

## **African Pentecostalism And gendered Roles among People of the Zimbabwean Diaspora in the UK**

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### **Abstract**

The diaspora, like the UK, has become a resource for many Zimbabwean women to both escape poverty and disrupt gendered patriarchal vices. Accordingly, the opportunities for women in the UK have changed the status of many women, allowing them to transit from poverty to positions of authority and affluence as breadwinners. Inevitably, this has had an impact on marriage, human rights, indigenous culture, sexuality and religion. Focusing predominantly on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and in-depth interviews, this study explores how issues of multi-culturalism and the evolving social and economic contexts within the diaspora influence marriages, families and the church. The results of the study showed that many Zimbabweans experience culture shock and struggle to accept reality and embrace the changes in gender difference. The study concludes that evolving multi-cultural experiences result in new perceptions of gendered roles within families, marriage and the church in the UK.

**Keywords:** Gender, African Pentecostal movement, diaspora, Apostolic Faith Mission International UK.

## 1. Introduction

Gender differences impact marriage, family and the church in the diaspora. Thus, the evolving culture, new environment and new economic status of people within the diaspora influence Christian concepts of social justice and ethics regarding marriage, family life and the Christian faith. In most African developing countries like Zimbabwe, the issues of patriarchy are the most dreaded vices for women (Sande, 2016). The economic meltdown of Zimbabwe for the past two decades has resulted in most families letting their wives, husbands, sons and daughters seek greener pastures in Europe, and particularly in the UK. Mbiba (2005:32) has argued that opportunities for health professionals, economic empowerment and political asylum are among the reasons for migration to the UK (Mbiba, 2005:32; Pasura, 2012b:33). Inasmuch as there is much celebration on reaching the first world, the dynamics of settling and evolving cultural approaches present their share of challenges. For instance, it is difficult to conceptualize issues of gender difference in the context of women's economic empowerment, culture and Christian faith in the diaspora. Gender difference among the ethnic minorities in diaspora must take into account their lived experiences in the evolving multicultural society of the UK.

Black Africans in the UK fall into three groups: individuals born in the UK, those who migrated to the UK and those holding dual citizenship or heritage. From a religious perspective, there has been an increased interest in the role of religion in issues of migration. Likewise, the African Pentecostal churches in the UK have received considerable attention due to their perceived role in reviving Christianity in the UK and the rest of Western Europe by means of a reverse mission strategy. There is a debate as to whether to label Pentecostal Christian groups as movements or as churches, and the author of this study prefers to use the latter. Religion has become a force to reckon with when dealing with migration process issues, and the African Pentecostal churches are contributing to the religious landscape of Europe (Kalu, 2008:282; Adogame 2013; Adedibu 2012; Burgess 2009; Wahrish-Oblau 2009). Migration issues have become a reliable scientific tool by which to understand the establishment of churches in Britain (Burgess, 2009:255). African Pentecostal churches in Britain have a propensity for forming networks which facilitate and deal with migration issues. For instance, prayers give moral support that helps believers to deal with visa-applications and work permits and even to hope to settle in the host nations.

African Pentecostal churches provide platforms for maintaining cultural norms and values. In addition, the African Pentecostal churches in the diaspora collect together resources

that form a hub of social, cultural and spiritual capital (Adogame, 2013:101-109). An example is given by Burgess (2008:49), who argued that, in the case of the 'Jesus House Assembly', the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) have combined their financial resources and are managing to support the poor in Africa. Also, Martin (2002:87) noted that Pentecostal churches have been able to develop socio-economic mobility for its members. Accordingly, Burgess (2009:268) has argued that members of the RCCG are additionally becoming involved in mission and civic engagement in Britain.

There is not much work that has targeted the impact of gendered roles within African Pentecostal churches in the diaspora. There is a knowledge gap with regard to how far the African Pentecostal churches in the UK have a role in reconfiguring and handling gender roles. Understanding gender difference in this area entails an understanding of socio-economic status, family upbringing, the diaspora and the Christian faith. It is in the context of faith that appropriate theology can probe the influence of issues of transcendence, materiality, hope and meaning over gender difference. As put by Beattie (2009), gender differences come to the fore when it comes to women's ordination and political campaigns over reproductive rights. Some Christian beliefs are responsible for sustaining gender roles. Hence, the African Pentecostal churches in the diaspora are strategically positioned to provide useful lenses through which to analyse the issues of gender difference, or alternatively, to explore what it means to accept gender difference within African Pentecostal churches in the diaspora. For example, from a perspective of gender difference among the diaspora, the creation narrative of Genesis 1:27 might suggest either the notion of complementarity between men and women or the idea that men and women are 'different but equal'. To gain more understanding of the impact of gender difference in the context of the diaspora, this study used the Apostolic Faith Mission International Ministries UK (AFMIMUK) as a case study. Two objectives of this study are: (i) to examine how multiculturalism and the evolution of women's social and economic empowerment affects marriages and African Pentecostal churches in the UK, and (ii) to establish alternative way(s) in which the African Pentecostal churches in the diaspora can mitigate perceptions about gendered roles within families, marriages and the church.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

This study uses the theory of gender performativity propounded by Judith Butler in 1990. Gender makes people think in binary opposition, and mostly this is imposed on people by the society in which they live. Judith Butler defined gender as processes which show a person to

be masculine or feminine (Butler, 2004:43). On gender performativity, Judith Butler (1990:141) has argued that there is no “gender identity outside the way it is constituted”. Such a proposition is vital to this study because it helps to understand how African Pentecostal churches can dialogue with evolving multicultural experiences which formulate new perceptions about gender difference, family, marriage and the church. In a similar way, the idea of ‘gender performativity’ reinforces that gender is performed and enacted through a series of rituals (Butler, 1990:25). From early childhood, children are taught and socialized to identify distinctions between women’s work and men’s work (Gordon 1998). Judith Butler believes that gender is not a simplified ‘role’, but rather it depends on the repetition and re-iteration of societal constructs creating identity. From a demographic standpoint, the African Pentecostal churches have an unequal system whereby females are not at the centre of power and authority despite being in the majority in the church.

### **3. Methodology**

This study used a qualitative research approach. The AFMIMUK was used as a case study which is representative of the many African Pentecostal churches emerging within the UK religious landscape. As one of the Black Majority Churches (BMC), the AFMIMUK has recently celebrated twenty years of existence in the UK. The BMC(s) are churches whose leadership and congregations are mostly from Africa and the Caribbean (Beckford, 2000:2). The reason for choosing the AFMIMUK is that it is a young and growing African Pentecostal church. The emergence of the AFMIMUK in the UK is associated with the AFM in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean migrant workers in South Africa brought the AFM back to Zimbabwe in 1915 (Hwata, 2009; Machingura, 2011; Togarasei, 2016; Sande, 2016). As a result of migration and transnationalism, former members of the AFM in Zimbabwe got together and founded the AFMIMUK (Sande, 2019). This study gathered data by means of questionnaires. The sample was comprised of married men and women aged 30–45 years from the AFMIMUK. In total 26 people completed the questionnaire. It assessed the marital challenges in the context of the diaspora, cultural differences between the UK and Zimbabwe, and the AFMIMUK role in dealing with marital issues. Also, the author made participant observations on three ‘married couples’ retreats and seminars, the target of which was to help participants to understand the theology and teachings relating to marriages. Specific questions asked in this study were: what are the challenges that Christian marriages are facing in the

diaspora? How is the UK environment different from Zimbabwean culture regarding marriage and gender roles? What resources can the church use to shape a believer's understanding of cultural differences regarding marital roles?

#### **4. Findings**

##### *4.1 Childrearing and marriage in the diaspora*

Childrearing and marriage in the diaspora emerged as a key theme from the participants' responses. Findings showed that about 80% of the participants agreed bringing up children is a problem in the UK. The evidence showed that many parents end up in the courts, with their children being taken into care by social services. One male participant explained that in his view children in the UK are too liberal because the government protects them. His particular bone of contention emanated from a traditional Zimbabwean perspective in which the parenting process involved disciplining children using corporal punishment. The instruments used would include sticks, belts, or any useable item to hand, and at times this approach would go beyond reasonable discipline, resulting in injuries. One of the female participants further noted the difference between the approaches to parenting in Zimbabwe and the UK, explaining that most parents in the UK spend little time with their children due to patterns of work. As a result, there is no parenting strategy and children receive more guidance from school than in their homes. In addition, some children have unfettered access to social media, which disrupts their healthy growth.

The challenge of maintaining a healthy marriage was also of relevance to the participants in this study. One of the female participants indicated that her marriage broke down in the UK because of the strain of working patterns. About 60% of the participants agreed that marriages still commonly break down in the UK. One recurrent cause of divorce was 'unfaithfulness' due to spouses working hard away from home for a long time. In such cases, shifts and live-in work patterns tend to dampen the sexual connection between couples. Also, sex issues were mentioned by some male participants, who felt that healthy sex is essential in marriage. If the marriage lacks this, men feel rejected and opt to leave their partners. Added to this, one male stated that social media had helped some people to reconnect with their former lovers, there being a lack of quality family time as people are too busy. Some participants supported the view that there is a lot of freedom in the diaspora and that if a person is not strong enough to resist temptation or exercise self-control, he or she may end up being unfaithful towards their marriage partner.

#### *4.2 Women's economic empowerment*

Dealing with women's economic empowerment emerged as a key theme from the participants. When asked about how men feel when their wives earn more money than themselves, about 70% of men said that most women become 'bossy' because they do not know how to deal with power. One male participant explained that he knew several men who are abused by their wives because they earn more than them. A few male participants agreed that in a marriage, anyone could be a breadwinner, but at times, women who earn more than the man are difficult to control.

Debt is another challenge for couples in the UK. About half of the participants stated that Zimbabweans end up in debt because of their 'competitive spirit'. They explained that Zimbabweans want to appear wealthier than their peers. Added to this, some couples do not understand how to use credit cards when shopping and planning holidays. This results in them then working excessive hours to manage the debt created and a consequent deterioration in their work-life balance.

Similarly, the findings revealed challenges associated with the communal living of Zimbabweans. A quarter of the participants mentioned that couples struggle to support extended families. For instance, most salaries sustain one family, but the expectation that they will also support their extended families puts pressure on families in diaspora. There is particular pressure on relationships where one spouse accuses the other of being biased towards supporting their own side of the extended family. One participant pointed out that couples in the UK cannot look after everyone in Africa. He further stated that it is important for the extended family to partially support parents but not siblings and cousins.

When asked about how the church can help on gender roles, half of the female participants stated that the AFMIMUK should engage in premarital counselling sessions and explore the challenging dynamics of living in the diaspora. Also, it is essential to properly engage in marital retreats and conferences which aim to tackle the issues of narrowing gender differences.

#### *4.3 Negotiating the dismantling of male dominance*

Most male participants stated that the UK environment affords excessive powers to women, and most of the time women take advantage of these rights. One male participant explained that in Zimbabwe, most men earned the respect of their wives because they earned more money than women. In the UK it is different because most women have jobs which pay more than men. A quarter of the male participants explained that in Zimbabwe, men lived as

'kings', and here they struggle to accept a perceived equal or lower status than their wives. What annoys them the most is that they are expected to share the same responsibilities, including paying bills, household chores and family decision making. About 80% of the male participants thought that UK human rights support women more than their male counterparts. A third of female participants commented that most men seem confused and stressed due to the sudden empowerment of the women. Men are experiencing culture shock because when they came to the UK, most men chose prestigious careers, which resulted in them failing to get jobs.

However, about 10% of female participants explained that their husbands respect them because they earn more money than them. Two exciting comments were that (i) "my husband now treats me with respect because I am helping him pay the bills [which] he was struggling to do" and (ii) "I feel more useful instead of just being a homemaker, and at least I can decide what I want to do without being controlled." When asked about what women expect from their husbands, the most prevalent sentiment, from about 90% of women, was that they expect their husbands to take on the housekeeping role since they no longer have the time or energy to do this. The other reason was that in the UK hiring housemaids is expensive, so married partners fight over household chores, as both are working equally hard. The participants also indicated that Zimbabwe is extremely patriarchal and each side of the marriage has roles assigned that do not conflate. They further stated that men find it hard to participate in household chores because of their socialization in Africa.

When asked about any resources the church can use to shape a believer's understanding of the cultural differences in marital roles, participants notably commented that the AFMIMUK needs to be able to teach the Bible cross-culturally. The church can use its authority over believers to provide transitional education and support, through preaching and contextual bible study sessions. Furthermore, women should not only help in setting out and cleaning the Eucharist utensils but should also be involved in serving it. Serving Eucharist has mainly been a preserve of male pastors and elders of the church, while women have concentrated on cleaning and decorating the church.

Findings from participants showed that the AFMIMUK have many 'couples retreats' aimed at helping Christians to improve their marital relationships. Some participants said that the teaching of female submission and a selective reading of scriptures that support patriarchy are prominent in these meetings. For example, one male elder put forward that the theology of

submission and headship which is learnt in marital life represents a robust framework for gender roles.

To deal with cultural relativity in the UK, one participant suggested that the AFMIMUK should establish centres to teach young men and women about the intersections between indigenous culture, the diaspora context and Christian faith narratives, the AFMIMUK being well placed to address some of the fundamental inequalities that are embedded within traditional Zimbabwean marital practices. This suggestion arose from participants' observations that people should be able to build their marriages the way they want without thinking about gender issues – too much prescription would be disastrous in the long run.

### **5. Discussion of the findings**

Pentecostals hold traditional views about gender and sexuality linked to both culture and the Bible. Therefore, marriages face challenges in the context of migration, mainly on how to deal with gender differences. The fluid nature of culture contributes to the formulation of new theoretical approaches to gender, the diaspora and Christian faith. The new diasporic context challenges a particular understanding of gender roles. Thus, the process of immigration disrupts family and marital institutions. About 80% of the participants in this study agreed that parenting and working with children is difficult in the UK. Adaptation to new parenting methods necessitates new gender roles in both marriage and family. For example, the dynamics of raising children can cause men to lose some of their traditional roles as they come to be expected to bath, dress and feed children and change their nappies duties mostly performed by women in the Zimbabwean culture. This finding confirms Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which argued that gender roles are a social construct (Butler, 1990). Therefore, the 'diasporization' of African Pentecostal churches in the context of gender roles is informed by global dynamics, which calls for cultural 'localization' in order to appeal to the present post-modernity.

Approaches to the discipline of children are also culturally relative. The study showed that parents in the UK think that their children are too liberal and the government intervenes when they want to discipline. In the Zimbabwean family context, children are raised not only by their parents but also by the community. Chinyangara et al. (1999:15) said: "it takes a community to raise a child". Thus the parent concept goes beyond the biological parents. In the UK, this approach is challenging to maintain. Findings of this study showed that Zimbabwean parents in the UK feel that a child does not necessarily belong to you, and that

there is too much interference from public social services on the extent and methods of disciplining children. Safeguarding children is the responsibility of every adult. Half of the study's participants agreed that strenuous working patterns have led to children spending time on social media, making them susceptible to uncensored teachings and resulting in confusion about their identity. This finding of the study is supported by Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity which argued that gender is a manifestation of core identity and the sexuality of the self (Butler, 1990).

Identity crisis is a notable challenge for parenting in the UK. Many factors contribute to this issue. For example, many parents emulate the whiteness privilege they see in the UK and want their children to be British. Consequently, since Zimbabwe was a British colony, post-colonial effects shape how people view society. Findings showed that some parents tell their children that they are no longer Zimbabweans but British citizens. In this case, they deny them the advantages of dual citizenship. Such an approach not only confuses the children but also makes them shun their culture and exacerbates the identity crisis.

The impact of identity crisis is increasingly manifested among Zimbabwean children in cases of suicide, drugs and substance abuse and mental illness (source). The issue of identity can benefit the church if handled correctly. In a similar study but focusing on gender in the diaspora, Pasura (2008) argued that the AFMIMUK Coventry Assembly was providing space to express cultural identities through religious identities. Further, he explained that diaspora churches expressing diasporic identities enhanced diaspora social networks. As such, the AFMIMUK is correctly positioned to reconstruct a sound theology and contextualisation of Christian faith narratives which have the potential to address gender difference. As noted by Butler, gender performativity is sexual identity; people always act out, for example, talking and walking, performing throughout their lives. So, Butler argues that gender identity is a product of 'stylish repetition of action' (Butler, 1990).

Intertwined in this thinking, the AFMIMUK can negotiate women's conflicting issues regarding gender roles and sexuality in the UK. There is a decline in the value of marriage in the UK. In Britain, marriage is often not seen as an ambition, and it has become acceptable not to be married, whereas a common view in Zimbabwe is that failure to marry is a bad thing, perhaps even the result of witchcraft and evil spirits. Usually, divorce is associated with 'unfaithfulness'. In the AFMIMUK it is commonly taught that God hates divorce (Mal 2:6). Setting aside the issue of morality, when people change environment, they tend to adapt their lifestyle, leading to more divorce. According to Judith Butler's performativity, the reality of

gender is seen when it is performed (Butler, 1990). African Pentecostal churches are having to adapt their teaching on morality within the transnational context, since some couples do not stay with their partner in the long term.

The previous discussion shows that the African Pentecostal church in the UK has a responsibility for redefining women's gender roles. For example, in this study when participants were asked about the cultural difference between Zimbabwe and the UK; the findings from most women indicated that in Zimbabwe husbands commanded more respect mostly because they earned more income, but in the UK they are no longer 'kings' but 'equals'. Such a sudden change of roles has resulted in men failing to pay the bills and spending quality time with their wives. In such cases, most men failed to negotiate their patriarchal, economic and biblical positions as the head of the family. Settlement in the UK has many sad stories affecting Zimbabwean marriages. This is in accordance with Mavaza (2017) who argued that many Zimbabwean women and men are dying in the UK because of the pressures created at home. While a few men in the study feel that women earning more money than men are troublesome, a common reason for this situation is that most men were not interested in doing 'healthcare jobs'. The male ego was eclipsing their view of the importance of being breadwinners, and causing them to focus instead on the greater freedom that women have in the diaspora.

Many immigrants regard the UK as a land of opportunities, but the reality is that the cost of living is very high. This makes the culture of communal living, which Zimbabweans uphold, challenging to sustain. Zimbabweans feel obliged to support extended families in Zimbabwe, but this brings pressure on the families. So, by default, new strategies are formulated within families to find the right balance between living in the UK and Zimbabwe. The findings in this study showed that some couples share financial responsibilities equally. Such changes disrupt the traditional hierarchical ordering of the gender roles, in which it is the men who make decisions and direct how the family should operate. Women who formerly were not generally at the centre of decision making now suddenly have voices. The traditional cultural norms and hierarchies which undergird the social order are disrupted.

Therefore, the UK diaspora context is helping African Pentecostal women to transit from the traditional roles of being 'dormant helpmates' to become professionals and entrepreneurs. Rather than arguing that hierarchical structures between man and woman create the concept of gender, Judith Butler's argument is that the determinant heterosexuality creates gender in society (Butler, 1990). The concept of a helpmate in the Bible (Genesis

2:18) forms a complementarity position. Hence, the African Pentecostal churches can choose to show the biblical hierarchy between men and women not as the separation of gender roles but as holding family responsibilities jointly, and the theology of 'oneness' covers the overarching of significant differences. Therefore, Judith Butler is correct to argue that gender is performative and that no identity exists behind the acts that are supposedly expressing gender. These acts only serve to constitute an illusion of stable gender identity rather than expressing it (Butler, 1990). Most Africans regard migration as a life-changing experience, so African Pentecostal churches should couple conversion narratives and moral aspirations within their communities.

Such teachings have the potential to show who has power over the other. Thinking about how to balance family power dynamics, brought by a new context such as the UK, is essential. Findings of this study showed that if women make more money than men and take the position of breadwinner, some men feel threatened. About 70 % of the participants agreed that men are still in denial that things have changed and certain Zimbabwean marital cultural practices are no longer applicable in the UK. Madziva (2011:130) argued that the patriarchal practices of Zimbabwe emphasize male superiority, making men breadwinners and decision-makers, and thereby denigrate women's roles as inferior. Findings showed that women, by working hard, have managed to develop their careers more quickly than men, entering the health professions. Career choices have led to most women gaining greater economic empowerment than their husbands. McGregor (2007) observed that Zimbabwean men shun health care or domiciliary care work in Britain, labelling it a 'double shame' since it is considered women's work.

Although Zimbabwean men work hard, there is a need for them to choose careers that will help them to develop quickly in the UK. However, some men have experienced institutionalized racism within certain professions. Such challenges need to be taken into account, as some women end up thinking that men do not want to help support their family. By looking at equality from a transformative perspective, the AFMIMUK can help the Zimbabwean community in the UK, which is suffering from culture shock and failing to integrate with the western culture. The African Pentecostal churches can use Psalm 139:14 to show that men and women are created 'fearfully and wonderfully' in the image of God and that this goes beyond gender roles. Society facilitates gender differences between boys and girls even at birth. This is supported by Judith Butler who argued that "the act that one does,

the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene.”

The preceding discussion indicates that involving culture in diaspora inevitably influences gender difference. It is undoubtedly often the case that both cultural diversity and religious pluralism are forgotten when interpreting gender in diasporic Christian communities. For instance, what are the metaphysical challenges that impact the understanding of gender difference by Zimbabweans now living in the UK? Most female participants in this study showed that they expect their husbands to help them with household chores. Women justified this by the fact that both men and women work outside the home, leaving no one to be solely responsible for household chores. One male participant explained that “many wives become bossy when dealing with house duties”. Such a position can be very challenging because it has the potential to cause misunderstandings in marriages. It is in this context that cultural adaptation contributes to the upkeep of the family.

Therefore, there is a need for a re-theorization of gender difference, and this requires a strategy that can utilize and acknowledge multi-culturalism, transnationalism and migration issues. Findings in this study pointed out that the diaspora has provided opportunities for women’s emancipation, which would have been a distant dream before migration. Therefore, cultural gender-role dynamics are weakened as the diaspora enhances its quality of life away from the country of origin. Discussions about gender issues in the UK seem to be entirely based on things like gender equity and equality, whereas Zimbabwe is lagging behind on the subject. In this regard, the UK context is playing a formative role in the construction of ideas about subjectivity and personhood, in the formation of ethics, in the attribution of roles and characteristics to different sexes, and the political organization of social and domestic hierarchies and institutions. Skilful and contextual interpretation of scriptures like Galatians 3:28 in the context of multiculturalism enhance the acceptance of changing gender roles in the UK. In this way, the church makes it easier to live outside the prescribed societal norms.

The multicultural context of the UK enhances the evidence for there being no definitive male or female roles, and the trend of gender in the UK resonates with the theory of Judith Butler, who argued for gender and sexual fluidity (Butler, 1990). It is essential to focus the theological debate about gender difference on everyday distinctions between men and women, since gender difference can be natural or constructed socially. It is noteworthy that the African Pentecostal theological ethics engage with social justice and enhance good ethics. Findings from this study showed that the AFMIMUK have a way of addressing the leadership

of the church as '*anababa*' (fathers), which promotes patriarchy. Leadership in African Pentecostal churches is therefore gendered, mirroring the traditional family values. This is a position which can be avoided in a multicultural context. There is a bias in the African Pentecostal church towards regarding males as the natural leaders and expecting them also to show spiritual headship in the family. Therefore, while the question of biblical masculinity and femininity seems to be supported by some biblical passages like 2 Corinthians 11:2, which show the eschatological spiritual symbolism of marriage between Jesus (groom) and the church (bride), it may be necessary to deconstruct this to prevent it from being used as leverage in shaping gendered roles.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study showed the impact of immigration, the diaspora and multiculturalism on both traditional culture and the African Pentecostal church. The diaspora has empowered African Zimbabwean women, thereby disrupting the patriarchal tendencies and gendered roles. On the other hand, the African Pentecostal church has a role in reconstructing a theology which mitigates the impact of gendered roles in the diaspora. For instance, the diaspora context has created opportunities for women to escape the suppression of institutional vices, and many women have embraced their empowerment. However, some men feel that women are becoming domineering and cannot be controlled because they now earn more money than their husbands. What is at stake is whether men can negotiate this shift in power and temper the patriarchal tendencies which are at the centre of their male ego. Inevitably, the study showed that evolving cultures provide alternative forms of gender difference. Therefore, framing theological teachings about gender differences within the African Pentecostal churches on the continuum of traditional culture, evolving multiculturalism propels the church to be relevant in the community. Promoting gender equality and an appraisal of the traditional cultures opens opportunities for women to formulate new gender roles in the diaspora. The African Pentecostal church has a call to redefine womanhood, motherhood and masculinity within family, marriage and leadership. The study confirmed Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. This study affirms that gender roles are culturally constructed through the heterosexual characteristics embedded in society. The African Pentecostal church should embrace the fluctuating and diverse spectrum of gender differences, which is enhanced by human sexuality, identity and desire around respect and responsibility. The UK's multiculturalism and advanced approach to equality provides an excellent drive towards an

acceptance of the unique sub-culture of the diaspora and creating new forms of gender difference.

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