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**PANEL Nº 9**

PANEL TITLE:

Feminism and Pentecostalism in Africa

CHAIR:

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KEYWORDS:

Pentecostalism, Empowerment, Identity, Power

ABSTRACT:

The fastest growing religious group in Africa today is the Christian Pentecostal Movement. This third response of Christianity is changing the Christian landscape in the continent, opening up new frontiers of being a church, a Christian person and a citizen in many African communities. It had offered new opportunities and challenges to the Christian women in Africa. The contemporary discourse of feminism opens another dimension for African women to redefine their femaleness in Christ: what it means to be a woman in the service of God and of a religious community according to the mind of Christ in the scripture and in the teachings of the Church. What lessons can the Pentecostal women learn from their counterparts in the mainline Churches, especially from the religious women in the Roman Catholic Church in Africa.

The panel is to examine from theological and biblical perspective what constitutes the Christian ideal of femaleness and spiritual empowerment; the dynamic of power and leadership from the hermeneutics of Pentecostal sexual identity, anthropological examination of the African consideration of the feminine body as a *conduit of spiritual power* and the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism. From the perspective of feminism understood as: an intellectual approach to the enhancement of the female dignity; a revolt against historical disadvantaged of women in politics and economics; a desperate cry for equality and justice for the sexes, the panel discusses the ideals of feminism from the optics of spiritual

empowerment according to the doctrines and practices of select Pentecostal congregations in Africa.

The central goal of the panel is to bring feminism and Pentecostalism into deep dialogue from the prism of the “perennial” Christian theology in order to understand and redefine an African Christian woman today for cultural transformation and ecclesial renewal.