowships, ministries*), the author tries to decipher the underlying ecclesiology. Then, he gives a thorough description of the development of Christianity in Bauleni since the 1970s when there were only 9 churches. In the 1980s a few more churches that had a long presence in Zambia settled in Bauleni, and, with the coming of the first Pentecostals, at the end of the 80s, there were 21 churches in Bauleni. In the 1990s the number of Churches in Bauleni was to double and in 1999 there were 45 churches, 21 of them being Pentecostal. Some Zion Churches also started to open branches in Bauleni. In January 2010 we counted 82 churches (and there must be more!). No classification is perfect. 16 out of the 82 different churches could be classified as “mainline” non-Pentecostal. 53 others are Pentecostal. 8 churches of Bauleni belong to different Zion traditions. The remaining 5 denominations are not fitting in the above categories. Additionally, many Bauleni residents pray in other churches outside the compound. Of course the 53 Pentecostal Assemblies differ greatly. 35 of these churches are Zambian-born, and 16 are Bauleni-born. The other Pentecostal churches in Bauleni maintain affiliations to the United States, to Germany, to the U.K., to Nigeria, to Tanzania, to South Africa and to Korea. 16 out of the 53 Pentecostal churches in Bauleni are affiliated to the EFZ, and one to ICOZ. Looking at the affiliations of Zion churches in Bauleni, seven are affiliated to other groups of Zion churches. One other Bauleni-born church founded many branches and developed into its own group of churches. Most of the Zion churches in Bauleni make explicit references to specific *mizimu* spirits, while two rely solely on the Holy Spirit, and still see themselves rooted in the (Zambian-style) Zion tradition, which they practice during their prayers (praying without shoes, kneeling towards the East, etc.). The size of congregations varies greatly. A few churches in Bauleni have on Sundays only 20 people, or even less - some may even drop prayers occasionally for lack of people. Other new churches have weekly congregations of more than 150 or even more than 200 people. Many have a weekly congregation somewhere in between 30 and 50 adult people. *(Here finishes the abstract)*

**The message** *(Here starts the full extract)*

A new church needs not only members - it also needs a message. To understand the message, however, is not only a question about the *meaning* of a teaching but also about the *power* of the teaching. The preaching style sometimes invokes this power: spotlessly dressed in a suit and polished shoes, preaching with a loud voice, (one pastor in Bauleni jumps up and down a table in the classroom while he preaches), and sweat pouring down. When listening, I doubted occasionally whether people in the congregation really believed what the pastor said. And maybe this was not the point. The point sometimes can be the power behind the words, the power that is to be channelled into healing after the preaching, that is to change people's lives. How important this concept of “spiritual power” is, I believe shows itself in the genesis of many churches in Bauleni: when pastors left a mainline church, it was often a search for God's power to a specific situation rather than a question of a specific meaning or doctrine. Starting a new church was sometimes invoked as a testimony to God's power and the rejection of a “dead faith”.

New churches present a way to experience this power in fellowship. Hence the importance of active *participation*. Members in the new churches of Bauleni widely participate in prayers, thanksgiving, intercession, in testifying, (and sometimes also in teaching). In many of the churches people pray with the whole body, sometimes also with a loud voice, or under tears. Worship is a transformative ritual. Also the laying on of hands, falling into trance and losing control over oneself can express an expectation of being touched by God's power.

Where the question of meaning is totally eclipsed, however, the preaching of the newer churches has come under scrutiny of the older Pentecostal churches. When the Bible is a source of authority rather than a source of teaching, a source of power without being a source of meaning, older Pentecostal churches speak of an abuse. For Madalitso Khulupirika Banda the question is not, whether a pastor has a Bible in his hand, but whether he opens it and submits himself under the word.

But the churches in Bauleni are certainly more than some naked display of God's power. They present a certain way of life, a spirituality, a way of placing oneself in relation to the changing world, to one's own history, to others, and to God and the spiritual world. They can create a sense of belonging that gives its members new purpose in life, and that makes them enthusiastic and proud of their church. Since this depends much on interpersonal relationships, one can hardly describe it in a general way, and one would need to study individual churches in depth and bring out the experiences of the members.

The message is inspired by various strands of Pentecostalism (including the "Nigerian style" of the "miracle-Gospel", by the "Prosperity-Gospel", but also by the "Holiness-Gospel"). But also each pastor puts the message together in his own way. Many new churches do not spell out their message systematically. Here I try to present some elements that could be seen as part of the message and spirituality of many new churches. Not all of them apply to all the churches, but – I believe – most apply somehow in different combinations to many of the new Pentecostal churches in Bauleni.

1. **A quest for wholeness.** Many new churches have taken on board the vocabulary of the "Prosperity Gospel", and speak of "blessings", "prosperity", and the "fullness of life". God is not a poor God. Health and success, material and spiritual wellbeing, body and soul, good relationships and happiness in marriage, blessing and completeness, are seen to belong together. One does not need to be ashamed to ask God for these concrete blessings, because it is part of the life that God himself intends for us. Body and soul, the material world and the spiritual, belong together. To be blessed shows itself in all dimensions of life.

(Note, that this point does not necessarily eclipse the possibility of a positive meaning of suffering: Many preach that being blessed can show itself also in the strength to bear necessary sufferings, of which only God knows the purpose, and in peace of mind and heart. Nor does it imply an *entirely* "this-worldly" meaning of what it means to be blessed – such an understanding is in fact often rejected. "Being a heir of God, the whole world belongs to you. Don't loose it for a few earthly riches." The tensions between being "blessed in all aspects of life" and the reality of "not having/being what I want" has not always been worked out systematically.)

2. **Belief in the immediacy of God's presence and an expectation of God's interventions** – for those who have faith. Faith means a total commitment on the side of people, but it also means a total commitment from the side of God. "Nothing is impossible for God" – "Expect nothing but the very best from God" – "When you pray, believe that you have already received, what you are asking for" – "If you don't receive what you want, God is preparing something better, than what you asked." Expectancy is a sign of faith, not a weakness. Faith implies a trust in God's goodness, but it also needs to be tested.
3. **God's immediacy shows itself especially in healing and deliverance.** Healing is understood in a much broader context than what a Western paradigm may suggest, since illness is not reduced to physical ailment, but connected to all spheres of life. The healing which many people seek (for themselves and for others) has to do also with being freed from misfortune, from unemployment, from accidents, from a lack of success in business or in marriage. It has something to do with deliverance from something that does not feel right. Illness also has a moral dimension; the sick has a different status in family and society, that cannot be reduced to the number of microbes in the body. Western science or medicine can only cure the symptoms; faith can go to the roots.
4. **Priority of Zambian spiritual agents** over Western secular concepts. Pentecostal churches can have a strong rhetoric against Zambian traditions, which they easily associate with witchcraft. At the same time the new churches take seriously - up to the point of reinforcing or transforming - Zambian spiritual realities with which people are struggling: witchcraft (re-baptised now largely Satanism), spirits (now called demons or principalities), the negative effects of unresolved issues in the families or with the ancestors (re-baptised now family-curses that need to be removed or "bound" by healing the family tree) or the acknowledgement that new forms of consumerism have spiritual consequences (new churches speak sometimes about contamination by demon-infested consumer goods). In fact the spiritual realities

are often seen to determine material realities. In some new churches the HIV-virus is seen as a demon manifesting itself in the form of a virus.

Many believe that this point of building on Zambian concepts, is one of the main reasons for the success of many of the new churches: they are close to what people experience in their own bodies and in their families, since they engage with people's own concepts. A number of scholars actually see the newer Pentecostal churches to be in continuity with the old African quest to eradicate witchcraft.

5. New churches present not only a way of dealing with spiritual forces that interfere in people's lives; ***they present a modern way***. Pentecostal faith is forward looking and future oriented. Also, Pentecostalism is *global*. Many new churches like to put the attribute "international" into their name, even if they are entirely Zambian. Some authors argue that Pentecostal churches provide a powerful way to appropriate modern aspirations. In Bauleni, people live both with grim poverty, but also with great aspirations of modern life at their fingertips. New churches present themselves to people as linking the local scene - with its poverty - to a powerful global reality.
6. Many churches present not only a modern way, but also ***a concrete way***, with steps (like of a ladder) and with evaluation indicators, at the end of which is the promise of change in all aspects of life. Spiritual progress is accompanied by progress in other fields of life (inner and outer) that can be measured, at least for oneself. Some churches provide a concrete "model" of where one can be. This can give hope and an ideal to strive for, and sometimes also the necessary discipline for rising out of poverty. One of the concrete steps can be the rule of tithing (understood as "sowing a seed"), which is proposed as a step to take initiative for one's own life, a concrete exercise in budgeting, and a step that can bring a sense of self-worth and worth in the eyes of God: "I am somebody, I am counted on by God, who dares to accept my gift". They also give spiritual means (deliverance, intercession and spiritual warfare) to control the inherent dangers of living in the modern world.

Some pastors see themselves in connection with the early apostles, who were sent out by the risen Jesus to proclaim the Gospel, which was to be accompanied by extraordinary signs. Some media-stars of large Pentecostal "Mega-churches" with emphasis on the extraordinary manifestations of God's interventions in miracles and in prophecies (for example T.B. Joshua or Philip Banda) have some influence on the self-understanding of some Bauleni-churches, who try to bring a "localised version" (but never a mere copy) to the compound. The Sunday-services of the "Book of Life Ministries" in Bauleni usually end with a healing and deliverance service, after which the pastor reveals in his prophecies very personal incidents or situations of different members of the congregation, and some of their dreams – be this vague or specific – , and then gives a spiritual interpretation. He does the same with some of the visitors, telling them (like a Christian *ng'anga*) why they have come, what they want from God, why they have not received it, and what they should do. A number of churches have dramatic deliverance services, where pastors use hands, sticks, their jackets and other tools for healing, and where many people fall down upon being prayed over and enter in trance. In some churches olive-oil is used for anointing. Others give holy water, ashes, or mixtures of milk, olive-oil and salt to drink to the sick, sometimes inducing vomiting and a "cleansing of the intestines and the whole body by the Holy Spirit".

In other churches, however, the services are much calmer, marked rather by much singing, prayers, and by simple gestures like the laying on of hands - in a light and sometimes humorous atmosphere. Indeed, one does not do justice to the small churches in Bauleni, if one looks at them as imitations of the Mega-churches and Pentecostal media-stars. Bauleni churches are unique and original. In most churches the pastors do not pretend to have a special telephone-line up to heaven; events are discerned together with the whole congregation:

- The Bible study of the "Christ Believers" often starts with the life-situation or problem of one of the members, and each member in turn tries to give advice, basing it on concrete Bible verses. Also the teaching is done by different young people in turn. "A church is not just about miracles or preaching. A church is about holiness. I founded the church, so we can help each other to lead holy lives", explained the founder Evangelist Memory Simutanda.
- In the "New Hope Bible Church" dreams are interpreted. The founder is gifted, but all the members (it is a small church of largely women) take part in the interpretation. "Dreams need a spirit of repentance, of thanksgiving and of praise, to find their true meaning." The pastor also narrates her own dreams, and she is given herself advice from members of the congregation. The whole procedure is embedded by a call to repentance at the beginning (with a public confession of sins, taken in turns), and by thanksgiving and praise..

- In one church the pastor was open with a personal struggle: people were falling in other churches when being prayed over, but in his own church nobody fell when he stretched out his hands. He felt like being a failure (though he had studied in South Africa!) Upon reflecting on his experience, he had a dream: He saw himself preaching in his church before a large congregation, and he heard himself asking a question “is it better for people to fall, or for people to believe in the Word?” When he woke up, he gave the answer to himself. Since then, he said, he places much more emphasis on his preaching, and does not care so much, whether people fall or not.

Such examples show that there is no blue-print for new churches. The struggles of the small churches give them real flesh and blood, and members sometimes realise that they are part of a common adventure that is open-ended.

### **Dialogue between old and young churches?**

Given the limited formal training of many pastors in the new churches, their theology can be by nature imperfect and ambivalent. The reading of the Bible is sometimes limited to a very literal understanding of the biblical texts (sometimes actually only very few texts). Theology also can be limited to very few issues. Yet it are sometimes “the little ones” who have much to teach about life, as a Bemba proverb affirms: “*Amano yafuma mwi fwaswa, yaya mu culu*”. (“*a mountain also has something to learn from a small ant-hill.*”) At least, the new churches can point out what people feel lacking in the older churches.

If one thinks of the sheer numbers of churches (maybe doubling again in the coming ten years?) and the lack of organisation and representation, one may doubt the feasibility of dialogue. Yet dialogue has in fact long started at grassroots within the charismatic wings of the mainline churches, which are often quite porous towards the new churches. For the Catholic church, a serious engagement with its own prayer groups of the Charismatic Renewal promises to “keep touch” (to some degree) also to the new churches.

All churches somehow answer by nature to a quest for wholeness. Mainline churches, in response to this quest, have a strong commitment to education, health-care and development programmes. Yet in practice, these commitments follow often a very secular agenda and worldview: people are cured through antibiotics, while God and the spiritual world remain (causatively speaking) absent, compartmentalised or somehow irrelevant. This can be felt by many as a fragmented life. Jim Harries, a Baptist minister who worked many years in Zambia (and now in Kenya), proposed that an engagement with the small churches could help the mainline churches to recognise, how much they themselves have been shaped by *Western secular culture*. There is an implicit tendency to drive religion and other spheres of life apart (religion is one thing, but technology or medicine is another thing) and to take this division for granted. Incidentally it is precisely the “secular” places in Zambia (bus-stations, markets, hospitals, schools, the public media) that are prime areas of evangelism for the new churches. Can this not be seen to be part of an implicit denial of the Western boundaries between the religious and the secular? To declare Zambia a “Christian nation” – pushed by Pentecostal churches – was partly another way to question the reality of a secular world.

At stake are issues of very different worldviews, with which the Christian message engages. The boundaries between the “religious” and the “secular” had been drawn and redrawn during a long European and Western history; they are fundamental to many modern institutions and disciplines (including Zambian institutions). The principles of science, for example, presuppose autonomy from the religious sphere.

Zambia has been shaped by a different history, and also by different ways of drawing boundaries between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. Looking at the success of so many young churches, there can be little doubt, that they are tapping into the spiritual needs, hopes and fears of many people, which had been rendered invisible to Western churches. Zambian Christians have often stood accused to be living in two worlds: a Christian world, and a traditional world, to which one falls back in times of crisis. The traditional world has its place especially in reference to the family, but it is here, that the tensions and contradictions of modern life are mostly felt.

New Zambian churches - building on Pentecostal traditions – easily acknowledge Zambian spiritual realities and their influence on humans. They also name them and engage with them, using a Christian and Biblical paradigm, through deliverance and exorcisms. While Western churches have a problem with the Zambian *spiritual* world, new churches have a problem with an independence of a *secular* world. Even science is subject to the world of the spirits; it is a world of symptoms, not a world of causes. So are the worlds of politics and economics. For them, the mainline churches stand accused of living in *two* worlds: Christian and secular, in syncretism. Dialogue between old and new churches therefore touches not only Christian doctrine. At stake are two different worldviews, and required is for both the possibility to engage with one another.

## **PART TWO: SHORT NEWS**

### **1\* ECUMENICAL NEWS**

This year will see three important meeting of the Christian Community:

In Edinburgh, the World Church will come together to commemorate the Centenary of the 1910 World Missionary Conference, and to provide new perspectives on mission for the 21st century.

The title of the conference is *Witnessing to Christ Today*. Approximately 250 mission leaders from across the globe will participate in the Centenary Conference, which takes place from 2-5 June at Pollock Halls, Edinburgh. Delegates come from the Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches.

On Sunday 6 June, the 250 delegates will be joined by 800 local and international visitors for a 3 hour celebratory worship at the historic conference venue, the Assembly Hall, The Mound, Edinburgh. The Archbishop of York, Dr. John Sentamu, will lead the service along with representatives of the World Church. This Conference has been prepared by Study groups about the all the main issues faced by Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: <[www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)>

The Evangelical Churches will meet at Cape Town (16-25 Oct 2010) for the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. Cape Town 2010, held in collaboration with the World Evangelical Alliance, will bring together 4,000 leaders from more than 200 countries to confront the critical issues of our time: other world faiths, poverty, HIV/AIDS, persecution, among others - as they relate to the future of the Church and world evangelization

[www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010](http://www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010)    [www.lausannecapetown.co.za](http://www.lausannecapetown.co.za)

The Pentecostals will gather in Stockholm (24<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> Aug 2010) for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Pentecostal World Conference. PWC is a fellowship of Pentecostal believers from around the world meeting triennially for the purpose of mutual edification. This year the Conference will focus on leadership in the local church. The theme is:

*Equip Yourself, Others and the Church* (Eph 4, 2-13)

[www.pentecostalfellowship.org](http://www.pentecostalfellowship.org)    [www.pcw2010.se](http://www.pcw2010.se)

### **2\*FENZA NEWS**

#### **Changes in Fenza Staff:**

Fr. F. Richard has received a new appointment, and will leave Zambia for Italy in May

Fr. G. Rosner will be the new Director of Fenza, starting in May.

Fr. B. Udelhoven is following a renewal course in Jerusalem. He will be back in the middle of June.

Fr. P.Mumbi is fully committed in his research in ethno-psychiatry.

Fr G. Mathorel (although no longer member of Fenza community) goes on encountering Muslims in Lusaka and in other provinces of Zambia.

#### **Next Fenza Conferences:**

- May 19<sup>th</sup>: African Christology  
(Lecturers from Baptist Theological College, from Justo Mwale Theological University College, from St Dominic's Major Seminary and from Fenza, will explore several African Christological titles)
- Aug 14<sup>th</sup>: Gender issues
- Nov 13<sup>th</sup> : Interfaith meeting

#### **Dates of Fenza Language and Initiation courses for 2010:**

*WELCOME TO ZAMBIA, Introduction to Some Aspects of Zambian Life:* 13-14 September

*INTENSIVE NYANJA & BEMBA COURSES:* 27 Sept – 3<sup>rd</sup> December

See <[www.fenza.org/language\\_courses.html](http://www.fenza.org/language_courses.html)>

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