

Review of: "Clergy Vestment: An Analysis Of The Ecclesiological And Theological Journey Of African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches In South Africa"

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The article analyzes an interesting topic that is rarely discussed. Honestly, I did not even think about the importance of vestments in African Pentecostal churches before reading the article. When attending masses in South Africa, I rarely saw pastors wearing liturgical clothes so popular in European factions of Christianity. So the article caught my attention.

Using the desktop research method is not the most innovative tool, but in this case, it is useful. Over the last 2000 years, Christian priests' vestments were designed and re-designed, and various scholars wrote about them. There is no need to describe the past to analyze the contemporary garments of African Pentecostalism. However, it is interesting to know that some post-Reformation churches (from which subsequently most Pentecostal churches evolved) treated ornate vestments as "symbols of the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and his detestable enormities" and instead wore simple black gowns, and later exchanged them for a civilian shirt and tie. The author gives a good historical background. I would only advise more caution when using words like "pagan." The word has a derogatory meaning and – especially in the case of African cultures – has been used to undermine the value of pre-Christian religions. The priests' clothes were influenced by tradition, a need to emphasise the importance of rituals, or even a need to show the power of bishops and cardinals, but not pagan elements. The author reports that the introduction of decorative liturgical vestments in South African churches is considered by some to be an expression of respect for God, so the vestments raise the importance of masses and rituals. The author also writes that priests' clothes seem to be important for both priests and their congregation, e.g., "a particular illness might require a particular uniform and a particular colour." It would be good to learn why.

The Author gathered material from existing sources. What I did not find in the article is field research. It was said at the beginning of the paper that it was based on other scholars' work; however, it would be good to ask priests of the chosen churches what vestments mean to them. Do they wear them because of a tradition, or do they have a special meaning? If the latter, what is the meaning? It would also be interesting to do research among the congregations' members. Do they have any opinions about the vestments? Are they important? Do they signify power, or maybe they give comfort to the believers? African Pentecostal and Charismatic churches did not have a hierarchy at the beginning. The Author takes into account this fact and the emergence of bishops and archbishops in the last few decades, and therefore, robes that help to see what position a person wearing a specific robe holds. It would be interesting to learn if the congregation perceived these robes as something positive or perhaps the opposite – as manifestations of the division between church hierarchs and ordinary believers. Hence, I encourage the Author to do a field study. The results may be surprising and add new

knowledge to the hitherto research.