‘It is the gullible ones that survive’: Armour-bearers and Bodyguards in New Pentecostal Movements in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The New Religious Movements (NRMs) have attempted to distinguish themselves from the other Christian movements in Zimbabwe in many ways. The flamboyance, glamour and executive touch in their approach copy or supersede national presidents and celebrities. Instead of being seen and suspected as ‘gullible crooks or hucksters’, the men or women of God (MOG) of the NRMs have become celebrities. ‘Curses’ and ‘blessings’ have been gullibly used as a shield for their failures, abuses and extortions of gullibly naive followers. Inevitably such presentation by the MOG is gullibly opening the door for celebrity worship. What is interesting is that the Bible is against celebrity worship, which is commonly regarded as evil, enslavement, idolatry, false and superficial. The pertinent concern or question that quickly comes to mind is the extent to which the concept of armour-bearer and bodyguards is morally compatible with both the biblical and contemporary church perspective. The article explores the meaning, significance and role of armour-bearers’ NRMs. We used a purposive sampling of 50 respondents or key informers from three Pentecostal Churches in Harare urban. The three Pentecostal Churches share similar beliefs and practices.

Keywords: Armour-bearer, Bodyguards, New Religious Movements (NRMs), Pentecostalism, Man of God (MOG), gullibility.

Introduction

Pentecostalism has been a leading force to reckon with within the religious landscape of Zimbabwe. However, many people have mixed feelings on the claims of miracle we witness every day and the continued mushrooming of the Pentecostal Churches. As such, the office of the Man or Woman of God (MOG) in ‘New Pentecostal movements in Zimbabwe’¹ is receiving significant attention in both private and public spheres. The MOG office is characterised by media attention, gimmicks and abuses. It has become apparent that most of the MOG are taking advantage of the social decline, religious confusion, economic hardships and political challenges the people are experiencing in Zimbabwe. As observed by Gunda and Machingura (2013: 16), the MOG in Zimbabwe has captured the attention of the populace with their extravagant lifestyle and exquisite flamboyance coated with spiritual healing powers. Of late, people have witnessed biblical manipulations and modifications to help the MOG to achieve their self-aggrandizing appetite. MOG have responded to most of the allegations by citing biblical scriptures that support their appetite for having bodyguards (Genesis 14: 14, 7: 0, 9: 1, 40: 3–4, 40: 10–12; 1 Samuel 21: 1, 22: 14, 28: 2; 2 Samuel 8: 18, 15: 18, 20: 23, 20: 27; 2 Kings 1: 38, 11: 4, 11, 19; 25: 18–25, 20: 14; I Chronicles 11: 25, 18: 17; Nehemiah 4: 2; Jeremiah 26: 21, 9: 9–13, 40: 2–5; 41: 10, 4: 6, 52: 12–30; Psalms 25: 21; 1 Pet 1: 5; Mk 6: 27 and Acts 17: 15). The Old Testament is usually cited as source of legitimation when it comes to the relevance of bodyguards or armour-bearers in the modern church.

Old Testament kings and religious luminaries were attended to by armour-bearers who gave them help. The picture of armour-bearers is not vivid in the New Testament; although the case of Jesus’ disciples and those of his followers are usually given as examples of armour-bearers in the New Testament. However, the phenomenon of bodyguards has become a familiar Pentecostal image whereby the MOG appear guarded at church services and in public places. Even when they are preaching, there are bodyguards who always make sure that they are with the MOG. As a result, there are mixed feelings about the role and significance of bodyguards in a church setting.

The basic question posed is: What is the need or role of bodyguards for the MOG? Does the MOG in the church today need

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¹ The ‘New Pentecostal Movement in Zimbabwe’ is discussed below in the Zimbabwean Pentecostal Landscape.

bodyguards? Are the bodyguards or armour-bearers giving their services for the love of God or as a form of employment or the respect of the MOG due to their patronising and selective reading of the Bible? An attempt to respond to the above question calls for criticism for a number of reasons. A number of respondents gave us various reasons. These include, first, the role of bodyguards creating a room for the deifying of the MOG; secondly, the simplistic assumption that the deification is a result of what they see in the MOG or the amount of money that they benefit from the MOG. Thirdly, in the process of protecting the leader, bodyguards control access to the MOG, making him/ her special and unique; thus bureaucratic procedures and protocols are put in place to distance the MOG from the congregation. Fourthly, there is wide consensus that the concept of servant leadership presupposes the MOG to serve the congregation, but what we find is the opposite, as it is the congregation that guards and serves the MOG instead of the reverse. By being a MOG, it presupposes an anointed individual who get their protection from God and not from paid bodyguards. In the fifth instance, the issue of bodyguards is an influence from Western nations where they have been cases of pastors who get shot in churches by gangs. Some of the bodyguards are from the professional security establishment, ex-military officials and companies. This boggles the mind as to why a church would spend money on the security of the MOG who is supposed to be protected by God. In extreme cases, some bodyguards are not even Christians at all but have been hired as a result of their military or security skills, or they are relatives.

The Zimbabwean Pentecostal Landscape

This study is situated in the Zimbabwean Pentecostal landscape and how the concepts of bodyguards and armour-bearers impact believers. In Africa, Pentecostalism is becoming a prominent type of Christianity (Ngong 2012: 216). Statistically, Pentecostals comprise 17.1% of Africa's 1,044,107,000 billion people (Kaunda 2016). The Pentecostal strand of Christianity has become a powerful force to reckon with, apart from the indigenous religion. Studies have been done on how the Pentecostal started and moved to South Africa (Chandomba 2007). Further, the article by Lovemore Togarasei (2016) historicises the emergence and development of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. Studies show that the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe are not homogenous. In recent years since 2006, a new wave of

Pentecostalism, which emphasised the ‘prophetic mantle’ emerged in Zimbabwe. Popular proponents of this wave were Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa, Prophet Chipunza, Prophet Uebert Angel and Apostle Tavonga Vutawashe. These MOG are responsible for the popularisation of the concept of bodyguards in Zimbabwe. Chitando, Gunda and Kugler (2014) argue that the Zimbabwean neo-prophets are young men who masquerade as indispensable mediators of spiritual resources and mysteries. The neo-prophetic Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe is ‘New Religious Movements (NRMs)’. Neo-prophetic movements or New Religious Movements (NRMs) have their own ethos, missions and style, which are different from Pentecostal traditions and it should be discussed in its own right (Omenyo & Atiema 2006: 59).

According to Mananavire (2014), Emmanuel Makandiwa, founder of the United Family International Church (UFIC), Uebert Mudzanire Angel, founder of the Spirit Embassy, and Walter Magaya, the founder of Prophetic and Healing Deliverance, are ‘always surrounded by heavily-built personal bodyguards as they battle for supremacy’. Perhaps it is important to understand the teachings and theology in these churches that necessitate the need for bodyguards. The miracles that are claimed by these churches include, but are not limited to prophetically identifying people’s identity numbers, mobile phone numbers and residential addresses. Other miracles are associated with blessings, weight loss, penis enlargement, fast-tracked baby birth, and miracle moneys. As such, the assumed ability to solve enormous existential challenges makes the MOG powerful to deserve protection. The amassing of wealth by new Pentecostal founders inevitably makes the suffering population align with the MOG as a means to access a better future. Human experience is akin to power in the context mediated by the divine encounters.

The Theology of Armour-bearers and Bodyguards

Analysing armour-bearers in the context of the Old Testament helps in setting a template for understanding bodyguards in the New Pentecostal Movements. The idea of armour-bearers must be understood in the light of welfare (Seevers 1998: 2). The biblical writings have rich data on welfare from the triumph of Israel and the foundation of the Israelite state. The biblical concepts of armour-bearers are linked to the militia. Though there is debate about the military age for the men going to war, Herzog and Gichon (1978: 67 - 68) propose that the age of 16 is the age base. Mendenhall (1958: 60) contends

that, the age of 20–45 is bolstered by a few messages (Numbers 1: 3, 45, 26: 2, 4, 14: 29; Deuteronomy 2: 16; and 1 Chronicles 27: 23). In any case, the proposition by Van Selms (1960: 55) that the military age was 13 appear to be misrepresented, since no writings talk about that scenario. Armour-bearers in the Bible seem to have been servants who carried additional weapons for army commanders. Abimelech (Judges 9: 54), Saul (1 Samuel 16: 21), Jonathan (1 Samuel 14: 6–17) and Joab (2 Samuel 18: 15) had armour-bearers. Armour-bearers would kill enemies wounded by their masters. The duties of an armour-bearer were threefold:

- a. Carrying the leader's additional weapons. The armour-bearer carried extra weapons by quickly replacing the leader's weapon in combat.
- b. Assisting the leader in finishing the enemy. The armour-bearer was skilled in the weapons he carried. He had the gruelling job of finishing off the wounded warriors for the leaders' sake.
- c. Protecting the leader at all costs. The armour-bearer would ultimately be responsible for protecting the leader from danger (McAurthur 2017).

After David, we do not find armour-bearers being mentioned in the Bible, as commanders began to fight from chariots, as mentioned in 1 Kings 12: 18, 20: 33. Armour-bearers were popular with the office of the king and some selected prophets, for example, Joshua assisted Moses; Elisha assisted Elijah; and Gehazi assisted Elisha. For example, 2 Kings 3: 11 states,

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the kings of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat who poured water on the hands of Elijah.

For us to take Joshua, Elisha and Gehazi as possibly bodyguards would be stretching the argument too far, as texts give us the picture of them being helpers or assistants. The assistant or helper succeeded the master; yet bodyguards or armour-bearers cannot replace the master or founder of the Church in the sense of the modern Pentecostal churches. It is possible that the bodyguards in the contemporary sense are the version of the sons of the prophets in the Old Testament whose responsibilities included providing services and protection to the MOG. Prophecy was viewed as risky and not as

the lucrative business it has turned out to be where prophets have become a danger to the people they are leading.

The idea of bodyguards comes with hero-worshipping of the clergy. The Christ model teaches servanthship and not Lordship. Perhaps, the MOG are tempted to receive this Lordship because of how the church portrays the MOG. The MOG is often pictured as a representative of God, the Vicar of Christ and the embodiment of the Spirit of God; hence the church teaches that instead of God doing everything on earth, He has put the MOG in place to function on His behalf. Do we have texts to support this? When the bodyguards are protecting the MOG, they have a feeling that they are serving God in the person of the MOG, which is a form of gullibility, as this results in hero worshipping. Universal scriptures that are misquoted and abused, to show the idea of protection of the MOG are Matthew 19: 14, ‘But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven”’. Secondly, Luke 18: 38-29 states, ‘And he cried out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”’ The assumption is that serving the MOG, automatically brings the mercies of God in the life and families of the bodyguards. Yet those who went before him were not bodyguards per se. People take it to extremes to associate the disciples of Jesus with bodyguards. In fact, the people who tried to silence the blind man are viewed as Jesus’ disciples, yet it is not clear whether it was the disciples of Jesus or the blind man’s contemporaries. Even if it were the disciples, it has nothing to do with the protection of Jesus or keeping Jesus away from the people. In the case of the cited biblical texts, the disciples of Jesus cannot be equated to bodyguards. It is common to point to Peter’s action in John 18: 10, ‘then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus’. Peter is associated with modern-day bodyguards, considering his violent behaviour in trying to protect Jesus Christ against his accusers. Jesus’ behaviour in avoiding violent acts speaks volumes about his lifestyle and ministry. Jesus did not need bodyguards to protect him against his adversaries.

The New Testament gives two structures: elders and deacons as the inner circle of the MOG. The elders are responsible for leading spiritual issues of the church, while deacons are positioned to deal with the physical needs of the church. We do not find elders and deacons serving in the Early

Church as bodyguards or armour-bearers. However, the two offices have created enmity within the MOG because of the power struggle. The two offices of the elder and deacon, rather than the bodyguards, protect and support the MOG socially, morally and financially. In some circles, the office of elders and deacons is potentially to be equated to the supposed bodyguards in the church that protect and guide the MOG. What is generally clear is that the New Testament does not have the concept of armour-bearers or bodyguards. What is visible is the idea of carrying the Bible, anointed handkerchiefs, chauffeurs, butlers and not bodyguards. Some associate the concept of bodyguards in Pentecostal Churches as something that was borrowed from African Traditional Religion and Culture.

Bodyguards and African Traditional Religion (ATR)

The issue of bodyguards is not foreign to ATR. The proliferation of the Shona/Ndebele culture in Zimbabwe can be the source of the bodyguards in the Modern Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. Although the Pentecostals claim to have a total break from their past history and life, the indigenous culture remains resilient within their practices (Biri 2012). In the Shona indigenous culture, *Machinda aMambo* are equivalent to the political bodyguards. As stated by Machingura (2012: 186), the role of the *Machinda aMambo* was to protect the community, subjects (complainants and accused) awaiting trial, to act as the chief's advisors (Zvikonzi), as well as community policemen to protect the destitute and travellers who stopped in the village for the night. As such, the issue of the bodyguard does not raise eyebrows since this is in tandem with the traditional indigenous culture. Bodyguards played an important role in protecting the chief and his household. When taken from that political context of *Machinda aMambo*, some Pentecostal MOG can be understood and interpreted as religious outfits who have the same needs as political elites.

Armourer-bearers/ Bodyguards in Modern Pentecostal Churches

Modern Pentecostals churches in Zimbabwe are emerging churches focusing on the prophetic frenzy miracles. Manyonganise (2016: 271) argues that the Pentecostal prophetic ministries have received an overjoyed response dubbed

as ‘this-worldly’ as they deal with issues of poverty, violence and social pressures. The question of the compatibility of bodyguards in the church today is vital. The function of the bodyguards is not defined in Pentecostal movements. There are schools of thought on bodyguards in the modern Pentecostal churches; that is, those in support of and against the use of bodyguards by MOG.

Pastor Stias Chivenge (Interview, 28 August 2017) explains that there is no big deal about bodyguards; it is just a department which deals with order, security and ushering services. Chivenge further adds that,

Bodyguards are part of security department. If a pastor leads a large church and know[s] that he [she] could be at risk of being attacked by robbers [they need to put up contingency measures for their own protection]. You don’t have enough faith to believe God for supernatural (angelic) protection in risk situations that needs physical protection. Go ahead and get yourself a good bodyguard. No use trying to be a hero and ending up a zero. Ignore the critics and do what you need to do.

Even Paul the great preacher needed protection in his missionary journeys. Acts 9: 23–25 narrates that,

And after that many days were fulfilled; the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

In this case, disciples are taken as having played the role of security personnel or body guards. This passage shows that even MOG must not just wait for calamities to befall them, but they must plan and protect themselves. Bodyguards can be viewed as a Pentecostal model of providing security to their leaders. The Apostles were harassed and murdered. This possibly forces MOG to think of having bodyguards. Above half of the respondents take bodyguards as a safety and security measure. However, the responses were not convincing on the following questions: Why are MOG afraid of their members? Apostles’ lives were at risk from outsiders and not brethren. Does it mean that contemporary MOG are afraid of death? Is it not

a security measure against congregants who would have been financially short changed? What about the security of the Church members? The Pentecostal gospel that is preached and the accompanying money spinning initiatives make some of the MOG feel vulnerable to physical attack and public harassment. According to Pastor Makari (Not her real name, Interview, 11 July 2017),

Most of these prosperity preachers realise the damage and criminal behaviour in their preaching and teaching. Their fear is real and practical. They know that they will definitely be beaten up for gullibly short-changing people using the Bible. A number of people are bitter and angry for the lost money and properties. The bodyguards are hired thugs meant to protect the MOG from possible attack or confrontations.

The Zimbabwean economic meltdown makes it easy for the MOG to gullibly defraud congregants, who are also gullible and they get away with it. Sande (2017: 57) argues that the leaders of mega-Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe use the discourse of ‘blessings and curses’ as their trump card. For example, MOG seek to protect themselves in advance against any eventualities. In that case, MOG protect themselves against defrauded members of the church. Prophet Sanyangore’s brother was beaten up by bodyguards and left for dead when he revealed all the fake miracles the prophets purported to perform (Anon 2016). The MOG makes sure that access to them is limited and highly controlled. People are disgruntled with the ‘no refund tag’ attached to the services given by the MOG. The bodyguards are hired to deal with any possible confrontations or uprising or showdown. For instance, Maxwell (2000: 270) argues that Ezekiel Guti, the founder the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God (ZAOGA) and his family was forced to relocate to Mutare following the grumbling regarding the prominence of Guti’s second wife and businessman who were appointed overseers. Guti’s wealth was questionable and as a result bodyguards were hired to protect him in case of any physical attack. For critics, the followers are to blame and not the MOG, because members volunteer to be bodyguards. As a result, followers are the ones who choose to protect their leaders, as we see in the story of Thomas. John 11:16 narrates that ‘Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with Him’’. It would not be outrageous

to think that Thomas in this scenario wanted to fight, protect and even die for Jesus; hence taking the place of the bodyguard out of context.

Some respondents and pastors talked about health reasons, namely that it is common that some pastors are not in good health, and if someone collapses on stage, first aid is provided quickly. The impression given is that of helpers and not bodyguards. However, it could not be established as to how much training and skills are needed for one to qualify as a bodyguard. The level of protection is also another challenge since it is difficult to guard effectively without weapons. Does it mean that the helpers are militarily or medically trained? What criteria do they use in the selection of bodyguards? Three respondents exonerated pastors who utilise the services of bodyguards by arguing that bodyguards are there to protect the MOG from followers who shove one another during altar calls for healing. The respondents cited an incident when Jesus had to withdraw from the crowd (John 6: 15-18). People just rush and come towards the MOG in the middle of a session, thereby causing confusion. Justification is given in having bodyguards to protect the MOG. According to Elder Moyo (Not his real name, Interview, 18 March 2017), some people are troublesome and bodyguards make sure order is maintained in the church. As a result, some bodyguards are armed, whilst some are trained to protect the leader without the use of arms. Dave Chikosi (2014) sketches the tricky scenario of Western countries when he argues that,

There is always the real possibility of being attacked and robbed if you are a preacher working in dangerous inner city neighborhoods. Some pastors in these neighborhoods have even gone on to heaven a little sooner than they anticipated.

a) Take for instance the widely-reported cold-blooded murder of a minister at Creflo Dollar's mega church in Atlanta, Georgia. The assailant calmly walked into the church's prayer service one October 2012 morning. With 20–25 people watching in horror the gunman opened fire, killing Mr Greg McDowell, the prayer leader in cold blood. Does anybody seriously think that the widow and surviving children of this slain faith hero would stand up and criticize a church for putting into place elaborate security arrangements? Most people who are quick to criticize have never stood where these unfortunate people stand. Until you have had someone take a swing at you or

some deranged gunman places you in the crosshairs of their shotgun, and you lived to tell the story, then you really have no business judging a preacher for having personal security or bodyguards.

b) I remember nine years ago (2005) watching a very disturbing video online of a man assaulting the late Rev Billy Joe Daugherty at his Victory Christian Center church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The man had come forward during an altar call at the end of a Sunday service. He motioned for Pastor Daugherty to approach and then hit him twice; opening a cut above the pastor's eye that required two stitches.

c) Then consider the tragic case of Pastor Ronald J. Harris of St Charles, Louisiana. While preaching a special Friday night service at his church in Sept 2013, a lone gunman walked in with a shotgun and shot Pastor Harris twice. Question: would a tighter security regime have saved this preacher's life? Maybe.

For Dave Chikosi, most large ministries (over 2 000 members) around the world have some security arrangements around their premises as well as around their pastors. Most critics would however concede that that it is therefore counterintuitive for MOGs working in high-risk neighbourhoods not to put in place some level of personal security rather than take unnecessary risks in the name of God and put the family or himself at risk. However, the scenario may be tricky to use as an excuse for Zimbabwean MOGs, considering that the environments are totally different. Zimbabwe has not witnessed cases of gunshots in church, save for armed robberies targeting collected offerings and tithes.

Consequently, this calls for understanding what the Bible teaches about self- defence. Are Christians supposed to carry guns in Church for self-defence? Did Jesus' disciples prepare themselves for self-defence? Luke 22: 35-36,

And he said unto them, when I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said nothing. Then said he unto them, but now, he that has a purse, let him take it, and likewise,

his script: and he that has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

Jesus seems to have encouraged the buying of swords. The question of whether a man of the cloth should be armed or have bodyguards is very controversial. But if we substitute gun for sword in the above passage the issue may not be as controversial as it first appears. In the context of Zimbabwe new Pentecostal preachers face no physical threats. People need to be careful when using biblical texts in light of modern developments in the Church. Texts must be understood within their context. Jesus never implied MOG only if we take the text as a reference to about self-defence, but every Christian believer or his followers. The sword in this context has nothing to do with violence but peace. According to Ezekiel 33: 6,

But if the watchman sees the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword comes, and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

Findings by Johns (2012: 144) show that personal bodyguards protected many Roman Catholic Popes. They also initiated wars, raised armies and military campaigns. So, from this context, apologists argue that the issue of bodyguards is not peculiar to the modern Pentecostals in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the need of a bodyguard depends on the threat level to the MOG.

With a quick response, Pastor Tinotenda Machingura (Not his real name, Interview, 27 August 2017) points to the scripture that the issue of bodyguards is there in the Bible. He further points to Nehemiah 8:4,

So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and on his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, [and] Meshullam.

In this passage, the pastor understood men standing at the left and the right as Ezra's bodyguards. On the contrary, 15 respondents from three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), where 65% were against the concept of bodyguards as a

self-serving measure borrowed from the state and its protection of political and government leaders. One senior pastor dismissed the idea of bodyguards as nonsensical and this-worldly. In fact, the title ‘bodyguard’ is standard in social politics where bodyguards are responsible for protecting and escorting famous people. However, in this case the use of bodyguards in some Pentecostal Churches could have been borrowed from society by ambitious and flashy pastors. Thus, MOG finds it tempting to also have bodyguards by imitating political leaders. Politicians have many fears which call for protection from possible assassinations. Inevitably, some MOG find the role of bodyguards irresistible. Perez (2013: 51) argues that the church is moving towards the worldly viewpoints of success and it is hard to distinguish business enterprises and the church, let alone helpers and bodyguards.

Within the Zimbabwean context, the risk of MOG needing bodyguards can be many, but much risk comes from the disgruntled church members who strongly feel they were somehow gullibly duped to follow the MOG. In some cases, the MOG threatens by curses to silence the people. Matenga (2015) in *Newsday*, reports from a *Judgement Night 3* that, during the miracle service, Prophet Makandiwa cursed three individuals who wanted to declare that he was a false prophet. Marongwe and Maphosa (2015: 12) argue that the terrain of miracle-making is growing amongst the high-profile figures in Pentecostalism. For example, they protect themselves by saying, ‘Do not touch God’s anointed’, but the context in which they use this scripture is wrong. It is cited out of context; a common feature with neo-Pentecostal Churches. The favoured texts are mostly taken from the Old Testament for the obvious reason that Old Testament texts places the MOG at the centre of things, thereby disempowering followers, whereas New Testament texts place every believer at the centre, thereby empowering all believers or followers. In the New Testament, the MOG is taken as a servant of the people and not vice versa. The call to ministry in the New Testament calls the pastor to serve the congregation and not the reverse. The New Testament is not popular with new Pentecostal movements because of its priesthood of all believers. The Old Testament empowers the priest on behalf of all believers.

The model of servant leadership creates an active relationship between the MOG and the congregation. Thus, the ministry of the MOG must be that of a servant leader who is there to serve others. The clergy needs to serve the church, and Jesus teaches that anyone who wants to be great among

you must serve others. Brown and Bryant (2015: 20) define servant leadership as the leader's humility, which authenticates and accepts interpersonal acceptance by those they serve. Pastor Chisoro (Not his real name, Interview, 17 September 2017) explains that the existence of bodyguards shows prestige, fame and an exaggeration of social status. As much as Christians are commanded to honour their pastors; pastors are commanded to be servant-leaders, not celebrities, who want to be flashy by taking armour-bearers or bodyguards. Pastor Gomo (Not his real name, Interview, 17 September 2017) argues,

The problem today is that the leadership in the church is centred on personal gain and not Christ-like servant-hood and humility. Therefore, the idea of comfort and healthy living for the MOG is topical thereby opening room for the ideas of bodyguards. The idea that the MOG are afraid of congregants who will harm them is unthinkable. One pastor denied that pastors do not need bodyguards, but rather pastors need inner prayerful brethren who protect them with prayers, love and encouragements.

In fact, MOG are supposed to go through rough patches, according to this analogue of John the Baptist in Matthew 11:8, 'But what went you out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses'. Most respondents who seem conservative on the issue of bodyguards argue that the Christian bodyguards are not carnal or physical but spiritual. Notable examples come when the Bible refers to 'the sword of the Spirit' (Ephesians 6: 17; Hebrews 4: 12). For Beaular Kamuriwo (Pastor Gomo (Not his real name, Interview, 06 October 2017),

Matthew 10: 28 says: 'And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' Is there anyone on earth that can kill your soul aside God? Of what use are those bodyguards if they cannot stop God from killing your soul? MOG must never have bodyguards. There must never be scared of anything, even death or being physically harmed by gun-wielding men even during church service. Why must a MOG have bodyguards to protect them against thy enemies when your God says he will fight for us (Deuteronomy

3: 22)? Pastors teach followers to pray before going to bed for the Lord will protect them in the night against the principalities of the earth. Why would those bodyguards man their houses? God has not given us the spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1: 7) so why would MOG afraid that their enemies?

Unfortunately, in Pentecostal churches, biblical interpretation is both literal and literary. Thus, the literal meaning is visualising the Roman Soldier as in Ephesians 6: 17. In such instances, it is easier for the church armour-bearers to serve the church leader as bodyguard.

Implications for Armour-bearers and Bodyguards

The notion that questions whether it is the gullible ones that survives, invites a reflection on the implication of having armour-bearers and bodyguards in the church. These implications challenge the theology of the church on the meaning of equality, justice and brotherly love. The study concludes by suggesting three implications for bodyguards and armour-bearers in the church:

- First, the MOG should be clothed with the spirit of humility to overcome the temptations of personal glory. This means that the MOG are ‘gifts’ to the church, called to serve the people, rather than burdening them. The MOG as a servant of both God and humanity should shun the celebrity spotlight which is brought by armour-bearer and bodyguard mentality. The bodyguard looks like a gangster and the MOG becoming the king of the Mafia.
- Secondly, the MOG must articulate his accessibility to the congregation. The MOG should be aware that the congregation has many options to listen to sermons on social media. But they prefer to sit down with them. Thus, if the MOG has a personal presence within the congregation, it promotes equality in the church. Whenever there is transparency, admission of fault, and the church knowing that the MOG has struggles, it helps to keep everything real.
- Thirdly, the MOG should be aware that the armour-bearer mentality

invokes the spirit to cling on to power. It brings a sense of invincibility, yet the MOG ought to walk in humility and groom others for succession. Pastors as leaders should model Christ-like humility and servant-hood. The goal of biblical church leadership should be congregational health, not personal comfort.

Conclusion

The continued elitism of the MOG has inevitably resulted in the employment of bodyguards or armour-bearers who are there to attend to the needs of the MOG. The bodyguard concept as we see it today was analysed from biblical perspectives in order to try and engage the new Pentecostal movement's rising numbers of MOGs with personal bodyguards. The teachings, miracles and doctrine of the New Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe provide gaps to amass wealth, fame and celebrity lifestyle. Therefore, the theology of bodyguards is premised on the idea of self-defence, mostly to protect themselves from their shady deals. The presence of bodyguards in the new Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe gullibly enhances the notion of an invincible and untouchable MOG.

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