

Examining the Concept of Reincarnation in African Indigenous Religion Through the Lens of Pentecostal Eschatology

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Abstract

Reincarnation is the belief in ongoing birth and rebirth. The philosophy of African Traditional Religion centres on birth and rebirth, where previous life quality affects both. Infants are seen as resemble deceased grandparents, implying they may be reincarnated. This interpretation assumes that the departed ancestor lived a morally virtuous life and died at an advanced age to qualify for reincarnation in the family lineage. Conversely, a family member is hesitant to associate with someone who has lived a morally repugnant life. The aforementioned intellectual construct is related to Christian eschatology. Thus, eschatology and reincarnation must be thoroughly examined. This paper explains the similarities between African Traditional Religion and Pentecostal eschatology and sheds light on African philosophy. This study examines reincarnation in African indigenous religion through Pentecostal eschatology. The relationship between these two belief systems is examined to determine their similarities, differences, and potential effects on religious understanding and practices. The study employed a qualitative methodology, strictly descriptive analytical perspective and concludes that African indigenous religion and Pentecostal eschatology affect people's beliefs about the afterlife and spirituality. The study further shed light on religious syncretism, amalgamation, and how multiple belief systems interact within African spirituality.

Keywords: African Indigenous Beliefs, Spirituality, Eschatology, Pentecostalism, Afterlife and Reincarnation

INTRODUCTION

Reincarnation is a core element of several religious practices worldwide, offering understanding of the repetitive cycle of existence, mortality, and renewal. Reincarnation plays a significant role in African indigenous religions, influencing ideas about the afterlife, relationships with ancestors, and the ongoing existence of individuals over generations. Simultaneously, Pentecostal eschatology provides a unique viewpoint on the culmination of time, highlighting beliefs like as the return of Christ, the ultimate evaluation of humanity, and the revival of deceased individuals. This study aims to analyse the notion of reincarnation in African traditional religion by utilising the perspective of Pentecostal eschatology.

In view of above, Andrew Ojo (2013) averred the fundamental mechanisms of the natural world and the continual process of manifestation are explained in many nations' cultural traditions within these cultural standards. The Secret Doctrine states that karmic effects limit population in a plane of existence. Reincarnation

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is generally considered as vital for real self-awareness of one's inner spiritual essence, especially in the face of worldly demands. Human spirituality remains continuous throughout life, evolving to physical forms that match development. Life experiences refine these manifestations to express the spiritual essence's inherent capacities. Only those who have transcended the cycle of reincarnation and acquired a divine-like status in human perception are exempt from this "cycle of necessity". However, others wilfully disobey the spiritual ideals that guide one's development are negated from the circle of life as postulated by Sandra Klopfer (2009). The creators of Illa claim that the spiritual Self manifests as masculine or feminine at various points throughout its long journey. Only a small number of entities escape reincarnation according to John S. Mbiti (1990).

Pentecostal eschatology serves as a framework for understanding the ultimate purpose and destiny of human life within the context of religious beliefs. It addresses questions about the nature of reality, the meaning of existence, and the culmination of history. Pentecostal eschatological teachings often provide guidance on how individuals should live their lives in preparation for the future, emphasizing moral conduct, spiritual growth, and adherence to religious teachings, Russel Spittler (1996) portrayed. The study of eschatology can also inspire hope, comfort, and reassurance for believers, as it offers a vision of a transcendent reality beyond the limitations of earthly existence. Eschatological beliefs can vary widely across different religious traditions, reflecting diverse perspectives on the nature of the divine, the afterlife, and the ultimate fate of humanity. Again, Grant Osborne (2011) reiterated that by exploring eschatology, individuals and communities engage with profound existential questions and seek to find meaning and purpose in the face of life's uncertainties. In the light of the establishment of some elements of similarities and divergences between reincarnation and eschatology, this research investigates the points of convergence, divergence, and consequences of these two separate belief systems. This research seeks to enhance our comprehension of how diverse worldviews influence beliefs about the afterlife, spiritual existence, and the ultimate fate of humanity within various cultural and religious contexts. This comparative investigation aims to elucidate the intricacies of belief, tradition, and syncretism in the domain of eschatological thoughts and reincarnation comprehension.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Many researchers with a Christian theological and intellectual background have overlooked African Indigenous Religion due to the dominance of Christianity. Despite the significant impact of Christianity on African indigenous religion, AIR continues to gain pace in its quest for members. The historical exploration and documentation of the causes for this ongoing importance have been insufficient. The contrasting themes in the two religions have been an overlooked subject of rigorous and thorough examination in historical research. Several scholars who have written about either Christianity or African indigenous Religion (AIR) have seemingly neglected crucial factors that have consistently attracted followers of Christianity to AIR. With the exception of a few broad declarations, there has been a lack of focus on the integration, syncretization and synthesis of AIR and Christianity. The statements generated from this source have offered essential information for a more comprehensive examination into the examination of reincarnation and eschatology in the Christian religion and the overwhelming results of the synthesis of both religions.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative approach that involved descriptive and analytical methodologies, to achieve a clear and thorough outcome. In order to achieve this objective, a significant amount of information was collected through a comprehensive investigation carried out on secondary historical sources. The secondary sources, such as books, journal articles, and internet materials, were extensively utilized to provide more detailed information

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Framework adopted to evaluate the concept of reincarnation in African indigenous religion through the lens of Pentecostal Eschatology are as follows: Cultural Hybridity Theory, proposed by Garcia (1995), this theory opine that cultural hybridity emerges when two or more cultures interact and merge, creating a new cultural form that incorporates elements from each original culture. However, by application, it connotes contextual utilization which in the context of African traditional religion and Pentecostal eschatology, cultural

hybridity theory can help explain how the fusion of these belief systems gives rise to a new and unique expression of African spirituality. Again, this work utilized the application of Colonialism and Post-Colonialism Theory proposed by Rutherford (1990) which critically elucidates that Colonialism and post-colonialism explore the impact of colonial encounters on indigenous cultures and the subsequent processes of cultural negotiation, resistance, and transformation. By applying these theories, we can examine how the introduction of Christianity during the colonial period influenced African traditional beliefs, leading to syncretism and shaping the contemporary African spiritual landscape.

Bhabha (1994) corroborated above in his theory Cultural Preservation and Adaptation Theory which profoundly emphasizes the dynamic nature of culture, highlighting the tension between preserving traditional cultural practices and adapting to external influences.

By employing this framework, we can analyze how the syncretism between African indigenous religion and Pentecostalism has influenced the preservation, adaptation, or transformation of African spirituality over time. Hall (1992) also proffered a theory crucial in this research known as Identity and Belonging Theory. This theory enunciates how individuals and communities construct their identities and sense of belonging through cultural practices, beliefs, and interactions. Further, through this theoretical lens, we can investigate how the syncretism between African indigenous religion and Pentecostal eschatology has shaped African individuals' and communities' identities, sense of the afterlife, hereafter, and soul's journey. Kraidy (2005) also gave his voice in this regard through application of Power Dynamics and Agency Theory. This theory examines power relations and agency in cultural interactions, considering how individuals and groups navigate and negotiate power structures to assert their cultural autonomy and expression. By using this framework, we can analyze the power dynamics at play in the syncretism between African indigenous religion and Pentecostal Christianity, exploring how African communities exercise agency in shaping their spirituality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reincarnation: An Overview

African indigenous religion manifests traditions indicating souls undergo multiple transitions between physical incarnations in a continual cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, according to David Chidester (1997). Human and animal well-being depends on the soul's prior life Laurent Magea (1997) proffered. Sandra klopper (2009) also postulated, morally virtuous people are believed to reincarnate in a higher state, while morally deficient people are believed to reincarnate in a lower state. Stressing on the concept of Karma Kimbwandende, kia bunseki fu-kiau (2001) elucidated that karma holds that humans can be rewarded for good behaviours and punished for bad ones. The ultimate purpose of Karma is for the soul to reach the highest plane of existence and unite with the cosmos. In the same vein, Aloysius Lugira (1996) believes reincarnation explains humanity's origin and fate. This idea transcends Eastern religions and New Age spirituality, reaching non-esoteric people. The idea that people have had multiple lifetimes and will continue to do so is a fascinating way to think about the existential consequences of human existence. Reincarnation is comforting, especially for those who desire liberty within.

The concept of certainty is examined in the context of future existence and liberty. However, reincarnation may be seen as a break from the monotheistic belief in divine assessment by a sacred entity, which could lead to eternal damnation. Reincarnation's perceived ability to explain individual variances is one reason it's widely accepted in modern society. Some people have good health, while others have chronic physical restrictions. Jan knappert (2004) also suggested a socioeconomic imbalance in which some are wealthy and others are at risk of poverty. Some people succeed regardless of their religion, but others fail despite their religious allegiance. Reincarnation theory in African indigenous religion explains human inequities by attributing them to past lives. The virtuous or evil actions of these lives manifest in the present through karma. Thus, reincarnation appears to be a viable way to administer equitable repercussions for an individual's conduct without relying on a deity.

Universality is crucial to evaluating philosophical systems, according to Joseph Ratzinger (1988). Worldwide, people believe in a metaphysical dimension that underpins daily life. There is significant variance in beliefs

about how spirituality and materialism interact. Many societies propose a conceptual framework that links two fundamental notions by assuming a continuous sequence of thoughts and senses. Religious and philosophical frameworks have discussed an interwoven stream, which depicts an endless cycle of manifestation as a fluctuation. This process involves "birth" in one domain and "death" in another, yet awareness remains constant.

Reincarnation has several meanings and is known by different names in different cultures. Rebirth is symbolised by various Yoruba words, including *Yiya omo*, meaning "emergence of a new lineage" or "transition into infancy," and *A-tun-wa*, meaning "a subsequent arrival." Aboh-speaking Ibo Nigerians use "Inua u'we" to mean "returning to life." Their view of death is that it marks the end of one's current existence and the beginning of a new one according to John Mbiti (1990). Reincarnation is considered a spiritual necessity, hence many strongly believe in it. The different explanations of rebirth in traditional African religions reveal their deep theosophical roots. People believe there are a finite amount of souls at a time, making reincarnation conceivable. The southern Zambian Illa believes that a set number of spirits were formed and given corporeal forms after creation, as put forth by Laurent Magesa (1997). After an individual's physical body dies, the immaterial essence exists in its own world of consciousness and prepares for the acquisition of new physical forms. The Illa elders believe that most humans will be reincarnated, except for two Mizhimo, tribe-specific deities, and sorcerers who have slowed spiritual progress are the exceptions. Again, Sandra klopper (2009) maintained, the Illa believes that reincarnating spirits can take on the bodies of either men or women, independent of their previous gender. According to many religious traditions, the incarnating spirit, which embodies an individual's essential nature, does not give a newborn infant any remembrance of previous spiritual or material existences. The spirit animates the corporeal form throughout an individual's lifespan, enduring everyday life's unpredictable changes. More so, Jan Knappert (2004) purported the reference to the ancient Greek mythology of the river Lethe, often known as the river of Forgetfulness in the Underworld, evokes identification. In mythological traditions, those who were about to be reborn would drink a certain amount of river water. This would erase their past.

Writing on reincarnation of the Yoruba people of Nigeria Awolalu, Omosade and Adelumo Dopamu (1979) believe the phenomena of reincarnation is expressed through ancestor's *okan*, or "heart-soul," replicated through their children. Although the Yoruba consider the *emin* or "spiritual body" the source of existence, the relationship between the two is unclear. According to Nigerian Nupe mythology, the *kuci*, or "personal soul," gives newborn Nupe children life. The *kucit* returns to *Soko* (God) for a set time before reincarnating. To emphasise the inescapability of reincarnation, Nupe tribesmen compare the post-mortem journey of the *kuci* to the trajectory of a stone launched into the air, which descends and rests. At death, the *rayi*, or "life essence," is believed to be incorporated back into the cycle of creation. While not directly integrating into the bodily form, this assimilation gives the reincarnating entity energy. Similar to Biblical traditions, the Illa *moza*, or "vital breath," is thought to animate the body. Daily interactions are generally affected by past events, which shape and build character over time. Various religious traditions view reincarnation as a natural process by which the spiritual essence within each person gains self-awareness through transformational worldly experiences.

Awolalu, and Dopamu (1979) affirming above, postulated thus, in reincarnation-based African societies, cleaning and purging the inner essence through several lives is a spiritual requirement. In Ghana's Akan tribe, reincarnation is believed to help people reach their full compassion. The comparison is like submerging a container in deep water. The bucket's weight when lifted from the well indicates its water content. If the bucket seems too light or not full, it is dropped again until the guy is sure it is full. The soul emerges and returns to its origin. Humans cannot be elevated and in a symbiotic connection with divine entities until their vessel of *nkrabea*, which represents their unique essence or destiny provided by *Nyankopan*, a divine aspect, is fully supplied with beneficial traits. This condition is only reached after the soul's ultimate destiny is fulfilled. The fully integrated soul rejoices at returning home. A soul's reincarnation on earth is like a child eager to learn and improve, not a condemned criminal awaiting punishment.

Among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria, the issues of reincarnation is prevalent the is describe as concept "*!lọ ụwa*," meaning a cyclical return to the world. The Igbo's believed in "*Ala-mụọ*" afterlife. The phrase "*Ala-mụọ*" refers to metaphysical levels beyond folktale fairyland. The people believe their ancestors live in '*Ala-mụọ*' and intercede for them before "*Chi-na-eke*" (the divine creator) and "*Ofo-na ọgu*" (the divine force

regulating natural equilibrium, including agricultural practices. People believe their deceased relatives live in "Ala-muo" after death. These dead spirits may reincarnate as family members as averred by Ihenwa (2014).

Corroborating above Eze, et al. (2024) emphasized the indigenous people of Igboland believe in life after death. Human souls transmigrate through seven regions, according to this belief. In Igboland, children and spouses often thank their elderly parents with phrases like "Ezi Nwam/nwunyem, igakwa abụ nwam /nwunyem, ụwam ụwa asaa." This statement means that a good child or spouse will always be loved by the family in all seven realms. According to Iwe (1979) the Igbo progenitors knew about seven rounds and seven races in humanity's developmental cycles. The Igbo have different views on how human reincarnation works. Various theories exist about reincarnation. One theory holds that people are reborn with their height, strength, and complexion. Another idea is that after death, the physical body decomposes and feeds organisms, but only the immortal divine within humans reincarnates. This group believes that a person's former life's merits and flaws will determine their lineage upon reincarnation, and they will be reborn as a newborn with the capacity to grow into an adult.

Again, Ekeopara (2011), reiterate above maintaining the Igbo term "Ebibi-ụwa" refers to a young prodigy, meaning "Nature's imprint." Reincarnation is supported by the Igbo community's observation of people with pre-incarnate intellectual and physical traits. Ekeopara maintains the following names are common in Igboland culture indicating cycle of reincarnation. The paternal grandfather and grandmother are Nna-nna and Nne-nna. Siblings are Nne-ji while half-siblings are Nna-ji. Nwa-nne Daa is the maternal uncle or aunt. Each family name identifies a different ancestor. Modern people show the same respect for their deceased ancestors or paternal relatives as they do for their children. In some Igbo regions, people are taking their pre-incarnation names and reverently honouring their ancestors. Reincarnation is strongly engrained in the Igbos' communal consciousness, despite their widespread Christianization. The emergence of convincing evidence about reincarnation causes Nigerian Christians to re-evaluate Church doctrine and even re-embrace their ancestors' practices and beliefs.

Pentecostal Eschatology: An Overview

Eschatology is a field of theology that studies the end times, humanity's ultimate fate, the afterlife, and the world's final events for religious reasons, according to Jerry Walls (2008). Robert Clouse (1977) corroborated thus, it discusses death, judgement, heaven, hell, resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the final judgement, and soul fate. Bart Ehman (2020) emphasized that many religions emphasise eschatology, which shapes views about the purpose of life and its significance. Joseph Ratzinger (1988) traced the etymology of the word eschatology as having its roots from the Greek words "eschatos" (last) and "logos" (study) refer to the branch of theology that studies the ultimate destiny of humanity and the world, often focussing on the end times and events surrounding the end of the world as believed in various religious traditions. Again, Carl Breaten (1994) postulated that eschatological beliefs vary by religion and can include the last judgement, the resurrection of the dead, the afterlife, a new heaven and earth, and the fate of the virtuous and unrighteous. In the same vein, William Crockett (1992) opined eschatology studies time, human purpose, and religion end-times teachings for a better future.

Buttressing the above, Regis Armstrong (1998) averred eschatology influences religious communities' beliefs, practices, and worldviews and illuminates how people interpret life in light of their ultimate reality. Wright (2008) elucidating on eschatology further maintained eschatology helps religious people grasp the ultimate purpose and destiny of human life. Russel Spittler (1996) further reiterated eschatology explores reality, existence, and history's end. Following above postulations, Grant Osborne (2011) inundate further that eschatological teachings emphasise morality, spiritual growth, and religious adherence to prepare people for the future. Randell Stephens (2008) aptly suffices that eschatology offers believers hope, comfort, and reassurance by depicting a transcendent realm beyond human existence. In the same analysis Wolfgang Vondey (2010) succinctly corroborated that eschatological ideas vary by religion, reflecting varying views of the divine, the afterlife, and humanity's fate. Simon Chan (2000) further averred eschatology helps people and societies answer existential issues and find meaning in life uncertainty.

Matthew Sutton (2006) adding impetus to the analysis emphasized that eschatology explores ultimate truths and fates via theological, philosophical, ethical, and metaphysical lenses. Ludovic Lado (2013), also added credence to the discussion on eschatology when he aptly averred that eschatology explores time, eternity, and non-temporal life. Daniel Castelo (2017) corroborated further that Individuals and groups use eschatological teachings to make ethical decisions and grasp the repercussions of their acts in light of divine judgement. Louis Berkhof (2005) exhaustively explicated that eschatology can also give believers a sense of urgency and responsibility to follow their religious beliefs and principles in preparation for future events. Odey E. (2023) further opined That eschatology can also soothe those enduring tragedy, grief, or uncertainty by depicting a transcendent world of justice, peace, and reconciliation. She stated further eschatology illuminates the mysteries of life, death, and the hereafter, affecting religious worldviews, ethical frameworks, and existential understandings of the human experience.

Pentecostal eschatology is a branch of Christian theology that studies the end times, Jesus' return, judgement, and humanity's fate as put by Russeel Spittler (1996). He affirmed to identify Pentecostal eschatology one must look out for the following affirmations: Second Coming: Pentecostal eschatology emphasises Jesus' imminent return to earth, the conclusion of history is Christ's return in force and glory to establish His kingdom. Rapture: Many Pentecostal organisations believe believers will be "raptured" to meet Christ in the air before tribulation on earth. This is based on 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Grant Osborne (2011) also postulated that Pentecostals believe in tribulation on earth before Christ's coming. This period usually brings disasters and difficulties that will test humanity. Randell Stephens (2008) maintains that Pentecostal eschatology has varied viewpoints on the millennium, Christ's thousand-year rule described in Revelation. In a different perspective, Wolfgang Vondey (2010) aptly put that Pentecostals believe Christ will return before the century. In contrary however, Simon Chan (2000) elucidate that other Pentecostals believe in postmillennialism or ammillennialism.

In the same vein, Matthew Sutton (2006) reiterates that Pentecostal eschatology believes that all people will give an account of their lives to God in a final judgement. Each person will either live with God or be separated from Him after this judgement. Daniel Castelo (2017) corroborated that Pentecostal eschatology affirms the corporeal resurrection of the dead. This belief holds that all will be resurrected, some to eternal life and some to judgement. After the final judgement, God will establish a new heaven and earth where believers will live forever, according to Pentecostal eschatology. This new creature will be sin-, suffering-, and death-free. War, natural disasters, and moral deterioration are commonly emphasised in Pentecostal eschatology as indicators of Christ's return (Louis Berkhof, 2005). These are Pentecostal eschatological core ideas and teachings, Pentecostal Christians share these eschatological principles, even though their denominations and groupings differ.

Convergence and Divergences between Reincarnation in African Indigenous Religion and Pentecostal Eschatology

Omoregbe (1993) averred in African indigenous religion cultural diversity through reincarnation are made possible as such, African Indigenous religions vary by area and culture, resulting in varied views of reincarnation and the afterlife. Many African scholars have varying views on reincarnation; this is because of the cultural diversity in Africa. Every scholar portrays the cultural beliefs of his/her cultural and ethnic beliefs about reincarnation, as such this research will portray these views base on different African cultural views on reincarnation. According to Laurent Magesa (1990) who wrote on reincarnation using his Ugandan cultural purview, he maintains that African Indigenous religions believe that the soul of a departed person can reincarnate. In his views, African Indigenous faiths believe reincarnation allows the soul to progress spiritually across several incarnations. Again, Sandra Klopper (2009) wrote from South African cultural view point noting that in African Indigenous religions, reincarnation is strongly ingrained in culture, rituals, and ancestor worship.

Similarly, David Chidester (1997) corroborated further, he inferred African Indigenous religions believe ancestors guide and affect reincarnation. In contrast however, Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes end-time doctrines, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the creation of a new heaven and earth. Pentecostal eschatology also views heaven and hell as places of eternal joy and connection with God for believers and eternal separation from God for unbelievers. Rapture difficulties are

reinforced by Pentecostal eschatology. Many Pentecostal Christians believe in the rapture, where believers will meet Christ in the air before the tribulation. Pentecostal eschatology also addresses judgment issues, including an ultimate judgment when everyone will be held accountable for their acts and rewarded or punished. Postulating further, Aloysius Lugira (1996) averred reincarnation in African indigenous religion addresses nature of rebirth, African Indigenous religions and Pentecostalism both believe in reincarnation, however, the details differ. African Indigenous religions emphasize reincarnation and cyclical existence, on the other hand, Pentecostalism emphasizes a linear path to a final judgment and eternal life. More so, Andrew Ojo (2013) opined African Indigenous religions emphasize the importance of ancestors in reincarnation; on the other hand, Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes individual redemption and personal relationship with God. Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes specific end-time events like the second coming of Christ and the final judgment.

Kimbwandende (2001) stated that African Indigenous religions may view time and rebirth more cyclically without a clear linear progression towards an end-time event. It is pertinent to note that while Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes salvation through faith in Christ, African Indigenous religions emphasize ancestral connections, community rituals, and spiritual practices for spiritual growth and evolution. This is quiet similar to both religion, as both are looking at an entity beyond the physical, that is while Christ is the sacred entity, for the Pentecostals, the ancestors becomes the sacred entity for the believers in African Indigenous religion. In this vein, it portrays why most African Christians would refer to Christ as their traditional ancestor. Thus, this calls for religious syncretism and dialogue. Appadurai (1996) had succinctly put that African Indigenous religions and Pentecostal eschatology have different cultural settings, afterlife beliefs, and spiritual growth and salvation approaches to reincarnation. Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) opined reincarnation in African Indigenous religion and Pentecostal eschatology may be compared due to their similarities, indicating spiritual fusion, syncretism and synthesis. More so, Eze et al (2024) postulated further that in African Indigenous Religion, Karma and Reincarnation are present. Some African Indigenous religions use karma for rebirth. It is believed that past acts can affect future reincarnation. Whereas Russel Spittle (1996) averred Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes, the second coming of Christ and judgment day determine when everyone spends forever. Which is also the reward of one's life on earth: morality leads to paradise, whereas immorality leads to hell. This practice or doctrines of Pentecostal eschatology matches AIR's reincarnation process, which involves karma, dictating where everyone will spend eternity. Thus, AIR reincarnation resembles Pentecostal eschatology.

Ekeopara (2011) inferred further that in African Indigenous religions, reincarnation is seen as a way for the soul to progress spiritually and absorb crucial lessons over several lifetimes. Each life offers growth and development. However, Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes purgatory, where the soul awaits Christ's second coming (Simon Chan, 2000). This concept shows substantial similarities between the two religions could boost syncretism spirituality. Pentecostal Eschatology declares End Times Imminence effect. According to Wolfgang Vondey (2010) in Pentecostal eschatology, Christ will return soon and the end times could happen at any time. This urgency guides Christians' faith and behaviour. AIR also emphasizes this belief; however reincarnation can only occur after a decent life and death on Earth (Ihenwa, 2014). Thus, both Pentecostal eschatology and reincarnation in AIR governs human behaviour on Earth. According to Matthew Sutton (2006) some branches of Pentecostalism focus on apocalyptic scenarios and end-time predictions, leading to various ideas regarding the order of events. In AIR however, the ancestors and elders of every African community warn the living about the impending penalty for disgusting lifestyle (Iwe, 1979). Wolfgang Vondey (2010) postulates that Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes resurrection of death which includes the resurrection of the dead, where believers' bodies will be resurrected and rejoined with their souls. Hence, Pentecostal eschatology also believes in a new heaven and world where Christians will dwell in God's presence in a restored creation. On the other hand, Jaja (2015) maintained in AIR only good earthlings can reincarnate as normal humans. However, Randell Stephens (2008) stated that Pentecostal eschatological theology maintained, Christians call reincarnation resurrection and this forms a major disparity between AIR reincarnation and Pentecostal eschatology.

Kasomo (2012) postulated that reincarnation in African Indigenous religion and Pentecostal eschatology discuss life after death and spiritual truths, but they diverge in their views on salvation, the afterlife, and destiny. Different cultural, historical, and theological circumstances have shaped these ideas. In the same vein, Mokotso (2015) corroborated further by saying African Indigenous Religion views reincarnation as part of a cosmic

worldview that links humanity to nature, spirits, and the divine. Reincarnation fits into this cosmic web, similarly, Pentecostal eschatology also connect Christian believers to the cosmic web, by cosmic web in Christianity it means to have a good relationship with Christ and God through the teachings and beliefs in eschatology. Mbiti (1975) had stated that African Indigenous religions incorporate ancestral heritage and continuity as another cosmic link. Soul rebirth may preserve family bonds and predecessors' heritage. He further stated that African Indigenous religions believe that people can be reborn to heal past traumas, complete unfulfilled aspirations, or find spiritual equilibrium. In contrast to above however, Pentecostal eschatology encourages mission and evangelism. As believers endeavour to save souls before Christ's return and the end times they will be able to redeem their soul, become righteous and also receive blessing in this lifetime, instead of the afterlife as conceived by AIR. Daniel Castelo (2017) portrays Pentecostal eschatology as giving mission and evangelistic intensity to believers as prerequisite to redemption.

More so, Pentecostal eschatology includes charismatic behaviours like languages, prophesy, and spiritual gifts as indicators of the Holy Spirit's presence in the end times. Pentecostal eschatology gives believers hope and assurance in the face of trials and uncertainties as they await God's promises and good's final victory over evil. The Pentecostal eschatology promotes personal change. Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes human development and spiritual growth for Christ's return and judgment. In anticipation of these occurrences, believers must live holy and righteously. On the other hand, Rutherford (1990) averred African Indigenous religions incorporate reincarnation beliefs into rites and ceremonies that honour ancestors, seek spiritual direction, and help souls transition between lives. Awolalu and Adelumo (1979) aptly put that reincarnation beliefs in African Indigenous religions emphasize communal cohesion and intergenerational continuity by viewing individuals as part of a broader network of links that transcend time and location. Pentecostal eschatology emphasizes Bible interpretation, Pentecostal eschatology sometimes literalizes end-time biblical prophecies, leading to different views of the rapture, tribulation, and God's reign. Pentecostal eschatology further emphasizes spiritual warfare, where Christians pray, fast, and fight demonic powers while they await Christ's final victory over evil (Russel Spittler 1996). Pentecostal eschatology also emphasizes prophecy and revelation, with believers seeking divine insight into future events and interpreting present events in light of biblical end-time tales (Grant Osborne, 2011). Eternal Destiny is another aspect of Pentecostal eschatology, which emphasizes the importance of personal redemption, faith in Christ, and living by biblical principles to enter God's kingdom (Ludovic Lado 2013). While AIR on the other hand, emphasizes communal living, ancestral connection, morally upright living, death at an old age and respect to elders as the key ingredient in attaining reincarnation (Apter Andrew 2002 and Anwana 2009).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implications of reincarnation in African Indigenous religion and Pentecostal eschatology, sheds light on how these beliefs shape the worldview, practices, and spiritual experiences of their respective followers. By exploring these points of comparison between reincarnation in AIR and Pentecostal eschatology, we can see how reincarnation in African Indigenous religion and Pentecostal eschatology are similar and differ in their underlying beliefs, practices, and implications for individuals and communities. These beliefs shape the way followers of these traditions understand the purpose of life, the nature of the afterlife, and their relationship with the divine. The amalgamation of African traditional religion with Christianity has discernible impacts on both belief systems.

The intersection of Christianity and African indigenous cult represents a process of religious acculturation, in which Christianity has greatly influenced the latter. However, the African indigenous religion is currently facing challenges in preserving its own religious traditions and ideals. Christianity has had a beneficial impact on African cultural history and values, particularly in regard to practices that are indecent and degrading. Conversely, the integration of Christianity into African traditional heritage has led to the disregard and disappearance of significant and valuable aspects of African cultural history. Therefore, during this process of blending religions

it is crucial for Africans to embrace the positive elements of Christianity while also maintaining the fundamental features of their culture and custom. Essentially, the process of Africanization or indigenization of Christianity is crucial for the revival and resurgence of African cultural heritage and values. In other words, combining the

essence and fundamental structures of our culture with Christianity will guarantee religious vigour, productivity, and steadiness.

There should be further studies of synthesis study of both African religion and Christianity. This will help researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of syncretism between African indigenous religion and Christianity.

A study of this nature will provide a lens through which to analyze the complexities of cultural interaction, transformation, and continuity within the African context, shedding light on the dynamics of cultural change and preservation in the face of external influences. Interreligious studies and dialogue is an indispensable strategy in gaining more knowledge about the two religious traditions. Cultural emancipation, enculturation theory is also invaluable.

Religious tolerance between the two religions understudied is recommended for inter-religious peace and cooperation.

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