



## **14th Conference**

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# **Pentecostalism and Gender**

# **Book of Abstracts**

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# Conference Theme

Pentecostalism's attitudes to gender are diverse. Historical, political and social research frequently documents the significant cultural and social influence exerted by Pentecostal churches on gender debates. Moreover, the theological perspectives on gender within the Pentecostal movement demonstrate substantial heterogeneity. This conference aims to contribute to the research debate on how Pentecostals deal with questions of gender in their everyday lives, laying emphasis on their self-perceptions and practices. Thereby, it will also address the question of whether gender is just a side issue or could be an entry point into global Pentecostalism in general.

Conference organised by:

Judith Bachmann, Michael Bergunder, Anna Kirchner  
Department of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology, Faculty of Theology

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# Keynotes

## Plenary 1:

### **Queering Azusa: Towards Pentecostal Fugitivity**

Keri L. Day, Princeton Theological Seminary

I am intrigued with how a reporter of the Los Angeles Times described the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in Los Angeles, CA: as a “queer mixture” of rich and poor, black and whites. Surprisingly, Azusa is described as queer. Deviant. Outside of dominant racial, gender, and sexual norms, roles, and codes of the day. Newspaper reporters and Christian ministers would refer to Azusa as queer and sexually deviant, although the Azusa revival is often framed as a more theologically conservative revival focused on otherworldly Spirit-filled doctrines and practices. So, I ask: How might a queer reading of the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in Los Angeles, CA, help one engage questions of anti-queer sentiment and practice, especially when assessing issues of gender and sexuality within contemporary Pentecostalism? Drawing on my book *Azusa Reimagined: A Radical Vision of Religious and Democratic Belonging*, I suggest that Azusa can be interpreted in a queer register, which might assist Pentecostal communities when engaging questions of gender and sexual difference. Namely, I want to argue that the Azusa Street Revival is a queer theological resource, expanding how we understand queer religiosity and aiding contemporary Pentecostalism when addressing questions of gender and sexual difference.

## Plenary 2:

### **Gendering the Pentecostal God**

Naomi Richman, University of Cambridge

The beguiling riddle of Pentecostalism’s relationship with gender—the ways it asserts gender inequalities whilst, at the same time, working to undo them—has served as the defining problematic for studies in this area, at least since the publication of Bernice Martin’s famous article “the Pentecostal gender paradox”, in 2001. This framing of the topic has nourished the development of a rich and diversified body of research. But it has also led to the uncritical adoption of a particular sociological understanding of gender, as a human social construct. In taking for granted that gender applies to humans and humans alone, scholarship on gender in Pentecostalism has been grounded in a secular reading of gender and of the human too. In this lecture, I ask if there are different, theological ways of thinking about gender that social scientific studies of Pentecostalism can integrate into their approach, and what there is to be gained by such a move. Drawing on my ethnographic research amongst Nigerian Pentecostals, I consider how their broader theological schemas of relationality and difference shape their ideas about gender, making a wider case for why studies of sexual difference matter to those interested in Pentecostalism.

## **Plenary 3:**

### **Ethnographic Excursions in the Pentecostal Making and Remaking of Men**

Brendan Jamal Thornton, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In order to better understand global Pentecostalism's complex cultural footprint, scholars have been keen to explore its impact on gender roles and relationships. Ethnographic research in this area has become quite robust over the years owing in no small part to the fact that Pentecostals themselves have so much to say about gender and what it means to be a man or woman of God. Following important and pioneering work on Pentecostalism and women, interest in the study of men and masculinity has grown. Research on Pentecostal men over the past decade, particularly in places like Africa and Latin America, has helped deepen our appreciation of how gender discourses shape and are shaped by churchgoers in powerfully meaningful ways. Yet, despite their ubiquity, issues of masculinity in the church are still often overlooked and seldom engaged with critically. Reflecting on my own research on men, masculinity, and Pentecostal conversion in the Dominican Republic, this talk will review emerging themes and questions in the study of Pentecostal masculinities around the world, taking stock of important interventions in the field of Pentecostal studies, while charting new directions for future research on gender and religion.

# Parallel Panels

## 1 Pentecostalism in Ecumenical Dialogue

### **A silent gender resolution? Gender and leadership among international/migrant Pentecostal-charismatic churches in Norway**

Stian Sørli Eriksen, VID Specialized University, Stavanger, Norway / Norwegian School of Leadership and Theology, Oslo, Norway

Despite having an early and long history of women missionaries and evangelists, Norwegian Pentecostalism has traditionally been marked predominately by male leaders and pastors, especially in senior pastor roles. In recent decades this has, however, changed, and today there are an increasing number of women as pastors and leaders at various levels in Norwegian pentecostal churches. Still, women in leadership represents an area in need of attention, as well as an understudied issue. Discussing gender and leadership, however, there has been little attention given to gender dimensions of the migrant/international church context intersecting with Norwegian Pentecostalism. In and among so-called migrant/international churches, churches often have an uneven gender distribution, and a good number of churches have women in senior leadership positions. This paper describes and discusses leadership and the role of gender within the international/migrant Norwegian church scene, addressing, social, cultural, and theological aspects related to this. Building on insights from a selection of churches with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the paper analyzes key issues emerging from experiences and the contexts these represent, including transnational and migrant-related perspectives. In light of these, the paper argues for the importance of discussing gender both contextually as well as comparatively for Norwegian Pentecostalism and more broadly across global Pentecostalism.

### **A Brief Survey on (Research) Literature on the International Roman Catholic – Classical Pentecostal Dialogue: Categorizing the Research Approaches and Trends**

Josfin Raj Stephen Balaraj, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

The bilateral dialogue between churches is a significant event in the field of ecumenical research. The International Roman Catholic - Classical Pentecostal Dialogue (hereafter IRCCPD), which started in 1972 and is currently in its seventh phase (2018-), is considered to be a key development in the history of bilateral dialogues. Each dialogue phase produces a final report summarising the convergences and divergence of the theme selected for each phase. There has been a significant increase in academic publications on the results of the IRCCPD dialogue. Since the conception of the dialogue, nearly twelve monographs and dissertations have been written, and numerous articles and reflections have been published in journals and magazines in the last 50 years. These writings can be considered as a way of reception of this ecumenical dialogue (Creemers, 2015, 66-71). The paper will explore the

approaches of these literatures in understanding and interpreting the result of the dialogue, categorising the streams of interpretation of the IRCCPD dialogue.

This study is a part of my current PhD research on the theme – ‘Charism in the Life and Mission of the Church’: A Historical and Theological Appraisal of the Sixth Phase of the International Roman Catholic – Classical Pentecostal Dialogue.

Creemers, Jelle (2015), *Theological Dialogue with Classical Pentecostals: Challenges and Opportunities* (London: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark).

## **Diakonic practices as women’s business? Hermeneutical study of Estrelida Alexander’s theology and justice behind diakonia**

Sanna Urvas, Theological School of Finland, Tampere, Finland

Pentecostal rhetoric has not commonly used the word diakonia in their vocabulary. However, the practice of diakonia was in the core and DNA since the beginning, and especially in the Black Pentecostal churches. The historical and current research of mainline protestant churches reveal how Christian service is considered “women’s business” and is regarded hierarchically below the pastoral leadership. (Malkavaara, 2015) Studies on Pentecostalism have not provided equally accurate and contemporary data but assumingly the situation is quite similar.

Hermeneutical study of Professor Estrelida Alexander’s theology shows that the concepts of justice and the Kingdom of God are keys to understand diakonia in Black Pentecostalism and especially in its progressive genre. Therefore, according to Alexander, justice seeking diakonic practices are not gender related or marginalized as second class activity and “for women only” but rather it should be situated in the core identity and activity of Pentecostal communities. Interestingly, the study shows how close Alexander’s views are with the concept of ecumenical diakonia by World Council of Churches. Study is approved by the chief editor Prof. Eskö Ryökäs and is in publication process by Luther–Agricola Society, Helsinki Finland.

To highlight mentioned topics and to show the roles men and women actually play in Ukrainian migrant church life in Poland today, I will focus on several narratives collected in church communities in Krakow and Lublin.

## **2 Women and Gender in Pentecostal History**

### **Hurt by the Glass Ceiling: The Rise and Fall of Frida Vingren - now feminist icon in Brazil and Sweden**

Jan-Åke Alvarsson, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

Swedish Frida Vingren (1891-1940) was the woman who caused a battle for the right of women to exercise all services in the church, especially in the Assembleia de Deus in Brazil, the largest national Pentecostal church in the world — a battle that is still going on! She quickly rose to fame in the Swedish Pentecostal Movement and was sent out as a missionary after only a year.

She was an extremely talented preacher, hymn composer and writer that many people liked to listen to or to read - in Swedish or in Portuguese! In Brazil, with time, she has become a role model in the fight for women's rights. In Sweden, however, after her husband's death, she was stopped from going back to Brazil, excluded from her Pentecostal congregation, put in a mental hospital by the local pastors, and finally died without a single mention in the journal *Evangelii Härold* ('The Gospel Herald') where she had published so many articles.

This paper examines the forces that resulted in the rise and eventually the fall of Frida Vingren.

## **Gender, Ordination, and Power Dynamics: An Historical Exploration of Women in Ministry within Dominican Republic Assemblies of God Pentecostalism**

Misael Cornelio-Arias, Fuller Theological Seminary, USA

This paper probes the Dominican Republic Assemblies of God (DRAG) Pentecostal Church's historical perspectives on women's inclusion and ordination in ministry. It sheds light on the heterogeneity of Latinex Pentecostals, known for their appeal to marginalized groups and diverse views on gender. The analysis traces the journey of women's ordination from the Pentecostal movement's inception in Latinex communities, starting with the Azusa Street revival and early 20th-century evangelization efforts in Mexico and the Dominican Republic. We highlight the key roles of pioneering women, like Romana Valenzuela and Rev. Dionisia Feliciano, in shaping these trajectories. Additionally, we examine how gender, power, and religious practice within the DRAG Pentecostal Church intersect, shaping broader cultural and social dialogues about gender in Latinex societies. The paper emphasizes the importance of continued scholarly exploration of gender, culture, and doctrine within Pentecostalism for understanding its ongoing evolution.

## **A woman's place? Uncovering the impact of black women within the Azusa Street Revival**

Patrice McDonald, University of Roehampton, London, UK

The Pauline scripture Galatians 3:26-28 has long been the maxim of Pentecostals seeking to validate equality amongst believers post the Pentecostal experience of Acts 2. The pronouncement that there is neither 'Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female' was adopted by those of different sexes who claimed the baptism of the Holy Spirit created a democratising space for all. But if this is the case, why is it that black women who historically occupied prominent places within Pentecostal spiritual revivals like Azusa Street, USA have appeared to diminish as Pentecostalism progressed? And why do some Pentecostal denominations in Britain and the USA bar women from full ordination rights?

This study will focus on black women at the Azusa Street Revival, particularly Lucy Farrow who paved the way for William Seymour's arrival. Excerpts from *The Apostolic Faith* newsletter will be explored to highlight Farrow as a divine healer operating in

ministerial autonomy in her 'faith cottage' in Azusa's grounds. Farrow's spiritual influence over the Assemblies of God's first leader Howard Goss will also be explored. The paper will suggest Azusa Street created a precedent for black women to lead despite prevailing social norms at the time. It will question if women in Black-Majority British Pentecostal denominations have less ministerial freedoms today, than Farrow had in 1906.

### **3 The Body in Pentecostal Theology and Practice**

#### **A Rhythm that Connects our Hearts with God: Worship as A Key Aspect of Pentecostal Spirituality-as-Theology**

Martina Björkander, Polin Institute, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The paper presents the main ideas and conclusions of my research monograph "Worship, Ritual, and Pentecostal Spirituality-as-Theology. A Rhythm that Connects our Hearts with God" (Brill). This is a theological inquiry into the role of worship for pentecostal spirituality, based on a case study of two pentecostal-charismatic churches in Nairobi, Kenya, and their respective worship practices. In the book, I move from a discussion on ritualization and liturgy ('orthopraxis'), via embodiment and affection ('orthopathos'), to theologizing and doctrine ('orthopistis'), showing how each one is a lens through which to view worship. For analytic purposes I keep the different dimensions apart, chiselling out the distinctive character of each as it is played out in context. Towards the end of the book, I instead look at worship as a unified whole, as 'orthodoxa', showing how the whole is greater than its parts.

For Pentecostals in my study (and, I believe elsewhere as well), worship is much more than musicking. It involves every aspect of life and travels far beyond the church walls. Yet the ritual practice of worship is a facilitator, a fast track to the transformational God-encounters that are at the very heart of pentecostal spirituality. Through worship, communities are changed to change the world. It is this connection between a certain type of ritual action and the existential whole that makes the practice of worship so central to Pentecostalism.

#### **Enfleshing the Essence: Pentecostal Hermeneutics, Erotic Theology And 'Loving the Divine'**

Okelloh Ogera, Great Lakes University of Kisumu, Kenya

Many African people at least in their Christian upbringing, lacked an open, honest and healthy conversation about erotic love. Even in the church, the discussions of 'God as love' were based on classical and enlightened theologies which are based on a binary logic and focus on selective dismissal, or purification of issues of sexually embodied thinking. These theologies create a sanitized 'ecclesial' or 'sacramental' body, which takes little account of the lived (sexual) bodies. This narrative however seems to be changing, as contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutics in Africa bucks the trend. This paper examines how one Pentecostal pastor, Rev. Kathy Kiuna as a theologian, utilizes a creative approach to hermeneutics in order to en-flesh the essential way



people understand and relate to God. While she recognizes the paternalistic, heterosexual and patriarchal rhetoric within Scripture and traditional interpretation, yet she creatively utilizes her own beauty and sexuality as a means of 'spicing' the message and affirming the spirituality of the body and desire. This paper argues that her theology seeks openings for a new comprehension of desire, love, and pleasure, in the way people relate with God. The paper concludes that Rev. Kiuna's theology, presented through her sermons seeks to help Christians in general and women in particular, become sexually connected with themselves (not being ashamed about their sexuality) while embracing spirituality.

### **Pentecostal Healing Practices and the Body**

Rahel Weber, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

In my PhD project, I am researching healing practices in a transnational Pentecostal church. My ethnographic work shows the involvement of the body in healing practices. For example, it is common for the healer to lay hands on or blow at the sick. Often, the sick person's body responds to these actions of the healer. However, in interviews about healing practices, the members of the church rarely speak about the body. Instead, they focus on stories of transformation suffering, and encountering God. On the one hand, the body is the site where divine healing is experienced. On the other hand, narratives about divine healing emphasize other aspects of healing than bodily experiences. It seems, therefore, that the body is highly crucial for Pentecostal healing and at the same time an ambivalent, silent subject. Drawing on ethnographic data and recent academic work on Pentecostalism and the body (Brahinsky 2012; Wilkinson/Althouse 2017; Jahnel 2020), this paper will conceptualize Pentecostal healing practices as part of a specific body knowledge. Through this lens, this paper will show; first, Pentecostal healing practices know the body as an eschatological body; second, this body knowledge subverts scientific knowledge about the Body, Religion, and Migration in Europe.

## **4 Gendered Expectations and (Counter-)Strategies in African Pentecostalism**

### **Portrayal of Women Empowerment in Selected Christian Home Videos in South-western Nigeria**

Mobolaji Oyebisi Ajibade, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

This paper examines the construction of women empowerment in the home video films produced by Mont Zion Faith Ministry (MZFM), the Nigeria leading Christian drama ministry. Majority of the existing literatures on empowerment have neglected the deployment of home video films in women empowerment. Electronic media occupies a significant space in educating the masses not only on gender roles but also on how the womenfolk can be empowered in order to fulfil their destiny. This study, adopting a combination of content analysis and Sociological approach selects two prominent

films-Back to Zero Point and The Story of My Life produced by MZFM to unravel the Pentecostal construction of women empowerment in home video. Specifically, it also shows that the Christian home video is the repertoire of challenges to women's quest for empowerment and offers probable paths to women empowerment in the society. The study concludes that the Christian perception of women empowerment could be best understood through the deconstruction of Christian home videos.

### **Gendered curses, Gendered healings? Understanding spiritual healing in a Pentecostal and Presbyterian « grant's » programs**

Fernand Idriss Mintoogue, EPHE Paris, IMAF

The anthropological bibliography on the study of spiritual cures in charismatic movements seems endless. This observation is not likely to be denied if we take into account the fact that the religious entrepreneurs officiating within most of the religious formations concerned by offers based on a theology – with ever more complex springs – of prosperity, are constantly redoubling their ingenuity on the rhetorical, pragmatic and practical levels. In the African context, for example, the ever-increasing demand for miraculous experiences of all kinds (healings or existential successes), in the midst of societies tormented by the crushing work of autocratic regimes whose plans for perpetuity are no longer concealed, should not be taken lightly. In Cameroon, for example, within Pentecostal churches and Presbyterian prayer cells, pastors are quite adept at questioning and identifying the evil afflicting their followers/patients. In their speeches as well as in their curative or preventive recommendations, it is possible to read a generation of evil (curses), piety, ongoing cure, or even healing. It is this fact that I shall attempt to explore in this contribution. I will then show that the cure administered by therapists is not based on biblical/prophetic status or the simple expression of spiritual gifts of the healer or that of the faiths, but on a precise knowledge of the ills affecting the various genders and social categories who place their hopes in their hands. For this, I will draw on ethnographic data collected between 2021 and 2023 in two « special programs » held in a Pentecostal church (« grant's hour ») and a Presbyterian prayer cell (« crossroad of proclamations ») in the Cameroonian capital, as part of my thesis work.

### **Archbishop Margaret Ekhoeragbon Idahosa: An Insignia of Gender and Social-Cultural Twist in Global Pentecostalism**

Itohan Idumwonyi, Gonzaga University, Spokane, USA

A revolutionary consensus among study participants positions Church of God Mission International as a trailblazer in remapping modern Nigerian (African) Pentecostalism. Yet, Archbishop (Mrs.) Margaret Benson-Idahosa's contributions have yet to receive the scholarly attention she deserves as co-founder and an agent for redefining Global Pentecostalism (GP). Scholars who researched Nigerian Pentecostalism (NP) (Matthew Ojo, 2006; Nimi Wariboko, 2014) often fail to discuss women's religious histories — doing so in passing. Their omission of women's history from the pages of African Christian history reinforces my view that Pentecostalism masks and thus

re/produce gender inequalities. What should religious and gender scholars make of women's historical narratives when constructed in fading importance, in one-sided and trivialized ways, and relegated in historical and current discourses? To close this gap, this paper draws on the interdisciplinary approach and empirical study of the first female archbishop in modern NP to chart her religious history — life, ministry, struggles, and the impacts of her leadership as a female archbishop. I argue that her story in a male-founded-dominated Church offers paths for a critical reconstruction of gender roles, social-cultural change, and power realignment. I conclude by exploring the cultural practices implied toward qualified women's ordination into significant leadership positions.

## **5 Politics, Economy and Pentecostalism in Southern and Northern America**

### **Jezebel in Washington: The politization of a religious metaphor under the Trump presidency**

Jeanne Deysson & Christophe Monnot, Université de Strasbourg & Universität Heidelberg

This paper focuses on the politization of a pentecostal rhetoric calling the members to spiritual warfare against “the spirit of Jezebel,” believed to dominate the USA. We conducted a discourse analysis of fifty YouTube videos and fifteen spiritual warfare manuals produced by these leaders, combining it with social network analysis to examine the network structured around its production and the conditions enabling this rhetoric’s performativity. The biblical episode of Elijah’s struggle with the Queen Jezebel in the Book of Kings is used to interpret American current events as an eschatological warfare between prophets and the spirit of Jezebel. This narrative also serves as a scenario for gender performance through biblical roles, such as those of Jehu and Ahab representing respectively good, dominant and evil, subordinate masculinities. Donald Trump and his supporters are praised as new Jehus, alpha males protecting the Kingdom of God against the Jezebelian assaults of the Democrats and their voters. The network promoting this warfare unites independent digital media entrepreneurs, structured around mass media. Located at the intersection of religious, media and economic fields, they aim to develop an alternative prophetic media network. They had a stake in Trump’s presidency to ensure the success of their business. They tend to impose a nationalist-Christian interpretation of American society via the reinforcement of the symbolic framework and of the male domination structuring the social order.

## **A Research Proposal on Pentecostal “Reverse Mission” to the Global North: The Development of Prosperity Theologies in Western European and North American Migration Churches**

Maren Freudenberg, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany

Neo-Pentecostal prosperity theologies, promising physical and emotional health, material wealth, and an “abundant” life to believers, have long gained momentum around the world. Like Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity more generally, they have adapted to a broad range of local contexts with different historical, cultural, economic, political and social features in their process of global expansion. The contribution outlines a planned research project that investigates the development of prosperity theologies against the backdrop of what has been labelled “reverse mission”, or proselytizing activities on part of Christians from the Global South in Western European and North American societies.

The project inquires how prosperity theologies are developing in so-called migration churches of the Global North – especially given the fact that migrants from the Global South face a particularly steep ladder of social mobility to climb in their economically advanced host societies. How are prosperity semantics adapting to their new settings and how might this be related to the increasing financialization of religion occurring in various parts of the world? The proposed project is planned as a contribution to the growing research on the manifold ways religion and economy are connected.

## **Pentecostals and the Crisis of Identity of Mainline Protestantism in Latin America**

Pablo Johnson, University of Cambridge

This paper will explore the internal conversations and debates among historic (roughly “mainline”) Protestants in Latin America prompted by the disruptive growth of Pentecostalism in the region, from the 1950s to the present day. Focusing on archive materials from the influential ecumenical theological faculty located in Buenos Aires, ISEDET, the paper will survey the perception of Pentecostals by traditional Protestants, their theological interpretations of the movement, and the thorny questions of identity raised by its apparent success: Should the Pentecostals be accepted as full members of the evangélico fold? Was the continent witnessing its first truly contextualized form of Protestant Christianity, or was the Pentecostal wave simply a neo-colonial putsch from the North in new clothes? How did the appearance of the first Latin American Protestant movement “of the poor” fit into a theological project that had consciously opted for the poor, but had seen limited popular adoption? Did the possibility of “charismatization” represent an opportunity for the historic congregations or a bourgeois distraction from the pressing task of liberation? I will argue that despite a range of approximations, a failure to sufficiently engage with Pentecostalism theologically and institutionally contributed to the progressive marginalization of historic Protestantism within the broader evangélico movement in Latin America over the second half of the 20th century.

## **6 Pentecostalism at Intersections**

### **Pentecostal Womanism: Intersectionality, 'Identity in Christ' and Public Pneumatology**

Selina Stone, Durham University, UK

Pentecostalism has historically thrived among those considered to be lower class, African and African Caribbean communities and especially women. Progressive Pentecostals have sought ways to address the issues which impact these groups, alongside demonstrating concern for the individual's religious life and spiritual needs. In this chapter I argue that black Pentecostal woman who are located in this progressive stream, embody a womanist ethic as public theology in practice. While existing at the intersections of class, race and gender inequity, they engage with those problems through their ministry for the sake of all. 'Identity in Christ' functions as empowerment for them as they come to terms with their own lived experiences. Drawing on the work of Eboni Marshall Turman, I highlight the womanist incarnational ethic inherent within black Pentecostal women's social engagement and point towards a broader public pneumatology which attends to bodies, hierarchies and oppression.

### **Pentecostalism and Gender: Holistic Liberation of LGBTQ Christians and a Wounded World: Beyond the 'Band-Aid Identity'**

Eunhee Wang, Torch Trinity Graduate University, Seoul, South Korea

Robert Wood presented LGBTQ rights with a view to liberating LGBTQ Christians to find their rightful place in church and society from mainly a 'socio-political' perspective. Those who follow his view regard LGBTQ as 'innate identity'; the 'gay lifestyle' should be fully accepted by establishing pastoral frameworks to normalize homosexual identities and admit same-sex relationships and marriage in sacrament processes of the church, thus 'liberating LGBTQ.' However, does this way of liberating LGBTQ fully understand the reality of this wounded world? Witnesses, 'ex-gay' and 'overcomes,' testified their deliverance experiences from gender confusion and gay lifestyle by Jesus in the Holy Spirit, claiming that life practicing a gay lifestyle had only 'got progressively worse.' The concept identifying LGBTQ as a 'Band-Aid Identity,' can only offer temporary release from feelings of guilt, but it cannot provide holistic liberation of LGBTQ Christians, freeing them from all the shackles that bind their wounded past and their gender confusion. It is not a 'Band-Aid Identity,' but 'True-I in Christ,' a royal priesthood, that should be the identity for LGBTQ Christians. There are three pivotal factors on this issue: the gravity of the Scriptures; the spiritual liberation experience claimed by 'ex-gays' Christians; and the effort to consider the painful journey of homosexual persons. In seeking the holistic liberation of LGBTQ Christians, this paper will contribute a 'Charismatic/Pentecostal' approach.

## **Gendered Generation: Change, Ecologies and Time Flow in Angolan Bom Deus Church**

Natalia Zawiejska, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

While generation is a useful tool to narrate about the developments and changes it is rarely approached considering gender and seldomly applied to the study of Pentecostalism. I suggest that the gendered generation might be a heuristic tool to better reflect on heritage, historiography, pedagogy as well as leadership and authority-building models in contemporary Pentecostalism. Moreover, it might help in better understanding the social developments and social engagement modes of Pentecostals. Therefore, in my paper, I would like to reflect on how the intersections of gender, ecologies, time flow and development resonate with the notion of generation and how it might be employed as the analytical framework for researching Pentecostalism as a socio-political phenomenon.

I will use the case study of the Bom Deus Church, an Angola Pentecostal church rooted originally in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Church, while reaching Angola separated from its Congolese roots and several years after nationalised in Angola, becoming a well-recognised church, sending multiple missionaries to various southern countries and to Europe. The Bom Deus history has been intersecting with the developments of Luanda and the socio-political formation of the country. Recently it managed to construct a new, central temple, the “3G”, “Third generation” temple that represents a new stage of Bom Deus self-understanding and socio-political embeddedness.

## **7 Gendered Expectations and (Counter-)Strategies in African Pentecostalism**

### **Pentecostalism and the Emerging ‘Subalterns That Speak’: The Nigerian Example**

Moses Aule, Kaduna State College of Education Gidan Waya, Kaduna State, Nigeria

Bible history recounts the experience of Jesus’ disciples who, until the ‘Pentecost’ were encumbered by fear and a humanity that nudged them into a marginal space for which they were muzzled away from community of (Pentecostal) practitioners. Such experience demonstrated that Pentecostalism has privileged the subalterns and equipped them with a voice that enables them to make in routes into the mainstream society and to shape epistemic discourses through it. By featuring Pentecostalism as an epistemic paradigm, this paper establishes its problematic by arguing that every structure of meaning creates within it a systematized framework for signification. This framework ennobles an interpretative community to determine parameters for shaping the signifying structure for which they (re)emerge. Tie to this idea is the assumption that Pentecostalism falls within marginal discourses as it offers the platform for (re)engaging in consilience and interpolation in a manner that grants the marginalised bodies access to hitherto restricted spaces with the altar as their ‘holy ground. It uses selected sermons by some female pastors to domesticate how these subalterns have shaped ideologies that offer them the platform to recreate themselves within such

patriarchal spaces as Nigeria. The study adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods as its analytical procedure. It finds that every knowledge form (re)creates the community of practitioners who drive ideologies to sustain them.

### **Re-shaping Gender Ideals in a Country of Increasing Inequality: How Money Influences Gender Norms in Pentecostal Churches**

Maria Frahm-Arp, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

This paper argues that Pentecostal gender norms are a luxury which few people in South Africa can adhere to. With an unemployment rate at 68% amongst people under 36, South Africa has an extreme degree of economic inequality. This paper explored two Pentecostal Churches, one in a wealthy suburb and one in a peri-urban township and found that only people in the wealthier church could actively embrace and practice ideals of a nuclear family with two, usually working parents, where the husband was the head and provider and the wife his helpmate. In the poor community grandmothers were the heads of multi-generational households and brought in most of the income through their pension grants. Most men did not work and had no direct access to money. Women with children received a small childcare grant. Most younger men and women could not afford to get married. These economic factors therefore force people to ignore or circumvent Pentecostal gender norms. The paper highlights the inconsistencies and fissures in the practice of gender drive by economic circumstances. It explores if a new notion of Pentecostal womanhood may be emerging, particularly in poorer communities.

### **Inversions and new opportunities in young women's narratives about Satanism in Zambia**

Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

In Zambia, testimonies of young women who claim to have been Satanists are regularly heard in church services aimed at deliverance from evil powers. The ex-Satanists often narrate how they were queens in Satan's kingdom, asserting their powers in ways that are traditionally more associated with men and masculinity. In this paper, based on an analysis of testimonies, I will show how narratives about Satanism invert traditional values related to age, gender, sexuality, and community. In the academic literature, such inversions are interpreted as reflecting insecurities and anxieties in society. Zambian narratives about Satanism can be placed in the context of developments in Zambian society which affect the positions of children and women. The traditional society with a clear hierarchy based on age and gender has become problematic. The paper argues that in the testimonies different responses to these tensions in society are played out. Ultimately, Pentecostalism gives the young women an opportunity to act with agency and authority without becoming the evil stereotype of the Satanist.

## **Pastor's Wives Succeeding Their Deceased Husbands In Independent Pentecostal Churches During Covid-19 Pandemic.**

Mangaliso Matshobane, University Of South Africa, South Africa

Covid-19 pandemic changed the economic, political, social, and religious landscape of the world, especially among Independent Pentecostal churches, due to the death of church founders in independent Pentecostal churches in South Africa. Most independent Pentecostal churches have no oversight structure that they account to, as a result, the founder tends to run the church as a covert family business, which everyone is comfortable with until their sudden death, when the wife assumes the reins of the church. This becomes a great challenge when there was no clear succession plan. Pastor's wives whose leadership role was mostly ceremonial in the church, must step into their husband's big shoes while at the same time grieving their loss, which presents a challenge to the congregation among those who think that the founders' wife is not the appropriate successor. Ironically, the findings of an empirical research conducted among 16 founders revealed that 13 of them did not want their wives to succeed them in case of sudden death. The question that this article will probe is what causes the founders not to trust their wives to succeed them? The objective of this article is to challenge the patriarchal mindset of founders and encourage them to value their wives as partners in the ministry and not just ceremonial ornaments. Osmer's theoretical framework will be used in this article to describe, interpret normatively and suggest a pragmatic solution.

## **8 Theology, Culture and Gender in Asian Pentecostalism**

### **Between Pentecostalism and Baptist: Indigenous Naga Women and Christianity**

Atola Longkumer, United Theological College, Bangalore, India

This proposal aims to demonstrate the ambiguous location of women in the church and larger society of the Indigenous Naga people of Indo-Myanmar region of Northeast India. The paper will argue that the ambiguity of location and participation of women in Naga Indigenous Christianity is a by-product of marriage between a structure inherited from the Baptist missionaries and a practice that emerged tacitly from the influence of global Pentecostalism. Influence of global Pentecostalism on a local expression of Christianity midwifed a dormant residue of a shamanic religiosity among the Indigenous Naga Christians, which is most vividly observed in the role and function of women in a pre-dominantly Baptist church. Three areas as observed in Naga Indigenous Christianity: theological education, liturgy and public theology – are highlighted to develop the argument of the paper. Ecstatic prayers, growing numbers of women in theological education and curtailment of women in public space in continuity of traditional practices are observable phenomena of Naga Indigenous Christianity. In demonstrating the ambiguity of location of women in Naga Indigenous Christianity, the paper hopes to add to the broader perspective of inter-culturality of Christianity. The undergirding argument of the proposed paper is the observation that Pentecostalism remains a potent conduit for inter-cultural expressions holding together the Indigenous traditional religiosity and the embraced Christianity.



## **The Imagination and Representation of Gender Expectations in the Chinese Context: A Case of the Neo-Pentecostal Megachurch in Hong Kong**

Christian Nathen Ng, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Pentecostalism has now reached over 300,000 people in Hong Kong since the 1900s. However, the issues related to the relationship between 'Chinese Pentecostalism' and gender in context have received little academic attention. This paper attempts a research question: How do Chinese Pentecostal churches imagine and represent gender expectations in their everyday religious context in Hong Kong?

Through a case study of the Bread of Life Christian Church in Hong Kong, a global neo-Pentecostal denomination with over 600 congregations, this paper explores three issues, namely Pentecostalism and the Chinese ideas of gender in context, gender and family expectations, and everyday lives.

This paper contains four main sections. First, it presents a precise overview of relevant literature. Second, it describes the background of the 611 Bread of Life Christian Church, one of the largest megachurches in today's Hong Kong. Third, it analyses the three issues above. Finally, it brings discourses from different disciplines to discuss the case theoretically. The primary data are drawn from the author's one-year participant observation, collected church publications, and interviews. This paper envisages contributing to Pentecostal Studies and Hong Kong Christian Studies simultaneously.

## **A Proposed Pentecostal Quadrilectic: Explorations for Asian Pentecostal Hermeneutics**

Lora Angeline Timenia, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, USA

Developing a general framework for Asian Pentecostal hermeneutics is necessary for a continent where the Holy Bible is "Scripture among scriptures." Although Pentecostal Christianity in Asia is growing, interpreting Scripture in a manner relevant to local contextual realities is necessary to propagate grassroots theologies. As such, the current Pentecostal hermeneutical triad of Spirit-Scripture-Community (Archer) or Spirit-Word-Community (Yong) needs further articulations of a reader's tradition and cultural/ethnic contexts. The concept of an interpretive "Pentecostal community" needs clarification in the Asian setting where multiple interpretative communities exist. This study proposes a framework that recognizes the dialectical role of the text's context and the reader's context in biblical interpretation. The offered framework is a quadrilectic—a dialectic of Spirit-Scripture-Tradition-Context. Modifying Yung Suk Kim's critical contextual biblical interpretation with the pneumatological lens of Craig Keener's Spirit hermeneutics, the author suggests that Asian readers (in this study, Filipino Pentecostals) use a pneumatological lens (ala Keener) in their critical contextual biblical interpretation.

## **Spiritual Capital and Gender Navigation in Pentecostalism: An Indian Case Study**

Viju Wilson, Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India

Many women have contributed to the emergence of Pentecostal communities in Kerala, the southernmost state of India. Four sisters: L. Kamalam, L. Baby, N. Thankam, J. Jagathamma (popularly known as Kodangavila Sisters) were unmarried women who exercised their spiritual capital and crossed the boundaries of gender in ministerial space. They negotiated their spiritual capital within the existing gender stereotypes in the Pentecostal community. They exercised their spiritual capital as missionaries, Church planters, preachers, teachers, exorcists, leaders, prophetesses, etc. People respected them and invited them to minister among them. Many people, including men, dedicated their lives to ministry because of their spiritual influence. They had not fought for their space as women but asserted their space through spiritual capital. They worked 'with' male leadership without 'openly' challenging the patriarchal social etiquette and spiritual traditions but covertly subverting them. They followed the 'accept-cum-reject' approach in their ministerial locations. This paper attempts to narrate the unique characteristics of the life and ministry of the Kodangavila sisters, particularly how they used their spiritual capital to overcome the 'disabilities' of gender in a male-dominated ministerial space. They speak to contemporary Pentecostal women and motivate them to channelize their spiritual capital as a tool of empowerment for equalizing gendered space in the community.

## **9 Contextualizations in African Pentecostalism**

**Men of God in northern Côte d'Ivoire: An ethnographic and qualitative study of Evangelical and Pentecostal/ charismatic pastors' construction of their role as pastors in the context of Islam.**

Fredrik Berge, Associated with Fjellhaug International University College, Oslo, Norway

There has been done research on Pentecostal pastors in Africa in various settings, and more and more research appear on Pentecostal immigrant churches in Europe, and the pastoral role in that setting. However, less work has been carried out on Pentecostalism in Muslim societies in Africa, and the pastoral role in this context. The focus of the study is to gain more knowledge about how a selected group of evangelical and Pentecostal/ charismatic pastors in the northern parts of Cote d'Ivoire construct their role as pastors, with a special emphasis on their interaction with the Muslim context they are a part of. Thus, the research question is formulated as follows: How do a group of Ivorian evangelical and Pentecostal/charismatic pastors in the majority Muslim "north" of Cote d'Ivoire construct their role as pastors and religious leaders in the negotiation between personal ideals and contextual variables that are related to these constructions (roles)?

## **“We need somewhere, where our culture is respected” – African Initiated Churches, African Traditional Religion and the Role of Women**

Marie-Luise Frost, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany

The sentence in the title is a quote of a Kenyan church leader explaining the success of African Initiated Churches. It exemplifies how these churches are often seen as bridge-builders between African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christianity – as those who maintained elements of African culture that were dismissed by missionaries. This paper investigates the relationship between ATR and African Initiated Churches and focusses on the role of women in these churches. It draws on expert interviews with researchers and church leaders from Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. The gathered material suggests that both restricting and liberating aspects are taken over from ATR to present-day African Initiated Churches. Especially the idea of women’s impurity during menstruation which can be found both in ATR and the Old Testament leads to the exclusion of women of certain rituals and hinders them to get certain positions in the church. At the same time, both religions also give room to charismatic authority that women experience through divine or ancestral calling. This authority allows women to question and redefine gender roles and understandings. It thereby points to a transformative potential inherent to both religious traditions.

## **“Mafanikio Gospel”: Expression of Prosperity Gospel within the Mainline Churches in Tanzania**

Leita Ngoy, Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany

This paper explores the phenomenon of the Prosperity Gospel, referred to locally as Mafanikio Gospel, within the Swahili speaking Mainline Churches of Tanzania, particularly the Lutheran Church in Dar es Salaam. Mafanikio Gospel is described to as a biblical message that emphasis on trusting in God, hardworking, pietism and good stewardship of God’s blessing” as the source of prosperity. Although highly contested, yet over the past few decades, the influence of such Prosperity Gospel teachings has been observed in these traditionally conservative Christian denominations, prompting shifts in doctrine, preaching, and financial practices. This paper provides a concise overview of the key findings and themes emerging from my dissertation. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interviews with church leaders and members, content analysis of sermons, and surveys of congregants, this paper uncovers the various implications of the Mafanikio Gospel within Mainline Churches in Tanzania. This paper sheds light on the evolving religious landscape within Mainline Churches in Tanzania, particularly the Lutheran church in Dar es Salaam, illustrating how the Mafanikio Gospel has shaped belief systems, practices, and theological discourse.

# **10 Women and Gender in Pentecostal History**

## **Calling, Commemoration, and Conflict: Gender and (Auto)Biography**

Linda Ambrose, Laurentian University, Canada

This paper is drawn from my biographical work on the Rev. Bernice Gerard (1923-2008), a Canadian Pentecostal preacher, media personality, and politician. I recently completed an academic biography of Gerard (University of British Columbia Press, forthcoming 2024) based on her personal archives and published autobiographies. I argue that Gerard was a more complex character than popular accounts of her life suggest. For example, while it is no secret that she sparred with denominational authorities over questions of women in ministry and created controversy with her public engagement, I suggest that closer attention to Gerard's identity as a sexual abuse survivor, life-long partner with another woman, and self-declared feminist are crucial to a fuller understanding of how gender shaped her Pentecostal experience. Beyond the tired trope of simply venerating Pentecostal women's historical contributions to the movement, a gender analysis of this Canadian Pentecostal women's lived experiences offers a more nuanced and complex understanding of how gender and power are entwined within conservative patriarchal subcultures of Pentecostalism.

## **“Those lovely buttons”: Lillian Trasher and the Everyday Politics of Living by Faith as a Pentecostal Missionary in Twentieth Century Egypt**

Darin Lenz, Biola University, USA

In February of 1911 Lillian Trasher (1887-1961) established a small orphanage in Asyut, Egypt, that eventually housed hundreds of children and widows of all religious backgrounds. The work she founded and directed for the next fifty years of her life was funded through the practice of living by faith. This meant that she prayed to God to provide the resources to meet the everyday needs of those she cared for including their day-to-day needs such as food, clothing, and other sundries. Her devotion to those on the margins of society eventually won the respect of the local population, Egyptian society, and government leaders. Trasher would be honored by variety of titles to recognize her efforts to help orphans and widows, including “Mother of the Nile,” “Nile Mother,” and more affectionately as “Mamma Lillian.” Trasher was celebrated by Pentecostals and even brought to the attention of the general public in the United States by those who were impressed by her philanthropic activities. Drawing on a variety of primary sources from personal letters, newsletters, and periodicals, this paper will examine the everyday politics of lived piety that enabled Trasher to succeed in her charitable work as an American woman leading an institution in Egypt. In particular, the paper will analyze Trasher’s focus on the things of everyday life while remaining a Pentecostal missionary determined to care for the vulnerable throughout the defining moments in modern Egyptian history.

## **Gliddy Bluks – Early Pentecostalism and Interrupting Biopolitical Formations of Gender**

Marlon Millner, Northern Illinois University, USA

This paper will argue that early American Pentecostalism was marked as a practice of race-mixing, which unsettled and interrupted normative logics and practices of gender, by examining the Apostolic Faith Mission revival which took place in Indianapolis, Indiana from 1907 through early 1908.

Newspaper media labeled this early Pentecostal movement the Gliddy Bluk revival. The name seems to be a play on adherents claims to speak in unknown tongues. But the grammar of tongues was closely wedded to a language of sexual pathology and gender non-normativity through practices of ‘race-mixing.’ In particular, the revival was portrayed as responsible for the divorce of a white couple in Indianapolis – Tom and Ida Oddy -- for the sole reason of the wife, Ida, race mixing with Black practitioners. The race mixing was characterized as sexual deviance and a rejection of normative gender roles.

My focus on both pathology and normativity follows language from Michel Foucault’s work on biopolitics – technologies of discipline and subject formation that are designed to make a population live, and simultaneously mark a break of the death-bound or excluded subject. Pentecostalism narrated here, disrupts this formation.

## **11 Women in Pentecostal Leadership in Africa**

**Women in leadership of the Pentecostal church FEPACO-Nzambe-Malamu (DRC) with its worldwide entanglements. Case-study, mirrored by Bernice Martin’s concept of ‘The Pentecostal Gender Paradox’**

Moritz Fischer, University of Applied Science for Intercultural Theology (FIT),  
Hermannsburg, Germany

Research-question:

What answers do we gain if we apply the double-edged concept of the ‘Pentecostal Gender Paradox’ (conversion of women towards Pentecostalism with the consequence of an incorporation into patriarchal relations on the one hand and their call into leadership-positions superior to men on the other hand) on female-leaders’ role in FEPACO?

Methods:

Literature based research (self-description in primary-sources and discussion in secondary-literature); online-interviews with actors of FEPACO; historical investigation of crucial points of the churches’ development of gender-mixed leadership.

Outline:

1. The longitudinal history of the transmission of leadership in FEPACO, entangled with Osborn’s Ministries International and Elim Missionary Society (US) and the limits of conceptualizing a so called “Pentecostal movement”.
2. Changes in the paradoxical power position of women after their ordination as pastors in Pentecostal congregations, identifiable in a cross-sectional perspective.

3. The theological foundation of sociologically defined “Pentecostal Gender Paradox” (B. Martin), applied on FEPACO and its gender-mixed leadership.

### **Unpacking Prophecy: Female Pentecostal Preachers and the Prophetic in Kenya**

Loreen Maseno, Maseno University, Kenya

The emergence of Pentecostal communities in Kenya has seen churches increasingly established around a charismatic leadership figure. This has ushered in Pentecostal leaders who identify themselves as prophets and prophetesses. In Kenya, there has been an increase in self-identified female Pentecostal-Charismatic (PC) preachers asserting themselves as Prophetesses. These female PC preachers proceed to make prophecies through various fora and medium which in turn meet unique congregational interests. This essay examines two such prophetesses in Kenya, Prophetess 1 and Prophetess 2 followed over eight weeks in July and August 2023 through their online presence on you-tube and Facebook which is in the public domain. Further this essay shall interrogate their prophecies and an analysis made based on eschatological hopes, the concepts of modes of self-legitimation in a field of power and Invasive versus non-invasive prophecy. The essay shall conclude by showing how these prophecies position these female PC's with religious leadership and further subvert the established symbolic priestly order. In all, these prophecies will be shown to activate an eternal, eschatological dimension and eschatological community not relegated to the world to come.

### **Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement in Ghana: The Trajectory of Ghanaian Women in Ministerial Leadership**

Angelina Yeboah Lartey, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany

Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is an emergent force in the Christian fraternity. There is a higher tendency to put all church denominations existing in this movement under one big umbrella of equal traditions. However, this has always not been the case especially when it comes to the role of women in the churches. Most Pentecostal/Charismatic churches may agree on some doctrinal principles and beliefs like the work of the Holy Spirit, tongues speaking, spiritual gifts, healing and deliverance; but may have sharp contrasting or opposing views on women's leadership and ministry in generality. Peter White accurately captures this when he wrote on the leadership hierarchy of the Church of Pentecost, which is the main and leading name in classical Pentecostalism of Ghana:

“Amongst the Classic Pentecostal Churches, the farthest a woman can go up the leadership ladder is to the office of 'Deaconess'”.

Suffice it to say that, this doctrinal position of the classical Pentecostal movement of Ghana is not only a derivative of sincere biblical orthodoxy. There could also be significant influences from the patriarchal society of the region under discussion.

In recent happenings, leadership in the Pentecostal Churches have seen a new dimension where women have founded churches, and are actively involved even as Pastors' wives. This switch of events attracts further studies and discussions.

## **12 Women and Gender in European/Migrant Pentecostalism**

### **Female pastoral leadership and ambivalent femininities in African Pentecostalism in Belgium**

Bosco Bangura, Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium / Protestant Theological University, Groningen, Netherlands

While African Pentecostalism's growth in Belgium has been explained by the international mobility of mainly male Pentecostal actors from Sub-Saharan Africa, little research has ascertained how female pastoral leaders have contributed to this growth on their own as active agents. This paper discusses the effect of transnational migration on the gender regimes that African Pentecostal churches adopted in (Flanders) Belgium. Using the life histories of four female African Pentecostal leaders, I argue that there appears to be an ambivalence within African Pentecostalism towards allowing women to exercise of pastoral leadership. This paper argues that this presence of this ambivalent femininities is largely due to a reticence that these female actors have towards engaging theologically with the question of their spiritual gifts and qualifications for pastoral leadership and an the ambiguous interpretations they ascribe to Belgium's gender regimes.

### **Couples culture as an obstacle for female leadership in Dutch Pentecostal churches**

Laura Dijkhuizen, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Netherlands

"My wife doesn't have the aspiration to pastor the church, but her influence is as great as mine."

Although a pastor couple is often presented as the (senior) leaders of the community, the division of tasks and the name on the payslip reveal that they fulfil different roles in authority. Gender-inclusive leadership is considered a non-issue in the Dutch Assemblies of God. Remarks like the quote on top as well as history show that the Pentecostal movement is quite open for women in leadership. However, the current percentage of registered female pastors is less than 5%. According to the general superintendent of the national board of the denomination, this is not a matter of theology but of (church) culture. Although it is questionable if there is not a theological reason for this lack of women, in this presentation I will zoom in on one aspect of culture: pastoring the church as a (married) couple. Drawing from observations of my empirical research, I will argue that ministering as a couple can act as an obstacle for women to step forward in the governing authority of the church.

## **War, forced migration, activism and gender in Ukrainian Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Poland**

Ganna Tregub, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland

Full-scale war in Ukraine is challenging existing gender patterns prevailing in Ukrainian Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

First of all the Russian aggression on Ukraine caused many Pentecostals and other Evangelicals to leave the country. Enforced displacement from Ukraine due to full-scale war, has a peculiarity, an important nuance that has to be reckoned with - the core of this group are women of different age. With the wave of refugees and forced migration, gender representation in the migrant churches, which grew rapidly in Poland, went drastically unbalanced in relation to the pre-war time.

Secondly, with challenges in the new social environment, the church adherents were forced to re-elaborate their social rules, responsibilities and authority as gendered people in the church structures and community.

In my paper, I intend to reflect on how war influencing gender shaping in the Ukrainian Pentecostal churches in Poland. Also, I would like to focus on how the topics of survival and uncertainty, challenge of sustainable church communities building intersects with gender problematic in this places. Besides my aim is to look on samples of male and female participation in church activism.