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**Pentecostalism, Political Masculinity and Citizenship:
The Born-Again Male Subject as Key to Zambia's National Redemption**

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Abstract

Africa has become a key site of masculinity politics, that is, of mobilisations and struggles where masculine gender is made a principal theme and subjected to change. Pentecostalism is widely considered to present a particular form of masculinity politics in contemporary African societies. Scholarship on African Pentecostal masculinities has mainly centred around the thesis of the domestication of men, focusing on changes in domestic spheres and in marital and intimate relations. Through an analysis of a sermon series preached by a prominent Zambian Pentecostal pastor, this article demonstrates that Pentecostal discourse on adult, middle- to upper-class masculinity is also highly concerned with men's roles in sociopolitical spheres. It argues that in this case study the construction of a born-again masculinity is part of the broader Pentecostal political project of national redemption, which in Zambia has particular significance in light of the country constitutionally being a Christian nation. Hence the article examines how this construction of Pentecostal masculinity relates to broader notions of religious, political and gendered citizenship.

Keywords

Masculinity politics, Pentecostalism, citizenship, Zambia, sermons, gender, politics

‘Raising men that are strategically positioned to affect their environments and society with Christ-like morals and be templates of how a man, leader and provider must be positioned ... [Such men] are much needed in today’s society to provide hope for families and the nation at large’.

Mission statement, Men of Truth, Northmead Assembly of God Church,
Lusaka

Introduction

The mission statement of Men of Truth, the men’s ministry of Northmead Assembly of God Church in Lusaka, is indicative of the type of masculinity politics pursued by this prominent Zambian Pentecostal church. What is significant in this mission statement is its broad scope: it is about men affecting change in all the environments in which they are engaged, from the level of the family to the level of the nation at large. In other words, Pentecostal masculinity politics, as presented in this mission statement, concerns all spheres of life, private as much as public, domestic as much as political. Furthermore, raising such a generation of men appears to be part of a broader Pentecostal strategy of impacting on society through a new Christian morale, and changing the character of the nation through the production of a particular, gendered form of religious citizenship.

Several studies of men and masculinities in Pentecostal-Charismatic forms of Christianity in Africa¹ have highlighted how Pentecostal discourses and practices are giving rise to the emergence of a type of born-again masculinity. So far these studies have mainly focused on the domestic sphere and on marital and intimate relations between men and women, centring around questions such as whether and how Pentecostal masculinities contribute to equality in marital relationships, male responsibility in the family, and, with reference to the context of HIV, to greater sexual responsibility by men (Chitando and Biri 2013; Chitando 2007; van Klinken 2012; van Klinken 2013b; Soothill 2007). In other words, they centre around the thesis of the ‘domestication of men’ in African Pentecostal circles. As Elizabeth Brusco points out, if Pentecostalism is successful in bringing about a transformation in the home through the domestication of men, this is ‘a major social transformation’ (Brusco 2010, 87). This is true, yet the sociopolitical significance of Pentecostal masculinity politics deserves more explicit attention and needs to be explored in depth. This article builds on the insight that in African Pentecostalism individual transformation through born-again conversion is part of and key to a wider political project through which the nation as a whole is to be transformed and become born again.² As demonstrated below, in the case study under discussion the Pentecostal discourse on masculinity is not only concerned with men’s domestic and intimate lives but also with men’s role in society at large. Against this background this discourse can be read both as a sociopolitical critique of culturally dominant forms of masculinity, and as a programme for the transformation of these masculinities as part of the broader Pentecostal project of born-again conversion and national renewal.

Masculinity Politics and Pentecostalism in Africa

The term ‘masculinity politics’, as defined by R.W. Connell, refers to ‘those mobilizations and struggles where the meaning of masculine gender is at issue ... [and where] masculinity is

made a principal theme, not taken for granted as background' (2005a, 205). Dependent on the ideological motives inspiring particular forms of masculinity politics as well as on the factors inciting such politics in specific contexts, the meaning of masculine gender is made an issue for different reasons and is defined in different ways. Also, different strategies are employed to engage men in such politics. In the work of Connell, who is a leading sociological theorist on masculinities, masculinity politics worldwide centre around the struggle for gender equality—with, on the one hand, influential global discourses seeking to involve men in gender-equality reform and, on the other hand, counter-discourses seeking to resist such reform and to protect men's 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell 2005b). This struggle is certainly reflected in contemporary African contexts in which some scholars are engaged in a quest for a 'feminist masculinity' (Mutunga 2009) and where several civil society organisations work to involve men in advocacy for gender equality, addressing issues such as gender-based violence (see, for example, Padare/Enkundleni Men's Forum on Gender in Zimbabwe). Another major factor in recent masculinity politics in Africa is the HIV epidemic, which has made men 'targets for a change' (Bujra 2002)—both in the sense of targets to be changed, and targets for bringing about change—since men are believed to play a critical role in the spread of the virus and in women's vulnerability to HIV (van Klinken and Chitando 2015). In this article, however, I am interested in the relation between masculinity politics and citizenship in Africa. Most scholarship on citizenship in Africa tends to focus on either the political, religious, or gendered aspects of citizenship (Bond 2014; Dorman 2014). The present case study of Pentecostal masculinity politics foregrounds a notion of citizenship that is simultaneously deeply political, religious, and gendered.

With religion playing crucial public and political roles in African societies, and with religious ideas providing many Africans 'with a means of becoming social and political actors' (Ellis and Ter Haar 2004, 2), the role of religion—that is, of religious institutions, religious leaders, religious beliefs and practices—in masculinity politics in contemporary African contexts cannot be ignored. Recent scholarship has particularly focused on the role of Pentecostal forms of Christianity because Pentecostalism is one of the fastest-growing religious movements in Africa and indeed globally (Anderson 2013), and because it is associated with a particular capacity to effect change both in individual lives and in society more generally, related to what Ruth Marshall calls 'the Born-Again program of conversion' (2009, 142). Several studies indicate the emergence of new, Pentecostal forms of masculinity in African contexts. This is partly the indirect result of men becoming born again and subsequently undergoing a transformation of their moral, religious, and gendered perceptions of the self and the lifestyles related to that (van Klinken 2012; Lindhardt 2015). However, this born-again masculinity is also the product of an explicit discourse in which the meaning of masculine gender, in Connell's words, is made a principal theme and in which men as gendered beings are directly targeted for change. Thus Jane Soothill finds that Ghanaian Pentecostal churches hold men in particular responsible for what is perceived as 'the social and moral crisis in African family life' (2007, 186). In these churches the break with the past that Pentecostalism seeks to bring about is interpreted 'as having particular consequences for male converts' since they are encouraged to break with traditional views of the superior status of men; to reject the role models established by their fathers—supposedly characterised by polygamy, extramarital sex, and domestic violence; and to adopt new attitudes toward

women, beginning with their wives (Soothill 2007, 189). Exploring the alternative ideal of masculinity that these churches promote, Soothill points out that ‘whilst a male-female hierarchy is preserved, the concept of male authority is redefined in terms of “sacrifice” and “self-giving” love’ (2007, 191). In my own research in a Zambian Pentecostal church I found a similarly discursive form of masculinity politics, with an ideal of ‘biblical manhood’ being promoted in which men are indeed the head of the home but in which this notion of headship is dissociated from domination and reinterpreted in terms of responsibility (van Klinken 2011a; van Klinken 2013b). In his study of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism in the context of the HIV epidemic, Ezra Chitando (2007) highlights the centrality of discourses of sexual purity, with young male converts as well as adult church members being socialised to be ‘counter-cultural’ in terms of their values, specifically in the areas of drinking and relationships. He further highlights that Pentecostalism tends to present a relatively ‘soft’ ideal of masculinity, in which ‘the new man’ is characterised by his love for his wife and children, demonstrating his affection by being faithful, buying presents for his wife, and spending time with his family (Chitando 2007, 119).

Surveying some of the recent literature, Martin Lindhardt captures the emerging general depiction of Pentecostal masculinity politics as a shift from the public to the private—in other words, as a domestication of men:

The converted Pentecostal/charismatic man is ... drawn into the private sphere and becomes more committed to nuclear ideals and to his role as breadwinner. According to hegemonic cultural standards, male prestige is largely gained through participation in the public sphere. By contrast, within Pentecostal-charismatic communities a man mainly gains prestige and respect by being a responsible father and husband. (2015, 256)

On the basis of his own study in Tanzania, Lindhardt confirms but also nuances this picture by questioning the strong emphasis on the oppositional or counter-cultural aspects of born-again masculinities that characterise much of the literature. He suggests that as much as conversion to Pentecostalism domesticates men and requires them to distance themselves from certain typical male activities, Pentecostalism also enables men to assert power and gain prestige in public. One major strategy through which born-again men can actually enact powerful masculine identities in public is located, according to Lindhardt, in the practice of ‘spiritual warfare’. Even though spiritual power in Pentecostalism is generally gender neutral in the sense that it is distributed among both men and women, Lindhardt argues that the neo-Pentecostal turn—with its emphasis on loud and semi-aggressive practices of worship and deliverance—has brought ‘certain masculine traits into the picture and created new frameworks for masculine self-identification’ (2015, 267). Lindhardt’s account is a welcome nuance of the ‘domestication of men’ thesis that tends to dominate discussions about Pentecostalism and masculinities (including, I admit, my own previous work on the subject).

However, the exercise of spiritual power is only one way through which born-again masculinity engages public space and complicates a one-sided focus on transformations in the private sphere. In this article I foreground another strategy by analysing how the Pentecostal project of transforming masculinities is actually embedded in and seeks to contribute to a broader born-again political programme of national redemption. On the basis of a case study of a Zambian Pentecostal church, I argue that as much as this church wants men to be

responsible and loving husbands and fathers it also wants them to be strong leaders in society and of the nation at large. This is because the church's masculinity politics feeds into the broader project of what Marshall calls 'redemptive citizenship' (2014, 93): the production of a form of citizenship that is simultaneously political and religious, and that turns out to be highly gendered. This critically interrogates the assumptions underlying much scholarship on political citizenship in Africa (cf. Bond 2014) that tends to be based on a secular distinction between religion and politics and does not acknowledge religious movements such as Pentecostalism as key sites of citizenship building, as well as scholarship on religious citizenship that tends to be based on a Weberian scheme of spiritual versus profane citizenship (Turner 2002). Such secular and often-Eurocentric distinctions do not hold true in African contexts generally, and certainly not vis-à-vis Pentecostalism as a highly public religion in contemporary Africa (Meyer 2011). My emphasis on the political nature of Pentecostal masculinity politics is not to deny but to balance the point that these politics also seek to bring about a transformation in the domestic sphere. Instead of introducing a new dichotomy between transformations in the private or domestic realm and in the public or political realm, I believe that the notion of citizenship allows for an analysis that considers both dimensions integrally. In other words, I seek to foreground how the Pentecostal rhetoric of men as responsible husbands and fathers relates to a more explicitly political discourse on men as responsible leaders in society and in the nation at large.

Methodological Notes

The sociopolitical significance of African Pentecostal discourses of masculinity has received very little attention so far since scholars of Pentecostalism and gender have been concerned with transformations in private, domestic realms. My analysis in this article builds on and is influenced by Ruth Marshall's reading of Pentecostalism in terms of what she, with Michel Foucault, calls 'political spirituality'. According to Marshall, the programme of born-again conversion that is at the heart of Pentecostalism constitutes the expression of a political spirituality because 'the problem of collective "political redemption" in the Born-Again program is expressed through the work to be done on the individual' (Marshall 2009, 11). Hence in her study of Nigerian Pentecostalism, she offers a detailed analysis of how Pentecostalism functions as a prescriptive regime, how this regime 'produces new subjects, in the double sense of being subjected to and the subject of a practice', and what its political effects are. I take up these questions but with a particular focus on masculinity, that is, male-gendered subjectivity. Remarkably, Marshall does not pay any attention to the gender dimension of Pentecostal political spirituality even though many studies have demonstrated that African Pentecostalism's prescriptive regime is explicitly a gendered regime (Parsitau 2011; Mate 2002; Chitando 2007; van Klinken 2012). As this article shows through an analysis of a sermon series preached by a prominent Zambian Pentecostal leader, the redefinition and transformation of masculinities is a key strategy to the collective political redemption that the born-again programme seeks to achieve.

The sermon series 'Fatherhood in the 21st Century', delivered by prominent Zambian Pentecostal pastor Bishop Dr Joshua H.K. Banda of Northmead Assembly of God, presents an example of the invention of a theological narrative not concerned with the realisation of new Christian subjects in general but of new Christian male subjects in particular. My focus

on these sermons is not to privilege the formal discourses or the voices of those in formal leadership positions per se, but because sermons as well as their interpretation and appropriation of sacred texts are an important part of the ‘narrative imperative’ (Marshall 2009, 136) that is at the heart of the Pentecostal programme of born-again conversion. As much as I focus on the content of the sermons, the theological worlds they evoke and the political spirituality they reflect and constitute, I am aware that sermons are not only a mediation of a particular message. Recent anthropological scholarship (e.g., Schulz 2012; Tomlinson 2014) analyses sermons as a performative practice involving the preacher’s body and voice as well as evoking certain experiences and responses. In this study I invoke Birgit Meyer’s (2010) notions of ‘sensational form’ and ‘aesthetics of persuasion’ to attend to the productive relation between ‘content’ and ‘form’. In Meyer’s words, form is not ‘in opposition to but ... a necessary condition for expression of content and meaning and ethical norms and values’ (2010, 751). Preaching, certainly in a Pentecostal context, is a sensuous experience for both the preacher and the listeners. I do not have relevant data to discuss how the audience responded to the sermons central to this study and how their emotional and spiritual state was affected. However, I pay attention to how these sermons themselves are a ‘performative path’ aiming to set people ‘into motion’ (Tomlinson 2014, 6)—literally, when people respond to the altar call following the sermon and walk to the front to dedicate their lives to Christ.

NAOG, Bishop Banda, and the Sermon Series ‘Fatherhood in the 21st Century’

Northmead Assembly of God (NAOG) is among the larger and most well-known Pentecostal churches in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. It is mainly attended by people from Lusaka’s urban, educated middle and upper classes with professional careers in business, the civil sector, and government administration. It is the flagship church of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Zambia (PAOG-Z), a fellowship of over 1,000 Pentecostal churches all over the country that historically is the fruit of the mission activities of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Canada. Since 1995 NAOG’s senior pastor has been Bishop Dr Joshua H.K. Banda, a leading figure in the PAOG-Z and also a prominent Christian leader in the country who often appears in the media to comment on national affairs. The church website refers to Banda as a ‘respected expositor of God’s Word’, emphasising his role as a preacher and teacher whose sermons are broadcasted nationally and internationally through the church’s television programme *The Liberating Truth*.³ Within the various forms of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Zambia and in Africa more widely (Kalu 2008), NAOG can perhaps best be categorised theologically as classical Pentecostal. It explicitly dissociates itself from the neo-Pentecostal emphasis on the prosperity gospel and on spectacular forms of healing and deliverance, even though in the church healing and deliverance are practised, and nuanced notions of prosperity are being preached. However, where classical Pentecostal churches, with their emphasis on holiness, are sometimes associated with a withdrawal from ‘the world’, NAOG seeks to transform society. Thereto the church is involved in a range of initiatives such as targeting sex workers, street children, and people living with HIV. Bishop Banda himself plays a prominent public role, serving, for instance, as chair of the National AIDS Council (2008-2015). The position and role of NAOG, and of bishop Banda, in Zambia could be compared to that of the well-known (among scholars of African Pentecostalism)

International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) and its overseer Rev Dr Mensa Otabil in Ghana, although NAOG is smaller than ICGC. Both church leaders are academically inclined and share a similar emphasis on ‘the message’—the ‘more rationalist “life-transforming” teachings’ as Marleen De Witte (2003, 181) describes Otabil’s preaching, which is the major reason church members attend these churches.

Sermons in NAOG are usually delivered in series around specific themes. When I first arrived in the church in August 2008, Banda had just delivered a series of six sermons titled ‘Fatherhood in the 21st Century’, and I was able to get hold of the recorded versions. The term ‘fatherhood’ here must be understood in a broad sense: as the preacher pointed out in the first sermon, it refers not just to those who biologically speaking are fathers, but also and more importantly to ‘social fathers’—those male figures who occupy political or civic leadership roles, most typically the country’s president who is the ‘father of the nation’, and to ‘spiritual fathers’ such as pastors and bishops in the church. Hence he concluded: ‘Many of you listening to me today in one way or another fulfil a father role. So I like you to attend to what the word of God has to say about this role that you occupy’ (Fatherhood, part 1). Moreover, Banda stated in the sermons that fatherhood is rooted in ‘biblical manhood’, thus widening the scope of the discussion from fatherhood to manhood and in fact using both terms more or less interchangeably.⁴ Yet more than the general term manhood, the key term fatherhood evokes the notions of responsibility and leadership that are central to the sermons. Furthermore, the idea of social fatherhood also highlights the sociopolitical significance of the sermon series that I explore in this article. This significance of the church’s discourse on masculinity is further illustrated by the NAOG men’s fellowship, the Men of Truth Ministry (figure 1), part of whose mission statement was quoted at the top of this article. The sermon series as well as the Men of Truth mission statement indicate that NAOG is actively engaged in masculinity politics: the meaning of masculine gender is deliberately made a subject of discussion, with new meanings being signified. It is also obvious that it is adult masculinity in particular that is made an issue and is therefore central in the analysis presented below.⁵

The delivery of a six-part sermon series like this may be unique for the NAOG case study, which makes the sermons such important primary material since they give profound and substantial insight into the discursive production of born-again masculinity. At the same time, the parallels between the NAOG case study and studies conducted by other scholars cited above demonstrate that a more-widespread discourse exists about masculinities in African Pentecostal circles, found, for example, in the numerous men’s fellowships but also reproduced through preaching.

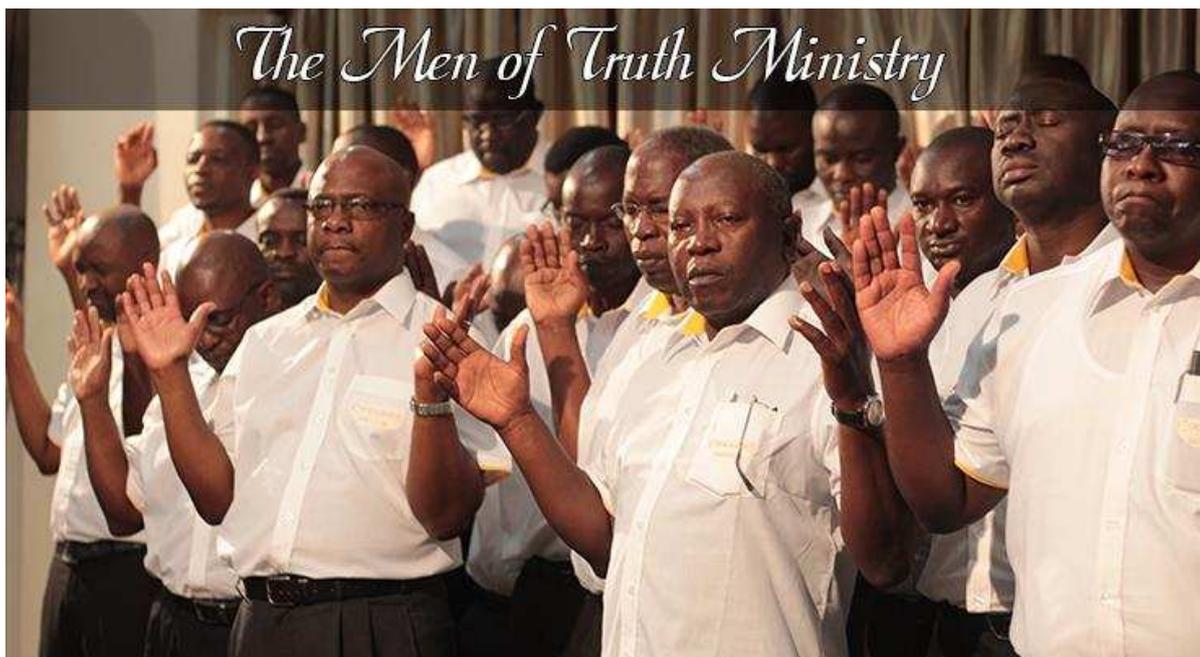


Figure 1: Poster advertising the Men of Truth Ministry on the NAOG website

The Context: Zambia as a ‘Christian Nation’

Before examining these politics of masculinity in more detail, it is crucial to briefly sketch the broader religiopolitical context of Zambia. At first glance, Zambia is perhaps one of the most successful examples in Africa of how the project of born-again conversion takes shape at a national scale and brings about collective renewal. I do not mean to suggest that Zambian Christianity has been completely Pentecostalisised—other forms of Christian expression remain strong (cf. Cheyeka, Hinfelaar and Udelhoven 2014)—but that to a considerable extent Pentecostalism has come to dominate public debates and political culture. Other scholars have examined in detail the historical emergence of Pentecostal Christianity in Zambia (cf. Cheyeka 2008). Here I refer to the 1991 declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation by the late president Frederick Chiluba, who self-identified as a born-again Christian and, although formally a member of the United Church of Zambia, also attended NAOG.⁶ Chiluba’s declaration is generally perceived to illustrate both the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches and movement in the preceding decades and their increased political influence (cf. Gifford 1998; Phiri 2003). According to Phiri, the NAOG leadership and membership, which after Chiluba’s election had been actively involved in a special ‘anointing service’ for the president, responded most enthusiastically when the declaration was made (Phiri 2003, 406-407). Like other Pentecostals, NAOG members ‘saw the rule of God coming to Zambia through Chiluba’ (Phiri 2003, 408), which they especially welcomed because his predecessor Kenneth Kaunda was regarded at the end of his regime as a ‘renegade Christian, presiding over a corrupt and oppressive government’ (Gifford 1998, 193).

Although not uncontested, Chiluba’s personal declaration has become a (if not the) dominant ‘narrative of nationhood’ in postcolonial Zambia (Larmer et al. 2014), used to promote a sense of unity in an ethnically and linguistically diverse country (although of course excluding non-Christian minorities).⁷ The declaration, which in 1996 was enshrined in

a preamble to the country's constitution, reflects a sense of 'Pentecostal nationalism' (Yong 2010, 9); that is, a distinctly Pentecostal political theology that subjects the nation as a whole to the discourse of being born again in Christ and combating the influence of Satan in the life of the nation. However, as historian David Gordon points out, 'The promises of Chiluba's "Christian nation" were never delivered', with Chiluba's government in the late 1990s becoming increasingly associated with corruption, fraud, and authoritarian tendencies (2012, 181). Moreover, since the early 1990s the spread of HIV in the country has increased to epidemic proportions, not only posing a major public health problem and adding to people's social and spiritual insecurities, but also raising the critical question of why the religiously inspired prevention messages of abstinence and faithfulness were apparently unsuccessful in this Christian nation.

Yet the difficulty in realising the vision of a national rebirth has not led to a revision of the idea of Zambia as a Christian nation. Instead, this idea has become popular at the grassroots level and is being firmly defended against its critics (such as the Catholic Church) by Evangelical and Pentecostal Christian leaders and their collective lobbying body, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (of which Bishop Banda is a board member). As recently as April 2013 the majority of delegates attending a national constitution-making convention, where a new draft constitution was discussed, voted in favour of upholding the declaration as part of the preamble.⁸ However, it seems that the rhetoric among Pentecostals has changed, from the initial celebration of Chiluba's declaration to the awareness that declaring a nation to be Christian is not the end but the beginning of a project of national renewal and political redemption. Bishop Banda is among the most vocal public defenders of the notion of Zambia as a Christian nation, which is in continuity with the above-mentioned historical link between NAOG and Chiluba and with the church's enthusiastic response to the initial declaration (Phiri 2003). Moreover, the language of 'Possessing the Land for the Lord Jesus Christ' in the NAOG mission statement reflects not just an evangelistic but indeed a territorial and political concern. It is against this background that Banda's sermons on fatherhood—keeping in mind his statement about social, political, and spiritual fatherhood—become politically significant.

The Abdication of Leadership

In the sermon series 'Fatherhood in the 21st Century' Banda addresses all kinds of issues related to men and the socially dominant forms of masculinity with which he is concerned, such as men's irresponsible sexual behaviour, marital unfaithfulness, absence from the family, violence against women, and alcoholism—moral concerns that are typical of the Pentecostal holiness tradition of which the Assemblies of God are part. According to Banda, these issues reveal a more deeply rooted problem, namely the 'impairment of fatherhood' and the 'distortion of manhood' in Zambian society—what sociologists would call a 'crisis of masculinity' (Hearn 1999). In the first two sermons he discusses at length three major issues that in his opinion are characteristic of 'the status and nature of fatherhood in the twenty-first century': 1) 'the violation of God's order', 2) 'the abdication of leadership', and 3) 'circumstantial mind-sets'. The last of these will be discussed in the next section. This section focuses on the abdication of leadership since this most explicitly has a political dimension. The first issue, the violation of God's order, is also revealing for the understanding of

Pentecostal masculinity politics, as Banda here expresses a serious concern about homosexuality and, more specifically, the growing global acceptance and recognition of same-sex relationships by both the state and the church. Regarding the latter, he explicitly refers to the ongoing controversy in the Anglican Communion, and calls the ordination of American ‘gay bishop’ Gene Robinson ‘a blasphemy’. This development is one of the reasons why, in his opinion, ‘we must restore a vision of biblical fatherhood, and biblical fatherhood has in mind that a man as God aimed him takes his role in a family as a father’ (Fatherhood, part 4).⁹ Obviously for Banda and other adherents of Pentecostal nationalism, homosexuality is a major threat to the Christian character of the Zambian nation and is therefore literally demonised (cf. van Klinken 2013a, 2014). At the same time, as will become clear below, the promotion of a strictly heterosexual idea of ‘biblical manhood’ is considered key to the born-again political project of national renewal and redemption. In this respect Pentecostalism does not differ from the Pan-Africanist nationalist ideology promoted by many an African postcolonial leader, which constructed and internalised a hegemonic heterosexual identity as part of the project of postcolonial state building (Ndjio 2013)—an ideology that itself reflects the colonial phallic, patriarchal, and heterosexist system of domination that, as Achille Mbembe suggests, is ultimately rooted in the monotheistic regime of God’s phallus (Mbembe 2001, 13, 212ff).

Banda’s other major concern, about the ‘abdication of leadership’ as a major factor in the Zambian crisis of masculinity, is informed by his observation ‘that men, the male factor in marriage and the male factor in society, have actually withdrawn from performing their role’ (Fatherhood, part 1). Thus he is concerned about both ‘domestic abdication’, that is ‘the lack of involvement of men in their families and homes’ (Brusco 2010, 86), and ‘sociopolitical abdication’, that is men’s failure to provide responsible leadership at all levels of society. Elaborating on the latter, he preaches:

All over the world men are in the majority of leadership positions, but look at the level of oppression! The size of the problem of oppression is equally proportional to the fact that it is men who are leading, so we are doing a bad job, sorry. It is a very serious problem. We love the power. In fact, if you read sociological studies, they talk mainly about the male factor in relation to power. Most powerful positions are held by men. So now there is a SADC [Southern African Development Community] gender policy to include a minimum of 30 percent of women in leadership position. We are striving to get there. But over 70 percent is still held by men, and we are doing a fairly bad job. Shame on us, men. Why? Because of abdication. (Fatherhood, part 1)

The ‘problem of oppression’ Banda refers to is informed by his analysis that men misunderstand the power entrusted to them. Whether it is in the domestic sphere where the idea of ‘biblical manhood’ entails the principle of male headship, or in the wider sociopolitical sphere where ‘biblical manhood’ entails the principle of ‘male leadership’ (though for Banda, leadership in society, different from headship in the home, is not exclusively male), men have used the power that comes with these positions irresponsibly. ‘What we have seen most times is male domination, and it stinks in the nostrils of God. It is a distortion of God’s order, because male domination implies that the woman is less than the man, but that’s not biblical’ (Fatherhood, part 6).

Although in his discussion of the abdication of leadership Banda does not explicitly refer to the political context in Zambia, his firm criticism of male leadership in society is an implicit political critique. Apparently, according to Banda, even in a country that is officially a Christian nation, where by far the majority of the population is Christian and where all prominent politicians pledge to govern according to Christian principles, the overall praxis of political and civil leadership is far from Christian. Collective renewal and political redemption have not been achieved by declaring the nation Christian. This already became visible during Chiluba's ten years in office as the reform agenda of his government was quickly 'taken over by factional competition [and] widespread corruption' (Szeftel 2000, 208), with the president himself becoming the subject of criminal investigations after leaving office in 2002.¹⁰ Of course, it is not clear whether Banda has this in mind or is referring to the more general struggle of leadership at various levels of society to promote development, prosperity, and well-being in the country. The latter is not unlikely, given that many of his middle- and upper-class church members hold influential positions in government, civil society, and business.

Vis-à-vis this problem of an overall abdication of leadership and in line with the Pentecostal idea that individual conversion is key to the ongoing project of collective transformation and national rebirth, Banda calls men to account, or better, preaches that God is calling them to account: 'God is seeking to correct that [i.e. men's abdication of leadership]. He comes into the garden, and even though it was Eve who ate the fruit first, God says to the man: "Where are you?" Today I ask you: "Fathers, where are you?"' (Fatherhood, part 1). In contrast to traditional Christian interpretations of Genesis 3 (the biblical story about the fall into sin of the first human beings, Adam and Eve), that tend to blame woman for the fall, in Banda's reading man is blamed (a similar reading is found in some Ghanaian Pentecostal churches; see Soothill 2007). Since Adam had received the instructions from God to not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he should have prevented Eve from taking the fruit. However, he failed in this leadership role, and that is why God calls his name while he and Eve are hiding in the bushes, 'Adam, where are you?'—a question that Banda broadens into 'Fathers, where are you?' and 'Men, where are you?' (Fatherhood, part 1).

This part of the sermon has some intriguing interactive moments. Having read verses 8 and 9 again, Banda asks the audience to repeat the final words: 'Everybody says: "Where are you?"' After the congregation has repeated these three words, he himself repeats it again, shouting this time, adding even more emphasis to what he calls 'question number one in God's economy'. Banda then goes on with his interactive engagement with the congregation, raising two questions about the biblical story and, cupping his hand behind his ear, waiting for a response from the audience. The two questions are: 'Who ate the fruit first?' and 'Who was given the command first not to touch the tree?'—the respective answers being 'woman' and 'man'. Pedagogically, this is well thought through since in this way he allows the audience to interpret and think about the well-known Genesis account of the Fall from a new perspective. Surprisingly, Banda continues by finger pointing at a particular person in the audience, mentioning him by his name and saying: 'Yes, Mr. xxx, this is for you, a father. Amen! So, she [and here Banda points in the same direction, apparently at the man's wife] ate the fruit first, but you got the instructions first. So here God is coming after you and me'. The point of this interaction is not, I believe, that the message is meant for this individual

man in particular, but for each and every individual man in the audience—both the audience seated in the church and those watching on television. That is clear from the way the preacher continues, no longer pointing at individuals but addressing the congregation as a whole while saying, ‘So when society is where it is at now, the first question we must ask is: “Where is the man?”’ because that is what God is asking. ... Are you hearing me?’ A little later in the sermon, talking about the problems men cause in society and concluding that ‘we men are doing a bad job’, he points at a woman while saying, with a smile, ‘A lady here agrees with me here’. This minor incident, where the bishop explicates and confirms the agreement of a woman with his argument, has some significant gendered aspects, not least among these the fact that it publicly acknowledges women’s opinions about and criticism of men and the way they perform their roles. This was appreciated by female church members, who told me that the Fatherhood series demonstrated that the bishop was ‘on their side’. The numerous interactions in this part of the sermon as well as the theatrical performance, are not just a way for Banda to keep his audience active and awake, but serve deeper pedagogical purposes. As part of what Meyer (2010) calls an ‘aesthetics of persuasion’ that is inherent to preaching as one of Pentecostalism’s ‘sensational forms’, they all contribute to the overall aim of the series, for men to identify with, reflect on, and respond to God’s question to Adam, ‘Where are you?’, culminating in a male-only altar call.

The Adam Narrative and the New Male Subject

The sermon series ‘Fatherhood in the 21st Century’ presents a fascinating example of the ‘narrative imperative’ that, as Marshall (2009, 136) points out, is at the heart of the Pentecostal programme of conversion. Citing John Peel, Marshall argues that such narrative is a preeminently political discourse because it ‘offers the possibility for the subject to achieve a sense of agency’ (2009, 136). What particular narrative is constructed, then, in the sermon series, and how does it realise a transformation of male subjectivity and agency?

Of particular significance here is Banda’s employment of the Pauline symbolism of the first and the second Adam. As Ogbo Kalu points out with reference to African Pentecostalism in general,

In Pentecostal narrative theology, Adam had enormous spiritual and political powers. He had the authority to name all of God’s creation and govern the garden. But he lost all of his authority. God sent a second Adam through Jesus Christ and Christians, as His disciples, have a divine mandate to work with the triune God to recover the chair that Adam lost. (Kalu 2008, 221)

The Fatherhood sermons reflect this narrative but in a rather unique way. In Banda’s version it is not Christians in general that are called to recover Adam’s chair, as Kalu calls it, but it is born-again Christian men in particular who have received this mandate.

What follows below is the quotation of one long section, the closing section, of sermon 2 in the series, split in several parts with a commentary. Earlier in the sermon Banda summarised the previous sermon in the series, in which he explored how fatherhood in the twenty-first century has been impaired by a ‘violation of God’s order’ and by an ‘abdication of leadership’. Following this summary, Banda addresses a third form of impairment ‘by circumstantial mind-sets’, referring to ‘circumstances of the past’. He gives examples, such

as men growing up in a violent home or having an absent father, that men sometimes use as excuses to explain their irresponsible behaviour. In line with Pentecostalism's rhetoric of 'breaking with the past' (Meyer 1998), Banda emphasises that such generational cycles should not determine the present because they can be broken 'in the name of Jesus', and he asks why men are still 'feeding into an Adamic nature that Jesus came to break'. That is the theme he elaborates on in the closing section of the sermon:

There is something in our being as humans and as men that makes it look like to be masculine is equivalent to being obstinate and just wanting our own way. But that's not biblical. The biblical man and the biblical father is counselled to take on the nature of the second Adam. The first Adam of whom we are reading about here of course is the one who more or less started things and that's the way how we are. We are behaving exactly like him: abdication, and this impaired way of life—that's the first Adam. That's the Adamic nature, that is sin.

This quote illustrates how Banda employs the first half of the Adam symbolism, explaining the contemporary problems of masculinity with reference to the 'Adamic nature', a trope that evokes the biblical story about the Fall in paradise for which God held Adam accountable (preceding the sermon Banda read Genesis 3: 1-1, a passage he had preached about extensively in the first sermon of the series in relation to 'the abdication of leadership'). Adam, with his failure to live up to the responsibility granted to him by God, becomes paradigmatic of the current situation of mankind.

I want us to read 1 Corinthians 15: 45-49 and I want to show you that there is a spiritual role that God wants us to perform, there is a spiritual surgery that God wants to perform in your life as a father. [Reading of 1 Cor 15: 45.] Everyone says: 'Life-giving spirit'. [Congregation says: 'Life-giving spirit'.] Jesus Christ gives life. The Bible says: in him was life, and the life was the light of men, giving guidance and direction. So there is a new place for a man and a father in this society and I want us to go there today.

The Pauline account in 1 Cor. 15 on the eschatological resurrection of the body is invoked to invent a narrative for the transformation of masculinity in the present. The 'natural body' Paul talks about becomes synonymous here with the negative masculinity that is part of the Adamic nature, and the 'spiritual body' becomes synonymous with the rebirth of men through which they come to take up their place in society and perform the role they are supposed to play according to God's original plan with Adam. This rebirth, or 'spiritual surgery', is enabled by the life-giving spirit of Jesus Christ, the second Adam who in another sermon is called 'God's provision for the reinnovation of masculinity' (Fatherhood, part 4). When talking about this spiritual role and spiritual surgery, the preacher speaks louder, as if to emphasise the urgency. He continues with a loud voice, becoming more and more ecstatic:

Last week I raised the question: 'Where are you?' And we found out that we are in a place where we are hiding, and circumstances have dictated how we must behave, but today we are coming out of the shadows as men and fathers in the twenty-first century. I want us to understand that the second Adam has done a work that no man can ever do. He gives you a nature and there is a way in which you can apply the realities of Christ that can change the way you live. Now if there are some men here who are born again and somehow you are still in a

struggling mode, you've still been at a place where things are not happening for you, I want to let you know: the problem is not with Christ, the problem is with you.

Talking about men hiding from God, the preacher crouches as if he hides on the stage, before rising and moving forward step by step when talking about men coming out of the shadows. Clearly, his preaching being a bodily performance, form and content are intertwined.

Important in the above quotation is the notion that the second Adam had already done the work, but that it is up to Christian men to apply this to their own lives. The born-again Christian identity, it becomes clear, is not a guarantee that men have left behind their 'Adamic nature'. As Marshall puts it, 'Becoming Born-Again is an event of rupture, but being Born-Again is an ongoing existential project, not a state acquired once and for all, a process that is never fully achieved and always runs the risk of being compromised' (2009, 131).¹¹ Failure in this project is ascribed to the individual who apparently lacks the commitment to self-labour, the active work of the self on the self that it takes to become a 'new creation'.

Banda is no exception among Pentecostal preachers when he refers to himself as a model of Christian life: 'I have experienced this in my life; I have seen that He has helped me to condition my mind as a man, to be a faithful husband. Beloved, it can be done today and now in the name of Jesus'. Where the Catholic Church has saints who present the faithful with a model of religious living, in Pentecostal circles pastors assume the role of what Simon Coleman (2011) calls 'charismatic saints', that is, charismatic preachers who exemplify and embody the principles of holiness and whose lives and words are mirrored in the lives of their followers. Remarkably, here and in other sermons in the series, Banda explicitly presents himself as an example of the 'biblical manhood' he preaches about, as someone who has answered God's question, 'Adam, where are you?' The church website as well as the billboard in front of the church building have a prominent picture of him and his wife in a romantic pose (figure 2), presenting them as an ideal of Christian conjugal love. In this sermon he



Figure 2: Picture of Bishop Joshua Banda and his wife, Gladys Banda, on the church website

refers to himself as a ‘faithful husband’, that is, as a living example to those men he had addressed earlier in his sermon, who think that they ‘cannot be free from bad thoughts, from extramarital affairs, from unfaithfulness and things like that’. It is as if the pastor himself and his marriage become part of an aesthetics of persuasion, convincing men that ‘it can be done’, as he shouts at one moment in his sermon.

The reference to Christ helping him to condition his mind as a man again illustrates how the work on the self in this context is explicitly defined in terms of a transformation of the male subject, and also how this work is in fact a coproduct of personal commitment and divine assistance. As Banda continues, preaching ecstatically:

Jesus Christ does make a difference. I am not talking about men who just say Jesus, Jesus and then walk out and do other things. I am talking about men who want to give up their sense of masculinity in a negative way where they just think that they are macho and unbeatable and they are this or the other and they have given themselves to a sensuality and things of this life. That you make yourself instead vulnerable for God. He will understand. On your own you can do nothing.

The emphasis on men’s vulnerability for God may reveal the ‘soft’ side of Pentecostal masculinities, reflecting the element of surrendering to the Spirit and letting go of control, which some scholars have argued conflicts with the ways in which men are often socialised (Gooren 2010). This notion of vulnerability could potentially open up a space not only for men’s spirituality but also for their emotional lives. It clearly contradicts what Banda calls the ‘sense of negative masculinity’—associated with machismo, power, and the lack of self-control—according to which, according to a popular Zambian saying, ‘real men don’t cry’. For Banda this vulnerability is located in the fact that ‘on your own you can do nothing’, a statement that is illustrative of the paradox of born-again conversion: as much as it ‘employs a language of will, intentionality, self-help, self-mastery and personal empowerment’, it also acknowledges the individual ‘as being fundamentally powerless, at God’s mercy, dependent entirely upon His grace’ (Marshall 2009, 142–143). It requires an encounter with the second Adam for a man to discover his true masculinity:

The true masculinity is raised up and elevated only in the second Adam. There has to be a true encounter between you and Jesus. You can’t claim to be a born-again Christian man and do what I described earlier. Where it seems to be no difference for you: your language has not changed, you still beat your wife, you still act recklessly. Then something has not happened, you haven’t met the true Christ.

Referring to true masculinity being raised up and elevated in the second Adam, the preacher wildly raises his arms, his gestures illustrating the very possibility and dramatic impact of a true, life-changing encounter with Christ.

The born-again discursive regime promoting a break with the immoral past and the adoption of a new lifestyle takes particular shape here when it presents the encounter with the ‘true Christ’ as the key for men to find their ‘true masculinity’, which is measured by their success in mastering the self and changing their ‘bad habits’. The quoted passage further exemplifies the precariousness of born-again masculinity: even when you think of yourself as a born-again Christian man, any backsliding raises the question of whether you have actually

met the true Christ and are truly born again. This makes born-again conversion a lifelong existential project. While at first glance the preacher seems to address only some men in the audience—those who are not truly born again—he indirectly evokes the memory of the dramatic conversion experience that all believers are supposed to have undergone (and that male church members are eager to talk about; see van Klinken 2012). In view of the risk of backsliding, evoking this memory is crucial for religious experience and commitment to be constantly renewed.

The relation between the ‘true Christ’ and ‘true masculinity’ is not so much located in the idea that the historical figure of Jesus Christ would embody this true masculinity—in fact, Banda does not pay any attention to the ways in which the New Testament depicts Jesus as a man (for understandable reasons, since the masculinity of Jesus Christ as depicted in the Gospels is rather ambiguous)—but in the spiritual powers that Christ as the second Adam has to redeem men’s negative masculinity in a transformative way:

Today I call you [shouting, and then continuing in a lower voice and speaking in slow motion], because I don’t see how a man who has truly come to know Jesus can be of the kind of attitude and circumstances that we see around. Something is wrong. The second Adam does a special work. Read with me. [Reading of 1 Corinthians 15,46-49] This is the second Adam. We can bear his likeness. That is why we can agree with Paul when he says: ‘Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the church’. It can be done! [By now he is shouting again.] The second Adam came to break the mind-set and that curse that makes men think that they must act like animals out there, unable to control their sexual desires. We are better than that, we are higher than that, we are more elevated than that because God gave us a provision in the second Adam. I want men here today to agree in their hearts and to understand that this Jesus can set you free. Today and now. So we can display true fatherhood in the twenty-first century. Next Sunday I will explain to you the biblical interpretation of the principle of manhood, what it really means. But today we must first of all deal with the circumstances of yesterday and the circumstances of today, what people have said to you, what the media has said, what your family has said, what your lineage had dictated, what your ancestry has dictated—we want the power of the second Adam to be at work today and to set you free. Hallelujah! And when the son of man sets you free, you shall be free.

While preaching about the second Adam breaking men’s mind-sets and setting them free, Banda is shouting loudly and moving his arms frantically, as if he is physically demonstrating the spiritual power of Christ through which men ‘today and now’ can be liberated and transformed. Indeed, this narrative about the second Adam is an alternative form of liberation theology, with liberation being understood spiritually in terms of deliverance from everything associated with an Adamic ‘negative masculinity’ and the adoption of a ‘redemptive masculinity’, that is, a new, Christian form of masculinity enabled by the redemption brought about through Christ.

The Altar Call as a ‘Performative Path’

In order for men to give their lives to Jesus, for the first time or again, and to access his liberating power that would transform them into new Christian male subjects, following the sermon that Sunday an altar call was made for men only. The altar call is a standard element in Pentecostal worship, another sensational form in Pentecostalism. It usually comes after the sermon when individuals are urged by the pastor to come to the altar—the sacred space in

front of the church—as an expression of repentance and faith. In the words of Pentecostal theologian Daniel Tomberlin, the altar call shows that Pentecostal worship is essentially about ‘an evangelistic encounter’ with God’s holy and life-transforming presence (2010, 31). It presents individuals with ‘a moment of decision, which converts are incited to witness publicly, and the feeling of compulsion often attached to it are signs that the convert is already caught up in the desire for change, for empowerment and supernatural intervention in his life’ (Marshall 2009, 148).

This male-only altar call, in other words, is an embodied ritual practice that enables born-again conversion among men and produces new Christian male subjects in the double sense distinguished by Marshall (2009): men are subjects when they decide to respond to the altar call, and in doing so they are subjected to the life-transforming power of God. Announcing the altar call that Sunday, Banda exhorted: ‘Today I am making an altar call for men only. Listen, this is about recapturing our position. The world needs us, gentlemen, to perform a better role than what we are performing’ (Fatherhood, part 2)—words that again illustrate the political significance of born-again masculinity as it addresses the ‘abdication of leadership’ by men at all levels of society. The altar call gives men an opportunity to publicly respond to God’s question, ‘Adam, where are you?’

The conversion of men at an individual level appears to be key to a large-scale sociopolitical renewal in order for Zambia to be a truly Christian nation. At the same time, since the sermon and the altar call are televised, broadcast, and distributed on DVD, the reach of this divine call becomes potentially unlimited. The phone number in the running text displayed on the screen gives men an opportunity to respond regardless of their geographical location, which demonstrates the dialectic of Pentecostalism between a national (and in this case nationalist) and at the same time transnational discourse. The produced recording of the sermon includes the announcement of but not the response to the altar call. This is in line with *The Liberating Truth* emphasizing ‘the message’ rather than ‘the spectacle’. It may further indicate that men’s response to the altar call, although publicly performed in the church service, in the end is considered a private affair between them and God, and therefore should not be televised. By not including the response, the altar call remains open to all men—not only those in the physical audience but those watching at a later stage.

Conclusion—Redemptive Masculinity?

This case study complements already-existing scholarship on Pentecostal masculinity politics in contemporary Africa and elsewhere. This scholarship tends to foreground how Pentecostalism, as part of its broader programme of born-again conversion, contributes to the domestication of men by promoting male responsibility in the home, marriage, and the family, and hence also indirectly contributes to social transformation (cf. Brusco 2010). However, in the present case study the ambition goes further and is more explicitly political, not just seeking transformation of male behaviours in private and domestic spheres but also in public and sociopolitical spheres. This is evident in Banda’s discussion of men’s ‘abdication of leadership’ and the ‘problem of oppression’ in society, and in his call to men to demonstrate ‘social fatherhood’ through responsible leadership at all levels in society. In the present case study born-again masculinity is key not only to individual and domestic but also

to collective and national redemption. What, then, are the implications of this case study for further scholarship on Pentecostalism, masculinity politics, and citizenship in Africa?

First, the case study calls for further comparative study of masculinity politics in Pentecostal circles in Zambia and in Africa more widely, taking into account the variety of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, the social class of church membership, and the specific political context. In NAOG, the explicitly political nature of the discourse on men and masculinities appears to be informed by the church membership being generally middle to upper class, with many adult male church members holding influential positions in business, government, and the civil sector. Emphasising men's sociopolitical leadership is more relevant here than in a context where most church members are youths, are relatively uneducated, and/or work in the informal sector. NAOG's historical investment in the Christian nation declaration and the underlying ideology of Pentecostal nationalism also seems to have stimulated the particular discourse analysed above. Further study could demonstrate whether and, if so, how in other Pentecostal contexts a similar form of political masculinity is being produced. Since previous studies have tended to foreground transformations in the domestic realm, this may at least partly be informed by the particular trajectory toward the study of religion and masculinity politics in Africa that was mainly concerned with issues of power in intimate spheres.

Second, this case study demonstrates how masculinity politics feeds into a broader Pentecostal political agenda in which conversion is considered 'a means of creating the ideal citizen' (Marshall 2009, 14). This calls for a further interrogation of the relationship between religious notions of masculinity and of citizenship, which so far has hardly been addressed. Scholarship on Pentecostalism should acknowledge the gendered nature of Pentecostal notions of redemptive citizenship, while scholarship on political citizenship in Africa needs to take into account religion in general, and Pentecostalism in particular, as key sites of citizenship. Classic sociological distinctions, such as between religion and politics, private and public spheres, and spiritual and profane citizenship, need to be interrogated in order to understand the intersections of religious and political citizenship in contemporary Africa.

Third, what is obvious from the present case study is that the Pentecostal political project, at least in the context of NAOG, is highly gendered. It is men in particular who are targeted and modelled to become ideal political citizens. In spite of his adherence to the principle of male-female equality, including the possibility that women could hold positions of political leadership, Banda appears to conceive of headship in the home as an exclusively male affair, and leadership in society as a primarily male matter. In what he calls 'God's economy of gender', femininity—or 'biblical womanhood'—is characterised by 'women's disposition to receive, affirm and nurture men's strength and leadership' (Fatherhood, part 5). The present case study of 'biblical manhood' needs to be complemented by one that looks into ideologies of 'biblical womanhood', examining how both feed into a broader project of bringing about transformation in domestic and political spheres.

To conclude, born-again masculinity may be key to the Pentecostal project of national redemption, but the redemptive potential of this political masculinity is difficult to assess.¹² From a feminist or gender-critical perspective, it can easily be argued that with its rhetoric of male headship and leadership Pentecostalism reinforces patriarchal structures of power and governance both in the domestic and in the sociopolitical sphere. From a political-science

perspective, one might argue that Pentecostal masculinity politics, as discussed in this article, are yet another way through which Pentecostalism introduces and reinforces a new form of ‘big-man rule’ in contemporary Africa (McCauley 2013). A particular concern here is that Banda’s sermons hardly clarify what the central notion of responsibility exactly and concretely means for the ethical practice of men’s social and political leadership. Additional research not only on the discourse about but also on the actual performance of born-again masculinity will need to further explore these critical concerns. What can be noted here is that in this case study and in wider African Pentecostal circles (cf. Soothill 2007; Chitando 2007), the principles of male headship and leadership are explicitly dissociated from domination, with men’s abuse of power and oppression being openly criticised. These principles are then being redefined in terms of responsibility, in Banda’s words a ‘benevolent responsibility’, because men are ‘to serve rather than to dictate’ (Fatherhood, part 3). Pentecostalism may not be ‘a religion that self-consciously aims at the dismantling of patriarchy’ (Brusco 2010, 87), but at least it could possibly bring about a transformation within patriarchy. Just as ‘the Born-Again program ... cannot be seen as developing an unambiguous critical response or form of “counter-conduct” to postcolonial modes of accumulation and domination’ (Marshall 2009, 196), Pentecostalism similarly presents a complex and rather ambiguous response to the problem of male power and the crisis of masculinity in African societies that it seeks to address.

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Notes

¹I am aware of the variety of Pentecostal and Charismatic forms of Christianity in contemporary Africa. When I use the shorthand term 'Pentecostalism' in this article, it is not

to homogenise these differences but to broadly refer to ‘all those movements and churches where the emphasis is on an ecstatic experience of the Spirit and a tangible practice of spiritual gifts’ (Anderson 2013, 8).

²The term ‘conversion’ is used in this article not in the narrow sense of a change in an individual’s religious affiliation but in a broader sense of religious transformation, including an often-radical personal change of worldview and identity. Henri Gooren notes that conversion leads to ‘biographical reconstruction, that is, reshaping one’s life story in accordance with Pentecostal conventions’ (2010, 106). For an analysis of how such biographical reconstruction intersects with masculinity, see van Klinken 2012.

³<http://www.northmeadassembly.org>.

⁴In one of the sermons in the series Banda extensively quotes and discusses a definition of ‘biblical manhood’ that he derives from a publication by John Piper (Piper 1991). A U.S. Baptist theologian and prolific writer, Piper is associated with the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), an American conservative Christian organisation that, according to its website (www.cbmw.org), aims to provide a ‘biblical’ response to the ‘ideology of evangelical feminism’. This presents us with an example of travelling discourses on gender within contemporary global Christianity, yet as much as discourses travel, they are not simply copy-pasted from one context to another but are negotiated and translated. Banda adopts and adjusts the notion of ‘biblical manhood’ to his own context, making it part of his own sociopolitical agenda. This agenda is not concerned with opposing ‘evangelical feminism’ but with building Christian marriages and families, and even a Christian nation in postcolonial Zambia.

⁵In other church ministries catering to youths and singles, NAOG does address issues related to youth masculinity, but this falls outside the scope of this article.

⁶According to Isabel Phiri, Chiluba was ‘attached to Charismatic fellowships within the UCZ and to the Northmead Assebmly of God’ (2003, 405).

⁷Zambians have historically been divided in up to seventy-three Bantu-speaking ethnic groups, usually clustered in seven major regional language groups: Barotse, Bemba, Lunda-Luvale (or North-Western), Mambwe, Nyanja, Tonga, and Tumbuka. Over 85 percent of Zambians are considered to be Christian.

⁸I have written in more detail about the constitutional review process and the discussion about the preamble in van Klinken 2015.

⁹I have explored the heteronormative rhetoric in ‘Fatherhood in the 21st Century’ elsewhere (van Klinken 2011b).

¹⁰He was found guilty in a UK court in 2007, while in 2009 the Zambian court finally acquitted him (in a ruling that, according to critics, was politically motivated).

¹¹For this reason, male church members in NAOG are encouraged to join the church’s Men of Truth Ministry in which men are encouraged to stay ‘truthful and faithful to their marriage, their family and the community’ (interview with the pastor in charge of the ministry, quoted from van Klinken 2013b, 107).

¹²For a discussion on redemptive masculinities in contemporary African contexts see Chitando and Chirongoma 2012.