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Religion and Social Marginalization in Zimbabwe

edited by
Lovemore Togarasei, David Bishau & Ezra Chitando

DEDICATION

This
Book is
Dedicated to
The memory of
Two of the contributors
Who were promoted to glory
During the preparation of this book:

Our teacher, friend, and colleague
Rev Dr Philemon T. Chikafu,

Our friend and colleague
Prof Richard Maposa

May them
Rest in
Peace!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Lovemore Togarasei

| INTRODUCTION

In each and every society, certain groups of people are 'marginalized'. By marginalization here we mean being disregarded, ostracized, harassed, disliked, persecuted, or generally looked down upon. Such people often include women and children, the poor, the disabled, people of different sexual orientation, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, refugees, among others. In short, the marginalized are those people who are socially, politically, culturally, or economically excluded from mainstream society. For this reason, J. Hampson (1990) sees all the rural people in Zimbabwe as disadvantaged and therefore marginalized when compared to their urban counterparts. This observation is very important as it has implications in the voting patterns that we have seen in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Musasiwa (in this volume) discusses, how lack of knowledge, and therefore power, makes democracy a mockery as those without knowledge are made to make choices while they are disempowered knowledge wise.

The history of the marginalization of certain groups of people in Zimbabwe goes back a long way. Traditionally, people with albinism, the disabled, the elderly and women were generally marginalized. With the coming in of colonialism, the black people in general were marginalized. Not only was their land taken by the colonialists, they were driven to poorer parts of the country and even forced to work for the colonialists. Marginalization is a question of power, as those with power marginalize others. As Musasiwa discusses in chapter 3, marginalization happens when certain people lack knowledge. Colonisers did this and thus marginalized the black people. Even black people education was meant to make them effective hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whites. This kind of marginalization has continued even in independent Zimbabwe although it is now no longer based on colour. Scores of people are structurally marginalized through systems that are meant to protect the interests of a few.

In all this history, the church in Zimbabwe has played a role in improving the lives of the marginalized. Black education, health services, care homes for orphans, lepers and the elderly were first introduced by the

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church. This book looks at what religion, especially Christianity, is doing for the marginalized in the current Zimbabwe context. Who are the marginalized and why are they marginalized? The different chapters that make up the book address these questions. Although religion is also implicated in marginalization, the contributions in this volume did not address this angle as they focused on the positive role that religion can and should play to help the marginalized.

The book is divided into five parts, with each part looking at a specific form or aspect of marginalization. *Part A* comprises chapters on theoretical views on religion, democracy, and marginalization. It opens with Chapter 1 in which Tarisayi Chimuka and Lovemore Togarasei consider marginalization during Zimbabwe's crisis years reflecting on the place of religion in addressing marginality. They note that the economic and political crises in Zimbabwe from about 2000 left an avalanche of marginalized people. With the economic side of the crisis leaving the majority of the people jobless and impoverished and the political side of the crisis leaving other people homeless, maimed, or even traumatized, they ask theoretically and generally the contribution that religion can make to address the marginalization. In Chapter 2, Philemon Chikafu reflects on why Christianity has failed to promote democratic societies in Africa despite its numerical strength. He finds the answer in the overemphasis of the theology of the justice and righteousness of God. He therefore proposes to add the theology of the grace, mercy, and love of God to this theology if the African Church is to build and sustain democratic societies. In Chapter 3, Roy Musasiwa also reflects on the role of theology in the democratization of African societies. Perplexed by the unfortunate paradox that Africa, a continent with the largest percentage of Christians and the fastest growing church, is riddled with problems of governance, corruption, disease, poverty and ethnic tensions, Musasiwa believes the answer is the African Church's non-involvement in sociopolitical issues that affect their societies. The chapter tackles the erroneous assumption of incongruity between the pursuit of theology, dealing with the things of God, and the promotion of social democratization, dealing with the secular reality of people power.

Part B focuses on a group that often experiences worst forms of marginalization, namely, people living with disabilities (PLWDs). It begins with Chapter 4 in which Francis Machingura and Nyasha Madzokere look at the Pentecostal Churches' engagement with PLWDs. They argue that Pentecostal Churches' emphasis on the healing of the lame marginalizes

PLWDs. Using biblical evidence, they show that there will always be PLWDs in societies and that everyone is prone to disability. As a result, they call on the Church to consider the disabled in their theology, practice and involvement. In Chapter 5, Kudzai Biri, Clive Tendai Zimunya and Joyline Gwara make a philosophical analysis of personhood and disability in Zimbabwe. They argue that there are necessary and contingent qualities that comprise a human person. They then probe these necessary qualities, concluding that disability is nothing but the absence of an irrelevant quality that is found on a human being, a quality that does not take away the 'personhood' of the person. Hence, for them, any discrimination and marginalization against disabled people based on their condition is akin to racism or sexism.

One consequence of the Zimbabwe crisis is widespread poverty. In 2014,[1] poverty levels were put at 76% in rural areas where the majority of the people lives (WFP Report, 2014: 4). In Chapter 6, Shoorai Konyana presents her research findings on the responses of Pentecostal churches to the situation of the poor in Chipinge District of Manicaland Province. Using the case of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM) assemblies, she established that the church reaches out to the poor outside the church through charity work and encouraging the poor within the church to work for themselves. However, she is of the view that the church's insistence on the concept of 'giving to God' puts financial strain on the poor, especially widows and orphans. From these findings she recommends that the church should extend its arm more to the poor within and outside it than persistently asking everyone to 'give to God' if they are to be blessed.

Poor leadership has been identified as one of the causes of poverty, marginalization, and general suffering in Africa. *Part C* therefore focuses on the theme of leadership. Lovemore Togarasei (Chapter 7) opens this part by looking at reconstruction theology. Like any other theory, reconstruction theology has received its fair share of appraisal and criticism. This chapter sees it as presenting an opportunity to address challenges faced in post-crisis Zimbabwe. The chapter outlines specific problems that have led to poverty and the marginalization of the poor and then suggests ways by which the Church in Zimbabwe can contribute to their resolution through employing reconstruction theology. In Chapter 8,

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[1]   In 2018, the poverty levels stood at 72% (www.thezimbabwemail.com/economic-analysis/72-percent-zimbabweans-living-in-poverty/, accessed, December 2018).

Kudzai Biri comes in with a critical examination of the deployment of the title "man of God" in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. This chapter examines the implications of this title specifically with reference to founders of denominations within the Pentecostal fraternity. Utilizing Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) of Ezekiel Guti and other Pentecostal churches, the chapter critiques the title in relation to authority and accountability. The chapter further investigates the status accorded the leaders in their respective movements in order to establish whether it calls for accountability by paying attention to how the local context changes and influences emerging perceptions about the 'man of God'. In Chapter 9, Clemence Makamure further addresses leadership through looking at power and succession troubles in the churches. He notes that throughout the recent history of Zimbabwe, leadership succession practices have been and remain problematic in the social, political, and religious sectors. Against this background, Makamure examines power struggle and leadership succession practices in the African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange and assesses the extent to which they generated schisms and wrangles. Ezra Chitando's Chapter 10 closes this section. In this chapter, Chitando finds the causes of poverty in Africa partly in poor leadership offered by church leaders. He therefore proposes a transformative theological education that should produce leaders who can end poverty in Africa.

Part D focuses on health marginalization. In Chapter 11, Tarisayi A. Chimuka addresses the ugly face of political and sexual violence during Zimbabwe's troubled years (2000-2008) and their aftermath. He concentrates on the sexual abuse of the women which culminated in pregnancies. The argument is that the children born as a result of these rapes were plunged into an abyss of marginality. Yet, the Church was afraid to rebuke government to uphold the rule of law and stop these heinous offences. In Chapter 12, Dudzai Chimeri investigates the validity of the assertion that gender equality is a liberating paradigm in the fight against HIV & AIDS. He acknowledges and seeks to detect religio-cultural practices and beliefs which promote women's sexual vulnerability and encourages an approach that celebrates human equality in sexuality in the context of HIV & AIDS. This is followed by Chapter 13 in which Macloud Sipeyiye and Tenson Muyambo consider the debate of human rights and Male Child Circumcision (MCC). The chapter examines male circumcision as a socio-cultural rite of passage which has recently (through scientific research) transformed itself from being a

socio-cultural rite to a health practice and so concludes that the human rights argument against MCC should not have a place in an African setting.

A group of people that is seriously marginalized in Zimbabwe is that of people with mental illness. Mentally ill people are marginalized as they are seen as socially unfit and at times regarded as less human than others. In Chapter 14, Bernard Humbe, G Konyana and Richard Maposa address this group. They explore the prevalence of discrimination, non-recognition, stigmatization and labelling of people suffering from mental illness as 'disabled' people. The chapter argues that although the Shona society generally shuns mentally ill people (*mapenzi*), it indirectly accepts 'madness' (*kupenga*) as an ingenuous lifestyle with a broken spirituality. The chapter concludes that mental illness should not be regarded as a disability or a curse but be viewed as spiritual capability that can be used to deal with life's complex social issues.

The chapters in *Part E* address other different themes on religion and marginalization in Zimbabwe. In Chapter 15, Lovemore Ndlovu examines how religion responds to social equality, democracy, and egalitarianism by presenting a study from the Celebration Church in Zimbabwe. The chapter concludes that the Celebration Church in Zimbabwe embraces social equality as it advances the notion of equality between man and woman acting as a 'trade union' of woman emancipation and advancement as it breaks the traditional patriarchal-based systems that are evident in African society. Canisius Mwandayi's Chapter 16 focuses on the Catholic Church while examining the polarization that is suffered by many African Christians. He seeks to salvage the situation by calling for inter-religious dialogue between of Christians and adherents of African Traditional Religion. The end in view is to try and resolve the problem of the past and present onslaught of Christianity on African Traditional Religion. Lastly, in Chapter 17, Vengesai Chimininge looks at children as another marginalized group in Zimbabwe. The intention of this chapter is to show how African Traditional Religions can be utilized as a source of safety for children.

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PART A | THEORETICAL VIEWS ON RELIGION, DEMOCRACY AND MARGINALIZATION

Tarisayi A. Chimuka & Lovemore Togarasei

1 | RELIGION AND SOCIO-POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION DURING ZIMBABWE'S CRISIS DECADE
An Investigation

Introduction

Since 2000, Zimbabwe has been gripped by a crisis of grave proportions. The crisis has enveloped all spheres of life. On the one side of the calamity, there has been an unprecedented economic decline while on the other, the crisis was political instability (Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010). The political turbulence was characterized largely by erosion of the rule of law (Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010), political intolerance and repression (Makumbe 1999) and the escalation of violence beginning with the farm invasions and in the subsequent elections (Human Rights Watch 2011). Although the situation eased a bit with the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) between the two main political parties, ZANU PF and the MDC, the arrangement was dissolved following the 2013 elections that gave Mugabe and his party the mandate to rule. In 2018, Mugabe's successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, won a disputed election and apparently the crisis still lingers. It is the combination of political and economic stability that gave birth to what has been described as a crisis. The resultant effect of the crisis is the marginalization of a host of people – the poor, the disabled, the weak, women, children and the elderly. The economic side of the crisis has left the majority of the people jobless, with unemployment rates estimated at 85%. This left the majority of the people impoverished. The political side of the crisis has left other people homeless, maimed, or even traumatized. Nyambi and Mlambo (2011) characterize this crisis as a 'comatose'. One wonders what can be done to rescue the situation. It is in the incessant search for answers that this chapter seeks to clarify the various forms of marginalization and interrogate the role religion has and continues to play in curbing the scourge. Zimbabwe is home to many religions (Chitando 2018). It is therefore not possible to look at how all religions have responded to the crisis. In addition, many of the chapters in this volume do address how different religions responded to the marginalization of

certain people caused by the Zimbabwe crisis. The chapter, therefore, limits its investigation to literature produced on African Traditional Religions and some Christian churches as it theoretically assesses whether religion can ameliorate marginalization in times of political and economic crises. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 seeks to conceptually unpack 'marginalization'. Section 2 examines the multifaceted processes of marginalization caused by the Zimbabwean crisis. Section 3 explores the role the churches have played and continue to play in reducing or eradicating marginalization in Zimbabwe. Finally, section 4 draws inferences pertaining to the impact of religion on social transformation.

Understanding Marginalization

The Encyclopedia.com defines marginalization as, "those processes by which individuals and groups are ignored or relegated to the sidelines of political debate, social negotiation and economic bargaining- and kept there." In like manner, the Business Dictionary notes that marginalization is predominantly a social phenomenon and so defines it as, "The process whereby something or someone is pushed to the edge of a group and accorded lesser importance." Marginalization is, however, a slippery and multi-layered concept. It is slippery in the sense that it does not have a fixed meaning. It is multi-layered in that it presents us with many different shades. In some cases, whole societies can be marginalized at the global level (Kagan et al 2004), while within a country, classes and communities can be marginalized from the mainstream society. At a local community level, ethnic groups, families or individuals can be marginalized within neighbourhoods. This marginalization can also occur in the churches with respect to the language used to conduct services.

From the above definitions, one can assume that it is the majority who often marginalize the minority. This is, however, not always the case. Marginalization has to do with power- where the powerful marginalize the powerless. As Marshal (1998:2) notes, a marginal group may actually constitute a numerical majority as long as it has no access to political and economic power. Thus, Daniel and Linder (2002) say that to be marginalized is to be distanced from power and resources that enable self-determination in economic, political and social settings. Gender, religion, culture, language, race, sexual orientation, political affiliation,

lifestyle and socio-economic position or class are factors which influence one's status in society in relation to marginality.

Marginality is an experience affecting millions of people throughout the world. This problem is considered to some extent in most of the following chapters. Being poor, unemployed, discriminated against, or being disabled by a society that will not work around the problems of impairment; all bring with them the risk of exclusion. Being excluded from economic, social and political means of promoting one's self-determination can have adverse effects for individuals and communities alike. This chapter focuses on social marginalization to see how community psychologists can understand it and challenge it at the same time. Perhaps this is better captured by Kagan et al. (2004) who write:

> To a certain extent, marginalization is a shifting phenomenon, linked to social status. So, for example, individuals or groups might enjoy high social status at one point in time, but as social change takes place, so they lose this status and become marginalized. Similarly, as life cycle stages change, so might people's marginalized position.

In other words, marginalization can either be localized or global in nature. One's state pertaining marginalization may change over time, as for example, with growing old. This chapter is concerned with the localized marginalization as instantiated in Zimbabwe. In this context, forms of marginalization range from unavailability of economic resources to lack of basic education on citizenship or political repression. As a result, "marginalization is not simply one thing, not just one status. While an absence of economic resources may, to be sure, characterize a marginalized group, lack of knowledge, political rights and capacity, recognition and power are also factors of marginalization" (Jenson 2000:1).

Zimbabwe's Dungeons of Marginality

The history of Zimbabwe is characterized by a series of challenges which are multi-layered and which at different turning points, manifested themselves through violent conflicts (Machakanja 2010). Notwithstanding the violence that brought about independence in 1980, since the country's independence, the issues of security and development have remained matters of top priority (Crisis Group Africa Briefing 2010). However, these developments have presented immense challenges that have marginalized the majority of the country's citizens. The political events of the last two decades have created challenges that have drawn the attention of both domestic and international actors. For instance,

since the sporadic, violent land seizures of 2000, punctuated by the violent elections in June 2000, March 2002, March 2005 and March 2008, the ruling party and government have acted in a ways that have pushed many to the margins of the society. This has, in turn, attracted international censure for their poor human rights record, which resulted in targeted sanctions for the ruling elite. These sanctions have resulted in untold suffering in the country. In fact, the impact of the sanctions has been more on the general population than the targeted individuals and companies.

A diagnosis of the Zimbabwean crisis would indicate intertwined threads of conflict, with some dating as far back as the colonial period while others were generated well after independence. For instance, scholars who have written on Zimbabwe (e.g. Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010) suggest that the theatrical transitions in the county's political landscape can be attributed to: the referendum that rejected the government's draft constitution in 2000; the mounting opposition to the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party, especially following the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999; the illegitimate land seizures by government loyalists between 2000 and 2002; the negative response or unwillingness of the state establishment to remove the unlawful land invaders; political violence before, during and after elections and the sky-rocketing unemployment rate due to the hyperinflationary environment of the 2000s.

By the late 1990s, as a result of the government's continued lip-service to issues of social and economic empowerment, ordinary people and workers responded through their union movements by increasingly showing a capacity for militancy and adopting political positions that were in opposition to those of the ruling elites (Laakso 2003). In response, the government concentrated wealth and power in the ruling class, thereby economically marginalizing the majority of the people. In the bid to stifle popular dissent, through repression and the systemic use of military force, a lot more people, especially from opposition parties and civil societies, were maimed, killed or imprisoned adding to the burgeoning list of the marginalized. Lacking an effective state social policy, people rose up in protest against the experienced poverty and social injustices.

The state increasingly resorted to terror tactics and violence in order to maintain social control (Machakanja 2010). Despite all these repressive tactics, and with the support of a disenfranchised people, political opposition rallied around left-leaning trade-union leaders such as Morgan

Richard Tsvangirai and Gibson Sibanda whose nascent Movement for Democratic Change Party (MDC) sent political shock waves to the ruling party by taking almost half of the vote in the parliamentary elections of June 2000. This strategic alliance between party politics and trade-union politics marked a critical turning point in Zimbabwe's political and historical memory landscape (Crisis Group Africa Briefing 2010). The birth of a formidable political party saw the multiplication of the marginalized in the area of politics. The ruling party did not take their loss of almost half of the electorate lightly. They began a systematic persecution of members of the opposition party that saw even the leadership being frequently arrested and tortured (Muvingi 2008).

By 2007, Zimbabwe had entered a tragic and devastating stage in its history, with enormous human, material and moral costs. Apart from the ruling elite, one could describe the rest of the citizens as marginalized in one way or the other. The political landscape was characterized by violence allegedly perpetrated by the state-sponsored militia against political opposition groups or anyone labelled as an enemy of the state. In addition, the violent political and electoral campaigns were characterized by arbitrary arrests, detention, torture, disappearances and the deaths of political opponents and activists. Preceding these contradictory events were devastating droughts in the early 1990s and during the period 2001-2002, coupled with an unsuccessful structural adjustment programme, all of which added up to the transitional challenges and sociopolitical complications and marginalizations of the majority of the people.

At the time of writing, the Zimbabwean socio-political crisis is best described as a complex emergency because of its mosaic nature. Thus, all these events constitute fundamental flashpoints which help give context and reflective understandings about the factors that influence the evolution and shaping of the politically- motivated violence and marginalization in Zimbabwe.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 15th September 2008, between the major feuding parties ended the major episodes of violence. This historic event heralded the beginning of yet another chapter – that of rebuilding the country. Thus, by signing the agreement, Zimbabwe as a nation entered another challenging process: the creation of a new era of democratic and transparent leadership, anchored in transitional justice with national healing and reconciliation as prerequisites for sustainable peace and nation building. Although it brought a sigh of relief, it was

short-lived. Subsequent developments under a ZANU PF government have brought back the crisis.

As has been highlighted already, the period from 2000 up to the Government of National Unity (GNU) can be safely characterized as a period of political unrest or crisis (Machakanja 2010). The calamity left visible, outward marks of poverty and destitution. The challenge is how to rehabilitate these people ravaged by political and other forms of marginalization. Often, efforts are directed at the repair of physical infrastructure in its many forms to the exclusion of social and spiritual souls of the same community. In Machakanja's words:

> Roads and bridges, for example, are given priority over issues of justice and national healing despite the fact that coming to terms with past injustices is an important foundation to sustainable peace, stability and development. Often leaders fail to recognise that in order for people to come to terms with a traumatic past, a process of acknowledgement, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing is required as stepping stones that lead to the rebuilding of a viable, legitimate democracy. Accountable political systems, institutionally independent judicial systems and strong networks of civic engagement can ultimately lead to increased levels of social trust, reconciliation and collective national healing (2010:1).

What Machakanja calls for, in our opinion, is best pursued with the leadership of religious institutions. What role then did these instituions play in the dungeons of marginality?

The Role of Religion in ameliorating the impact of Marginalization

Given the situation above, one may ask whether religion has a role to play in ameliorating the crisis. The question continues to be asked under any discussion of the relationship between religion and society. Religion comes into the picture always because life is a shared enterprise and religion would be contributing to the "shared quest for survival" (Chitando 2013). There is a plethora of definitions of religion, some of which are bewildering. Some have defined it as 'subscribing to institutionalized beliefs or doctrines' (Vaughan 1991); while for others, religion is deeply personal and mystical (Steiner 1902). Other attempts at defining religion have been sociological. For instance, Spiro (1966:96) takes it as; "An institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings." However, the bottom line is that there is no single definition with a single universal core (Lechner 2000). Many people are surprised by the resilience of religion in attempting to offer solutions to teething social problems. Religious movements

are getting revived to answer to crises as they emerge (Ellis 2006). We are aware though that some religious movements have been associated with fundamentalism and terror (Iannaccone & Berman, www.econ. ucsd.edu/~elib/rex.pdf) but the potential of religion to address social issues cannot be dismissed.

When discussing religion in Zimbabwe, one has to identify African Traditional Religions (ATRs), Islam and Christianity as instances of religious phenomena in the country. In this vein, it seems plausible for one to focus on the activities of the three religions when discussing the role of religion in addressing marginality in Zimbabwe. Harnessing traditional institutions and faith-based organizations (of which churches are members), one may ask what they are doing in rehabilitating marginalized peoples of Zimbabwe and ask further whether these efforts are enough. The rest of the chapters in this book endeavour to do this. This chapter, however, provides an overview of the role of ATRs and Christianity in responding to marginalization. We need to point out though, that Islam has also played a big role in addressing the same problem (Chiwara 2013, Zvingowanisei 2018).

Regarding African Traditional Religions (ATRs) in Zimbabwe, the institution of chieftainship epitomizes the role of traditional religion. According to Togarasei, chiefs were religious functionaries in pre-colonial Zimbabwe (Togarasei 2013). The spirit world into which the chiefs tapped was unlocked by *masvikiro* (spirit mediums) whom they consulted. This spirit world was largely responsible for the well-being and orderly life in the chieftaincy (Ogot 1963). A host of spirit mediums worked in various ways. Instances abound of the role of spirit mediums in Shona society. There existed the *Gombwe* (divine angels), *Mhondoro* (clan spirits) and *vadzimu* (ancestral spirits) (Kazembe 2011). Some such spirit mediums like Nehanda, were war spirits, while Chaminuka was for rain and prosperity (Kazembe 2011). Even during Zimbabwe's war of liberation, *masvikiro* were very active (Bourdillon 1984/5). This is aptly summed up by Chavunduka:

> We have seen the direct involvement of the spirits in active politics during certain periods of our history. The first example in recent times is their role during the war with the British settlers in 1896-97. Then there was a revolt in the country in 1901 known as the Mapondera revolt, and in 1917 was the Makombe war against the Portuguese. We saw the involvement of spirit mediums in active politics again during the war of Independence. In many parts of the country, spirit mediums are regularly consulted by freedom fighters and political leaders who wished to re-

ceive protection, legitimacy and advice. And at the end of the war of In-
dependence, for example, ancestors were celebrated and applauded at the
ceremonies that marked the achievement of independence (Chavunduka
2001:5).

If one were to focus on the period from 1997 onwards and inquire what
role the chiefs and *masvikiro* were playing, one would be confronted with
a confounding scenario. These traditional and religious leaders threw
themselves into the fray by supporting government efforts at fast track
land reform. Their role in this respect is shrouded in ambivalence. This
is largely because the agrarian reform viewed as positive by beneficiaries,
was condemned by the victims for destroying their livelihoods and driv-
ing them deep into marginality. Sachikonye (2003) interrogates the effi-
cacy of the process. Magaisa (2010) laments that the forced evictions
marginalized both farm workers and white commercial farmers.

Turning to the Christian organizations, we note that they too have been
reacting variously to ease the burden of the Zimbabwean crisis on the
poor and the disadvantaged. Scholarship on the Church's engagement
with various aspects of social ills can be divided into several clusters.
There has been remarkable interest in the church and political engage-
ment, particularly the quest for democracy (Chitando 2013). Other re-
search initiatives have focused on matters of Justice and Peace (CCJP
1997; Chitando and Chirongoma 2013). Whereas some researches have
focused on religion and development (Musoni 2013); others have fo-
cused on reconciliation (Machakanja 2010). Whereas some have focused
on the advocacy role by the Church (Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Con-
ference (ZCBC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the
Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC)); others have dwelt on the
Church's enrichment drive (Gunda & Kügler 2013). Although these
themes interconnect, not much has been done to examine the efforts to
rehabilitate those marginalized by the Zimbabwean crisis. However,
while all this is taking place, some faith- based organizations, mostly
Pentecostals, have been shying away from such social engagement on
the belief that the Church must be apolitical (Chimuka 2013).

Although church-based organizations have been working independently
in bringing to light their practical faith, there came a time when they
collectively came up with a unified vision. The ZCBC, the EFZ and the
ZCC produced the document "The Zimbabwe We Want" to discuss with
the government or its representatives, the aspirations of the Church for
the country. They contended that the Church has a mandate to engage
government on matters of national interest as they affect the people. The

united Church noted with concern that government had enacted oppressive laws, that there was no proper management of the economy, and that corruption was rampant. The Church also advocated for the respect of people's rights, good governance, and the promotion of justice. The church leaders also pleaded with government to look into the welfare of the people who had been victimised by the crisis. The demands by the church leaders are significant in that they aim to reconstruct a society ravaged by violence and erosion of quality livelihoods.

However, as Zigomo (online) observes, civil society groupings, which include the churches are deeply fractured along political, ideological, and tribal lines. Another factor which threatens to frustrate the efforts of the Church is lack of funding. As the economy shrunk due to the management challenges, it also meant the Church suffered and continues to do so. In the end, they start looking out for donations from parent or sister organization overseas. Ncube (2010) succinctly puts it:

> Donor-driven development projects are problematic as they are not only often short-term in focus (thus perpetuating an unhealthy donor dependency cycle) but they can often fail to meet the real needs of the communities they aim to help as they often lack grassroots participation and insights and are often based on the interests of the donors at a particular time and not so much what is actually taking place on the ground.

Conclusion: Lessons Concerning the Place of Religion in Society

From the foregoing, one notes that religion is very active in the Zimbabwean society. However, the activities of the traditional religion represented by the chiefs and spirit mediums seem to undercut what the churches are doing to ameliorate marginality in Zimbabwe. While the Church has tried to respond positively, ideological differences among them tend to destabilize their common front. The economic crunch which has affected the members affects the churches as well. This hampers all their activities in the end. Thus, while religion has sought to respond to marginality by addressing the Zimbabwean crisis, its role could be deepened by adopting more effective strategies. Chapters in this volume seek to reflect on some of the key strategies that religion has used and could use in addressing marginalization in Zimbabwe.

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2 | WHY IS THE JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD PROVING TO BE INSUFFICIENT TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES IN AFRICA?
Some reflections

Background

The road to the creation of democratic societies and attainment of democratic systems in Africa continues to pose challenges to the African continent and the world over. Not only does Africa face the problems of creating these democratic societies, it is also confronted with the challenge to sustain them whenever it happens to create them, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The picture becomes more complicated when we hear claims that this is a region where Christianity is experiencing the highest growth rate on the continent, if not in the entire world (WCC Report 2004). The gains in the spread of Christianity in Africa do not translate into the quality of life the people lead in this part of the world. For example, political violence is generally on the increase in countries such as Kenya, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo Rape. Ethnic related conflicts and killings linked to political conflict are equally on the increase (Rutikanga 2003:132). Zimbabwe has not been spared from these problems. What is surprising is that church attendance at sanctuaries is reported to be alive. Church members give witness of being born again. Yet there is suffering, crying and grief in the backyard, presumably caused by the same Christians.

The Problem

The spread of Christianity, and the excitement and enthusiasm it brings to the members is not replicated in the quality of life people lead. The Christianity of the pulpit does not seem to provide solutions to Africa's political problems to the extent that one is persuaded to conclude that Africa's Christianity or its brand of Christianity, is useless and obsolete. It seems to produce more heat than light. While the preachers and their followers boast of "making a joyful noise to the Lord," the same noise is

failing to bring peace and tranquility to Africa's nation – states or can we call them tribal states? The case of the arrest of Laurent Gbabgo, former president of Ivory Coast, in 2011, is the best example. During that time Mrs. Gbagbo appeared on TV being supported by Pentecostals and Evangelicals while major denominations were behind the contending figure, Alassane Ouattara.

Rarely do sermons speak to the promotion of democratic societies. In saying this I do not refer to the area of national politics alone, but also to the promotion of democratic systems in the way families, communities and even churches handle disputes and conflicts in their respective areas. It is regrettable to note that some church leaders are not being democratically elected, something that weakens the church's role in its promotion of the prophetic ministry. It looks like the church has failed to transform the world. But if the church has failed, what could have contributed to this state of affairs?

Inadequate Theology

It is my submission that the church has failed because of its appeal to a bad theology that is not sufficient to move members and society at large to the required threshold to make a difference in the world. For example, the church appeals to the justice and righteousness of God as a means to move society to change for better, and to conscientise its people to see the value and need for peace in the world. It has to be acknowledged that even though the church has appealed to the justice and righteousness of God, such an appeal has yielded limited positive results, relatively speaking. For example, these words reflect an effort by the church to create a language and symbols to express the way God is believed to deal with humanity in its struggle to create a better world. The effect has not been complimented at a practical level. Admittedly, there are some advantages with using justice and righteousness to move society for change.

The expression 'justice and righteousness of God' creates and presents a God with a character, a face and a heart. It demonstrates an attempt, theologically speaking, to remove abstractions from the manner we talk about God (God-talk) in our time. Because God is believed to be righteous and just, the expression has given motivation to some followers of the Christian God to embrace this character and use it to create societies that are just and righteous in turn. It is observed that ordinarily, the

justice of God appears together with his[1] righteousness, the later describing God's uprightness and faithfulness (Van Selms 1978:26-28). However, the problem is that while these two faces of God, his justice and righteousness, should always operate in a complimentary role:

a)   They are often presented as if they are distinguishable and cannot exist together.

b)   In a real-life situation, they are appealed to for convenience, instead of always being in people's minds and hearts so that they influence the way they behave.

c)   They have become ends in themselves so that people only ask themselves whether they have acted justly and righteously after the event, instead of asking that question before the action is taken.

d)   One of the reasons these characters fail to influence action is the presence of dogmatism and orthodoxy. Under these philosophies, God's characters are presented as attributes or virtues that are permanent and immutable, with no dynamism or outlet to influence lives of people to act the same way. In other words, these characters of God, according to this view, are presented as a state or his nature and do not reflect the manner he acts and is experienced in history. Moreover, dogmatism and orthodoxy provide another stumbling block to this debate by saying that God's character cannot be brought under scrutiny and microscopic test because he is the sovereign Lord who is free to do what he desires in any given situation. However, dogmatism and orthodoxy fail to see that theology or theological science is a human discipline used to reflect on what people think about God, and not what God thinks about himself. This protection theology has made it difficult to discern what to call the will of God, for according to this view, God's will is always hidden, unknowable and beyond comprehension.

As a result, the inter-relatedness of concepts used to describe the character of God has not been fully appreciated, and the usefulness thereof has not been fully demonstrated. This is true of Christianity's borrowings from Greek philosophy which presents God in a Platonic sense where God is understood as a being sufficient to himself. For that reason, he does not need anyone or anything. To suggest that God loves, for example, is to confess that God is weak, and cannot exist unto himself, but

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[1]   We are aware of the politics of using the male pronoun for God. However, we retain the traditional approach due to its prominence in the sources that were consulted.

only when he enters into a relationship with someone. What it means is that one cannot talk of God's love. It is therefore necessary to pay close attention to the meanings of the words 'justice' and 'righteousness'.

Meaning of Justice and Righteousness

The word justice (Hebrew: *mishpat*) could refer to the conduct a person displays towards God and to other people. It could also refer to a set of principles by which human conduct and attitude to one another and to their God is measured and judged. The word justice could be used to refer to the quality or the standards which could include laws, requirements, or claims a god makes or is believed to make upon his worshippers or members, in order to bring predictability in their behaviour.

The issue of justice comes in when persons in office exercise judgments or arbitrate on matters where fairness is upheld. Justice is considered done and delivered when the judgments (legal determinations or decisions), instruments (the laws and courts) and the conduct to arrive at these decisions, are seen to be good and fair. In a way, justice is the whole package. It is not enough to have a constitution that is just when the laws go against it; similarly, it is not sufficient to have just laws when those who administer them (legal officers) are corrupt. In practice, justice looks for compensation equal in value to the damage or loss experienced by the other party, injuries sustained and to looting of goods suffered.

In examining the word justice, let us briefly look at its forms and types in order to have a better picture of it. There is economic justice. This is often found in the manner people exchange and distribute goods. This area also includes a relationship or correspondence between rewards in the form of wages or salaries and duration of work performed by an employee. We also look at the proportional justice where scales must relate to cost – exchanges to avoid fraud and extortion (Amos 8:5). Society talks about social justice. This is often believed to be present when access to goods and services is not dependent on someone's status in society, but that the same laws apply to everyone irrespective of one's political, ethnic and social position. Distributive justice is believed to be present when degrees of equal rewards go with merits or needs, while proportional rewards would obtain if quantities involved between parties are unequal. In the area of a constitution, which spells out the bill of rights, for example, there is the concept of equal rights for all people,

which involves care for all needs which are basic to every human, while special care is given to people with special needs whose legitimacy is acknowledged. The idea of equity comes out clearly in this last case. Justice also applies to claims where each person is believed to have a legitimate claim to the fulfillment of his/her basic needs and where each inventor or worker has a legitimate claim to the rights and benefits accruing to the products of their labor. Justice is perceived done and delivered when there is equal treatment in a given society in which advantages and privileges to individuals are only justified if they produce the greatest advantage to the least privileged. These may be regarded as marginalized.

Theologically speaking, when we talk of the justice of God, we mean that he deals fairly with humanity, both at the individual and corporate levels; he shows no partiality because he is just, he wants human beings to act justly to one another. The Old Testament meaning of the word justice (*mishpat*) is synonymous with righteousness (*sedaqa*) except when the two words appear together, when they receive translations of 'judgment' and 'justice', where judgment stands for righteousness. Otherwise, the word justice is associated with fair play or 'legal equity'. The practice of justice in the Old Testament rests on the premise erroneously assumed, though highly believed, that Israel was governed by one legal system, the Decalogue (Exodus 20). This law was interpreted by the elders in the community courts, and the priests in the cult. The belief was that interpreters would be above board. The book of Amos talks a lot about justice issues as found in the famous statement, 'Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an overflowing stream' (Amos 5:24). This text, and others related to it, expose the values of that society and the standards by which society's behavior and ideas were judged.

The word righteousness (*sedaqa*) could refer to a heart and conduct that is firm (unwavering) and straight as the seat of conscience – and does not move from set principles and values, a heart with no split personality i.e. a heart that is not divided, invaded or contaminated by foreign elements (Pedersen 1926:334). Righteousness could also mean faultlessness, truthfulness, straightforwardness, uprightness and faithfulness. With reference to the character of God, righteousness means God is someone who is dependable, trustworthy and truthful, unlike human beings who cannot be trusted, nor can they be depended on. The word emphasizes a view of God who is a friend; one who will always stand

with his followers and would not desert them, even when chips are down.

The Deficiencies of Justice and Righteousness of God

These two characters of God (justice and righteousness) have failed to build and sustain democracies and democratic systems in Africa. The limitations in the application of the righteousness of God in a real-life situation is noticeable when dealing with evil, especially when God is presented as a person who, because he is 'straight' and 'firm', would not tolerate evil. God is made or he is believed not to accept anything that is crooked. This intolerance of God for evil pushes him to punish evil do-ers – those who violate his commandments. In other words, for these people, if God fails to destroy evil, he will seek to destroy its source – the human being. To use a rather harsh phrase, if God fails to eliminate evil, he will strive to eliminate its perpetrators. The situation gets worse when we observe that the God of the Old Testament is presented practicing intolerance on many occasions where he invoked the religious ban phi-losophy, the *herem*. The imperative mood in which the Decalogue is cast, which is absolute and categorical in tone, confirms the existence of this idea in it.

Let us examine briefly the biblical view of these concepts. The examina-tion would give us an idea of how Israel used these words at different stages of her history. Deuteronomy 20:16 is often considered to contain the original pronouncement on the philosophy of the *herem*, the ban or elimination. We do find an adjustment of this position in Joshua 2:6, presumably because Rahab had assisted the spies sent to Jericho. How-ever, in Joshua 6:18 in the story of Achan, there is a return to the origi-nal position without any explanation given for the variations. A partial ban is recommended in the capture of Ai where Joshua is permitted to help himself with some livestock and any spoil, he could lay his hands on (Josh 8:2). The most complicated of the sanctioned religious elimina-tion stories is that of Agag in 1 Sam 15. What makes this story more interesting is that it is contained in a prophetic tradition. According to the story, when Saul spared some livestock and Agag from a battle with the Amalekites, and brought with him some spoils, he is accused of violating God's commandments, which is alleged to have culminated in his rejection by God (1 Sam 15). A similar punishment visited Korah (Numbers 16), apparently for rebelling against Moses. Add to this, the great purge of Elijah (1 Kings 18) where the prophet is said to have killed

450 prophets of Baal. The assumption is that Yahweh did not tolerate syncretism and apostasy. We observe that the intolerant attitude to evil based on the interpretation of God's character as a righteous person gave motivation to some Old Testament interpreters to present a God who does not forgive evil and, who sanctions biblical genocide (for example as seen in the occupation narratives in the book of Joshua).

What is wrong with this picture of the Justice and Righteousness of God?

Firstly, turning to the justice of God, we also observe a terrible weakness. Oftentimes when people talk about justice in a conflict situation, what they mean is punitive and retributive justice. This is a justice that seeks to settle scores and not to correct the wrongs committed. It is motivated by anger, fury, and the desire to revenge. This revenge formula starts a cycle of violence that does not end, so that the perpetration of atrocities does not come to an end but rather goes on and on.

Secondly, whilst the law that deals with contending parties in a dispute could exist, there is a tendency in the application of the law of justice to dwell on the letter of the law than on the spirit of it. This creates an eye for an eye situation, a pound of flesh philosophy, if we go by the Shakespearian story of the Merchant of Venice. The choice to use the letter instead of the spirit of the text appeals to the emotions than to the mind. People cease to think properly and later on find themselves in murky waters.

The third factor which is more serious in this whole drama is the role played by a third force when it enters the scene. The factor is the politician who picks a dispute between two ethnic groups and blows it out of proportion in order to gain political mileage through an isolated incident. The Bible is full of cases where a small misunderstanding is taken out of context and ends up involving whole clans, tribes, ethnic groups, or an entire region. In these cases, the concept of the justice of God is used to justify the nursing of grudges so that a misunderstanding that is believed to be over is made to erupt again from nowhere. Samuel's act upon Agag was used by David, an army general who aspired to take over the reins of government in Israel. The death of Naboth the Jezreelite was used by Jehu, the son of Nimshi, so that his descendants were to suffer way after the event (Hos 1). The claims 'justice and only justice will prevail', or rather, 'we want nothing less than justice to be done', have not

been helpful. The use of the word turns it into a song and degenerates into cheap rhetoric, empty and meaningless. It has given rise to the promotion of hostilities when there are counter claims of 'justice' from groups in a conflict. The appeal to these two faces of God has not brought peace in Africa; neither did it bring democracy to the emerging states.

Toward a Solution:
The Second Face of God (God of Grace, Mercy and Love)

The use of the justice and righteousness of God in a general or loose sense when the two are taken to be synonymous, and in a special sense, when the two are taken to have particular meanings, has yielded the same results. The intolerance generated by the righteousness of God, and the punitive, retributive and vengeful attitude generated by the justice of God, have delayed the arrival of reconciliation on the continent, and have failed to sustain democracies and democratic systems in Africa because of the eruption of hostilities when everyone thought that everything was over. It is in this area that Africa has lost a lot of ground. 'The continent of Africa is filled with cases of ethnic conflicts, wars over resources and failed states... fighting burns or simmers in Africa' (Rutikanga 2003). These cases have taken place in Rwanda, the DRC, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe, to mention a few.

It is against this background that we turn to the second face of God, his grace, mercy, and love. In case I repeat the same mistake as done by those of old, I appeal to this second face of God to complement and not to replace the first. Complementarity is intended to bring balance to the deficiencies found in the first model. The love, mercy and grace of God has an advantage of adding value to the character of God. The three characters, God's love, grace and mercy, create a God who wishes to enter into a relationship (a covenant relationship), forgives, redeems and reconciles. The love of this God makes him to pose to his people as father and say, 'I am your father and you are my son' (Hosea 11:1), a relational expression found in the famous covenantal formula. The word love expresses a relationship as found in the parable of the prodigal son or of the loving father (Luke 15:11-32). According to this story when the son appeared, the father is not interested to listen to his story. Also, he was not keen to know what the son did with the wealth he gave him. The

father did not give the son the chance to make the confession he had probably rehearsed all the way to impress the father. The father could have suspected the insincerity of the confession the young man wanted to make, which was tantamount to a flattery and an insult to the dignity of the father. Another good example of God's love, mercy and grace is the one found in the story of a woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). This later example demonstrates another element that does not come out clear in the justice and righteousness model. In this later case, the forgiveness is followed by an advice, "go and sin no more". Jesus did not give a blank cheque.

The Bible talks widely about the love, grace and mercy of God. The book of Exodus gives us an entry point. In a hymnic form, Moses sings about God's love 'The Lord, a good, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness' (Exodus 34:6). The word 'mercy' (*hesed*) could mean 'God's determined and persistent love for a wayward person' (a delinquent) (Findlay 1963: 644). The word carries the meaning of God's favor which he persistently shows to the undeserving. 'Grace' generally can be taken to refer to a 'steady and persistent refusal of God to wash his hands of wayward Israel but can also be translated as loving kindness. It is also used to denote God's compassion for the weak and suffering. The biblical usage of the word 'Love' has the meaning of Yahweh's choice for Israel, not because of any merit or love on Israel's past (Findlay 1963:593). That God chose Israel to deliver her is conceded to be a miracle of his love, and while the word love does not feature prominently in the exodus story, the exodus remains a great testimony to the Lord's love for Israel. What is implied in the three words and what is common among them theologically is the element of God's determined and persistent love to the undeserving. The grace, mercy and love bring in the element of 'forgiveness' (Stringer 1962) and not vengeance and revenge.

Grace, mercy and love also imply the show of favour by a superior to an inferior party, where the superior party is God – for no human being can show favour to God. The words seek to present God as not interested to give fault or blame to anyone, but rather views him as one interested to initiate the process of breaking of barriers in communication between him and humanity. This is where the whole story resides, that even if God is the wronged party, he is the one who initiates communication with Adam and when the father in the parable of the prodigal son is tricked by the son, it is God as father who is at pain to forgive the son.

There is a consensus in the translations for the inter-change in the meanings of these words in the major concordances and dictionaries of the Bible (Cruden 1954; Rowley and Grant 1963; Douglas, 1962). The key text is Exodus 34:6. The text is a hymn celebrating the love, grace and mercy of God. A closer reading of the Old Testament reveals that the hymnic style extolling God's love, mercy and grace appears in several texts. In order to give more flesh to the debate on this second face of God, we turn to some of these texts, Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 103:8; Ps 145:8; Ps 86:15; Neh 9:17; Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2. The objective is to find out how this idea is distributed in the books of the Bible, especially in the Old Testament.

Exodus 34:6

> The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

Numbers 14:18

> The Lord is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children to the third and fourth generation.

Psalm 103:8

> The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Psalm 145:8

> The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Psalm 86:15

> But you, O Lord, are a God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Nehemiah 9:17

> You are a God merciful, ready to forgive, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Joel 2:13

> ... For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and relents from punishing.

Jonah 4:2

> ... You, you are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and ready to relent from punishing.

Analysis

In the above texts, the grace, mercy and love of God stand together. The combination does not mention his justice and righteousness. Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2 include another character of God – his exercise of restraint, implying that he is not wrathful, vindictive and vengeful. He is not repulsive. Nehemiah 9:17 comes out clearly to say – 'because God is merciful, gracious and loving, he is ready to forgive (cf 34:7; Ps 86:5; Ps 103:9). Elsewhere, the justice of God is mentioned with his grace. When justice is mentioned, it only appears in a different line not related to the rest of the text. The inclusion of justice with mercy or kindness of God appears in situations where words are used loosely and without thought, as what happens in prayer and liturgy.

Merits of the Second Face of God

Just looking at face value, one observes that the words display a theology that is simple and straight forward – mercy, love and kindness. They are distributed in a poetic form for easy memory. They are in a song form so that even kids could sing them.

Using the second face of God for Reconciliation, Peace and Healing

What humanity needs the most is life in abundance, promised by the prophets and by John's gospel (John 10:10). Sin became the only threat for this dream to be fulfilled. From the fall to the wilderness, the prospect of sin lingered around Israel's neck, 'for in the day you shall eat of it, you shall die' (Gen 2:17). The threat comes in the background of an injunction, 'you shall not eat...' (v.17a). The eating of the fruit soured relationships between God and humanity and the threat of death in v17 became a reality. However, God forgave Adam and Eve; he never killed them. He showed them his love and mercy.

In the wilderness, the giving of the law brought optimism to God's children now that she knew what God wanted or did not want. Moses, having broken the law, became the first victim to its wrath because of anger which led him to crash the tablets. God showed love, mercy and grace, when Moses expected to meet his wrath (Ex 34:6). In this incident, God came into one-with-himself. He reconciled with himself first, changing his wrathful face into a face of love; but after that, he was ready to share his new face with Moses and later in his relationship with Israel. The text demonstrates that life as people live it, is lived in tension between

purity and impurity, between what upholds and sustains life and what threatens it. This is a dialectic of life where evil and goodness coexist and none of the two can exist alone. The issue before us is how to manage this relationship between good and evil in people's lives.

Provision in the priestly tradition looked at the sacral lamb as substitute for sin. Through the sacrificial lamb, the threat of sin, which is death, was nullified. But humanity found itself living in the chain of sin and death, which held the community in bondage. God was not secure in this chain, for he had to look for what punishment to give to his offenders, a punishment that would always match the offence to maintain his justice. He became a prisoner to the laws he had made. The at-one-ness (atonement) of God and community (cf Ex 24:3-8) was a show of God's grace, mercy and love, so that when he appeared upon the mercy seat (Lev 16:2), death was averted and life was assured.

The summary above, of how Israel understood the presence of God in her midst, is a result of a struggle on her part to understand the secret of God's dealings. Her discovery was that continuity of life was always accompanied by development in the knowledge of God and change due to dynamism of Yahweh's faith and Israel's circumstances. The reality of dynamism as it unfolded itself in human development and change gave expression to the idea of a 'new covenant', a 'new creation', a 'new heart', and a 'new humanity'. What these expressions meant, is that each generation has its own way of expressing its understanding of God's character. The new creation comes about because the group is ready to change a bad theology to a new one, the one that sees things from a new light. In this regard, theology is not an expression of something static. It is an affirmation that theology is a reflection and an expression of society that is fast changing, even at the moment the reflection is taking place. It is this dynamism that makes theology dynamic because the object of its reflection which is God or society, is always changing. And while theology itself is an expression of what is, which is slowly and dynamically changing into something else, it also contains its dynamism to change society. It is dynamism of theology as a system of ideas about God, and its dialectic that converts it into a transformative instrument for society. It is this capacity in theology that we hope to change society to embrace the alternative picture being provided to the old one, in order to create a new heart and a new humanity. It is the need to break the cycle of violence that we believe the initiative would restore relationships at both personal and group levels. We believe the group should own it if our

communities are going to experience peace. Also, when a person commits atrocities, he creates a prison for himself and starts to think of everyone out there as an enemy. The person needs a redeemer to extract them from the hell they have created for themself. S/he starts to think about ways of hitting back, instead of being remorseful, humble, and asking for forgiveness.

The abused or victim also enters into a bottomless pit. He is angry of what people did to him. She waits for an opportune time to hit back. He plans strategies to revenge in the most painful way. She does not sleep. He cries, develops wounds of the heart to add to wounds of the body and those of the mind. When the two parties meet, there is a war of eyes, moods even of the faces before it erupts into a war of words. Clans and friends join in, even if they do not understand the origins and nature of the dispute. This is where the theology of forgiveness is needed.

The love, mercy and grace of God collectively enable people to forgive one another and leads to reconciliation that is genuine and the onset of peace. But we may ask, why should the victim initiate the peace process? It is because we believe that peace starts with the victim forgiving the perpetrator of evil. First, by forgiving, he changes his status from being a victim to being an initiator of a peace process; from being on the receiving end to being the giver; from being a mourner to being a celebrant, from being a victim of violence to being a giver of life, through reconciliation and the oncoming of peace. Second, through the act of forgiving, the victim starts to move on the road to restore his dignity and image. Self-restoration and self-building are part of protecting oneself against being crashed. It is a choice by which the victim becomes the subject who owns the process of healing. By initiating the process of reconciliation, the victim does not only seek to own the process, she also determines her destiny and gets the credit for the success of the activity. The love, grace and mercy of God motivates the victim to embrace these properties of his God and to practice them to others. The forgiveness brings trust that comes from it, breaks the cycle of violence in Africa by influencing persons in conflict to start to appreciate the cessation of hostilities through refusal to nurse grudges.

Above all, forgiveness gives motivation to the Christians, to be preachers and workers for peace. When a person believes that he is a recipient of mercy and love, he is likely to share those values with others. This is a theological truth as much as it is a psychological and pastoral truth. A child who is brought up by a loving parent would want to share that love

with other children of his age group. In this model, the victim of violence becomes the hero of peacebuilding. This process has advantages, in that it does not require outsiders who always come into the game with hidden agendas and sometimes end up worsening the situation. Forgiveness helps to nip conflict in the bud before politicians and army generals step in to exploit and manipulate the situation in their interest. Forgiveness breaks the cycle of violence of a tit-for-tat revenge, which serves only to increase the problem. It not only breaks the cycle of violence and the promotion of evil, but also has the power and potential of neutralizing its effects.

A Trajectory in the Development of the Biblical Text

To sustain the position in the use of the biblical text to base the theology of love, grace and mercy, I present a possible path followed in the growth of the idea. I believe that the Decalogue presents a face of God in rudimentary terms. The 'don'ts' that characterize the view of God accompanied by the judgments that would fall upon violators of these laws, confirm this line of thought. This God is vengeful and wrathful. The second stage in understanding the face of God should be drawn from the pre-classical prophets, especially their appeal to the principle of obedience as found in the famous statement, 'to obey is better than sacrifice' (e.g. Hosea 6:6), an idea which is also found in other books (e.g. Ps 50). Whilst the wrathful behavior is presupposed in the don'ts texts (1 Sam 15), I prefer to separate the two. To me the 'don'ts' represent the demands of custom which were taken to define morality, and custom at that level was understood to embrace the will of God. The obedience in the famous Samuel text should be interpreted differently. It was a test of a person's faith in God. The former is a cultural requirement; the latter is considered a religious expectation. However, the implications are the same in that the issue of obedience was a requirement or a condition to enjoy his favor. The third stage came in the phraseology of the text. To me, a change of attitude is displayed in the manner the tenets and statutes of God were presented. Instead of the don'ts and appeal to obedience, we notice a presentation of the law in an affirmative and positive way. There is an expression of good will and the hope that the obedience was affordable. Here we meet the expressions, 'seek good' (Amos 5:14), 'learn to do good' (Isa 1:17); and though the same rule could be juxtaposed together as in Isa 1:17, there is an effort at this stage to move from the 'don'ts' into 'dos' as also found in the book of Micah: "do justice,

love kindness, walk humbly with your God" (Mic 6:8). My own impression is that the presence of this expression in the eighth century prophets signals the transition into a discovery of God's love, mercy, and grace, which defines the second face of God.

The fourth stage flourished in the exilic period at the beginning of the restoration. Deutero-Isaiah should have been instrumental to the birth of this perception. The joyous mood, the excitement and hymnic style in the expression tallies with the genre of this period. However, it should be noted at the onset that Israel had occasional moments of joy here and there, but they were not significant enough to break new ground in the manner they interpreted God's designs.

But what could have triggered the changes over the period of the history of Israel? The unsustainability of God's wrath as a method to deal with evil brought about this change. Two texts in Exodus provide a clue to the unsustainability of this formula. In both instances, Moses exposes the 'foolishness of God' if he continues to use that method.

Concluding remarks

The search for a theological formula to deal with conflict in Africa is an acknowledgment that the appeal for justice (the legal), social and political solutions only to conflict in Africa has not managed to sustain democratic systems. The key word is 'sustain'. The introduction of God's love gives us another aspect of God that enables society to deal with this cancer on the African continent. Reconciliation that comes from these characters of God is likely to heal the wounds of the hearts, minds, and communities as well as (of) bodies. Clinical techniques to deal with wounds of the heart and of the mind are costly and less helpful. Mercy and love present a God who is both a woman and a man for those who want to see a genderless God. Taking the story of the prodigal son as our cue, it has been observed that the father in the story displays characteristics of a woman or a mother: sensitivity, tact and kindness. Sensitivity, because 'he kept scanning the horizon in the hope of his son's return'. Tact, because he also addressed the concerns of the elder son. Kindness, in the father's show of love, 'but while he was yet a distance, his father saw him and had compassion' (Lk 15:20). He also showed tenderness, warmth and affection: 'he ran and embraced him and kissed him' (Lk 15:20).

The father in the story looks as if he is very weak between the two sons – one is an obvious sinner in the story and the other, who is not appreciative to the father's ever presence, takes this opportunity to vent his feelings. But we also meet a male face of God in the same story. God as father allowed the son to make mistakes: he also allowed his son to experience life, and to take him back when things failed to work out. The father also provided the best garment and the fat calf to welcome the son back into the family. In all this, the father plays his role. He is 'weak enough to plead with his elder son to come to the banquet, and yet strong and firm enough to confront him about his reasons for not coming in'. Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness. There is strength in it.

The appeal to the two pictures of God we extrapolate from the story, enables us to meet a God who is both firm and loving. This face of God would enable his followers to opt for forgiveness, thereby help reduce the problems associated with raping, killings, maiming and displacements (refugee problem) which continue to have their toll on Africa's sons and daughters, fathers and mothers. Above all, it is my hope that the appeal to God's mercy, love and grace would help to motivate individuals and the church at large to engage in programmes of reconciliation and healing in communities. This is likely to usher in a life of peaceful coexistence, tolerance and tranquillity. Whilst the model looks weak at face value by suggesting that the victim pronounces forgiveness to the perpetrator of violence, it should be acknowledged that it is here where the strength of this method lies. The application of this theology defuses tensions and is likely to create a conducive environment for peace to prevail. It also enhances healings and reconciliation, and energizes people to develop a passion, to act like their God who is 'merciful, slow to anger, gracious and abounding in love', to bring about lasting peace.

In my discussion of the second face of God, I made mention of complementarity. The question people might ask is the sustainability of the second dimension to deal with conflict. In Africa, my response is that this method is being introduced to compliment the deficiencies of the justice and righteousness of God scenario. The love and mercy of God do not operate in isolation of the justice and righteousness of God. What differs is the order of the process. Instead of beginning with confessions, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace as a formula for healing in the traditional sense, I suggest starting with forgiveness, confession, reconciliation and peace formula in the love, grace and mercy route.

Second, there is another dimension presupposed in the second face of God. The religious dimension being suggested here should be seen to operate with other assumptions. For example, the same person is in a community where culture or custom has its place on what it expects its people to do in a situation like this. Also, the state has its legal instruments to deal with this. The love and mercy of God seek to capture the limitations in systems we use to settle disputes in society, and to acknowledge the element of cultural relativity in everything we do. By this, I mean no matter how good the ideas we have about something, and no matter how intelligent the architects of those ideas were, they are relative and should be put side by side with ideas from other people or sectors of society. Similarly, no matter how good an idea or philosophy is, it is likely to cause problems if it is overdone and overstays. Also, it has the potential to cause conflict when it turns sterile.

Third, it is not enough to deal with firefighting, and seek to perfect methods for doing so. The best way to deal with fire is to prevent it. Africa needs to find ways to prevent violence than to specialize in methods for dealing with them because such approaches do not yield good results as interventions come later when the damage has already been done, or the problem would have mutated to become very complex. Our vision of the future is that we need to raise questions to expose weaknesses in any given system before it is too late. We need to learn to be tolerant, accommodating and when hostilities erupt, to find dignified ways of dealing with them. By raising questions, we also mean allowing change to take place in the frame things have been presented to us. No political system is sacred to the extent that it cannot be subjected to scrutiny.

Raising questions to the reality presented to us simply means exposing the fallacies. That solutions used in 1948 to settle the aftereffects of the Second World War would apply in our own situation would be a wrong assumption. Theology and the Bible need to deal with the issues of power. Most violence is caused by the desire of one party to control, manipulate, dominate and exploit other people. The need to have mastery or lordship over someone is the cause for most conflicts. It becomes worse when it is used as a measurement for success, as a sign of good leadership. A rigid scrutiny is needed in the interpretation of the Bible, especially the Exodus narrative where war is legitimized and glorified. The elimination of the Canaanites in the Joshua narratives and the imperial texts in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah require some de-mystification. Theology should not only dwell on reflection on texts, but should create

texts that are friendly, seek to change society through an interpretation of the text that is sensitive, sincere and motivational. By motivational, I mean an interpretation that dwells on a search to inspire people to change things. For this reason, I prefer the need for a practical theology in the cultural sense of the word.

Lastly, the research has demonstrated how the biblical text is oppressive but also liberative, depending on who is interpreting it. But since in the Bible we are dealing with religious texts, there is need to view seriously the claim that the text is sacred. I say this in the light of people's attitude to the text and how that influences the preferred mode of interpretation. I believe that in seeking to achieve the demystification process I alluded to earlier on, the more conservative friends of the Christian faith are invited to take the context of the text seriously to avoid a dogmatic and orthodox view that is based on a synchronic approach to the text.

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Roy Musasiwa

3 | THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIZATION

Introduction

A question has often been asked: How can we explain the unfortunate paradox that Africa, a continent with the largest percentage of Christians, and the fastest growing church, is riddled with problems of governance, corruption, disease, poverty and ethnic tensions? This writer believes that the lack of church involvement in socio-political issues gives the best answer to this complex question. The chapter tackles the erroneous assumption of incongruity between the pursuit of theology, dealing with the things of God, and the promotion of social democratization, dealing with the secular reality of people power.

Juxtaposing theology and social democratization may, at face value, appear to be an oxymoron. The apparent incongruity between the pursuit of theology, dealing with the things of God, and the promotion of social democratization, dealing with the secular reality of people power, has been emphasized by both politicians and theologians whose interest is to maintain the status quo. "The church must concentrate on preaching and praying", we are often told, "and leave politics to politicians and economics to economists." This chapter seeks to reverse this mindset and establish the essential role of theology in the process of social democratization.

Aloys Otieno Ojore (2008) discusses the unfortunate paradox that Africa "the notoriously religious continent is also notoriously poor and notoriously violent!" Ojore goes on to ask: "What has happened to Africa that Christian leaders have run down their countries and led them to wars? Why has the Church been so ineffective in certain countries?" This writer believes it is lack of church involvement in socio-political issues that gives the best answer to these complex questions. True theology is not mere theory or orthodoxy but orthopraxis. It involves practice that arises from theological reflection, and the reflection that results from actual involvement in human socio-political realities. If theology is divorced from practice, it soon loses its reason for being. It will therefore be evident from this chapter that theology touches on human social realities,

and in particular the promotion of social democratization. To be a Christian must not involve being so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good. Thus, the pursuit of theology must lead to the promotion of social democratic values which involve personal freedom, participation and equality of rights and privileges.

What matters most to God is not the system of governance *per se,* but promotion of Godly values such as justice, truth, respect for human life and dignity, human freedoms, respect for other persons, good governance, participation, equality of human beings and accountability. It will be shown that, compared to other systems of governance, democracy creates the best chance of society upholding these values. While democracy, like other systems of governance, will be shown to be highly manipulable and abusable by dominant forces of society, it will also be shown that the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. The role of theology is to deal with that problem of the human heart and to tackle the problems of lack of knowledge and lack of power that hinder the success of democracy.

The chapter ends by articulating the role that theology can play in the promotion of social democracy. This includes promoting the balance between Christian identity and Christian involvement in the socio-political realities of our time, doing theology contextually, focusing on the oppressed and marginalized as interlocutors of theology and defining the importance of theological praxis. These approaches demonstrate the compatibility and partnership between the pursuit of theology and the promotion of social democratization to the glory of God. But first, what are the meanings and implications of the two concepts "theology" and "social democracy"?

Definitions and Implications of "theology" and "social democracy"

Theology can be understood as a systematically articulated human response to divine revelation in a particular context. However, theology, properly understood, is not mere theory or orthodoxy. Liberation theologians correctly characterize theology as "praxis" to emphasize the practice that arises from reflection, and the reflection that results from practice. If theology is ripped out of a practice of ministry in the world it soon loses its reason for being (Philpott 1993:9).

What, then, is the central theme of all genuine Christian theological endeavours? Part of the Lord's Prayer states: "Thy kingdom come; thy

will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Philpott (1993) gave expression to the concept of the kingdom of God, which he reconceptualized as 'kin-dom of God' following his praxiological involvement with the poor Amawoti Community of South Africa. To him the kin-dom "is where God's power to change is working; it is the power of God in action" (Philpott 1993:33). Elucidating this concept further, Philpott (1993:60) states that,

> The kin-dom of God, God's power to change in action, is seen when this God who identifies with the poor and oppressed, uses his divine power to support the oppressed and set them free from their yoke and heavy burden of oppression.

Theology, therefore, deals with matters of the kingdom of God which, from the above explication, touch on human social realities (Balcomb 1993, 1998). From Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of God, to be a Christian does not mean being so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good. Thus, pursuit of theology, or the kin-dom of God, as Philpott characterized it, is not incompatible with the promotion of social democratic values. But what do we mean by social democracy?

When applied specifically to government, democracy refers to 'a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system' (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy). According to Wikipedia, "The term comes from the Greek: δημοκρατία (*dēmokratía,* "rule of the people") which was coined from δῆμος (*dēmos,* "people") and κράτος (*kratos,* "power"). It was popularized in the middle of the 5th-4th century BCE to denote the political systems then existing in some Greek city-states, notably Athens, following a popular uprising in 508 BCE.

In this chapter, however, we go beyond the system of government and consider 'social democracy' to mean a state or society characterized by personal freedom and equality of rights and privileges. As Ojore (2008) rightly says, democratization includes the way people are activated to,

> participate fully in addressing and resolving issues that affect their lives either directly or indirectly. It is a process leading to the eradication of all obstacles to the realization of fully dignified human life. These obstacles can be political, economic, social, cultural and religious in nature. Democratization is therefore a process of liberation.

The explications of the terms "theology" and "social democratization" already shows the close relationship between the two. It is the central argument of this chapter that a theology of involvement as articulated

above must participate in promoting democratic values which in turn would improve the lives of the marginalized members of our society. But how do we evaluate "democracy" theologically?

Theological evaluation of democracy

Let it be admitted, from the outset, that no system of government at national or local level is perfect. Democracy, in particular, is susceptible to manipulation by dominant forces of society, unless the society concerned has developed a critical consciousness arising from a high degree of knowledge, participation and power (Philpott 1993:26). In other words, for democracy to succeed one needs what Paulo Freire (1993 [1970]) calls "conscientization".

Without this conscientization, the majority of countries which have legal forms of democracy, including Zimbabwe, are lacking in democratic values of freedom, equality and participation. The majority of the marginalized people in Zimbabwe, the poor, the disabled, are in turn affected by this. There are at least two hindrances to the promotion of democratic values. First, is *lack of knowledge*. Democracy presupposes the ability to make choices, but choices must be informed by knowledge of the issues involved. Thus, where there is no education, democratic space necessarily shrinks, and people can easily make uninformed choices – a clear case of the majority being wrong. Knowledge can also be withheld through biased media, or by a lack of free press or restricted airwaves and other media outlets. This kind of environment allows the ruling elites to dictate what people are allowed to know. Ignorant people may vote for a particular candidate for no other reason than the fact that they have been given a bag of maize seed and a bag of fertilizer. They may swallow the propaganda that demonizes opponents because they are denied accurate information about competing parties. When the majority of the voting public falls into the bracket of the ignorant, the result can only be a mockery of democracy.

The second hindrance to democracy is *lack of power*. This power comes in different types. A brilliant presidential candidate from a small ethnic group may fail to garner enough votes because of a lack of *numerical power* in the situation of many African countries where people are conditioned to vote on ethnic lines. A brilliant parliamentary candidate may be beaten at the polls by a less worthy opponent due to a lack of *dollar power* for campaigns and for use in bribing voters, as commonly happens in

many parts of the world. *Poverty*, however, is the greatest source of disempowerment. When people have to struggle for mere existence, they may experience voter apathy, with the result that a minority of voters decide the fate of the majority at the polls. Alternatively, they may easily vote on immediate bread and butter issues without taking the larger socio-economic picture into consideration. This, too, is a mockery of democracy. The prevalence of ignorance and powerlessness creates a field day for political and other manipulators.

Do we therefore discard democracy as an unworkable system? We say no. We say no because other possible systems of government also have weaknesses which may be worse than those of democracy. The dictatorship of kings would only work when it is "benevolent dictatorship" which puts the interests of one's subjects above one's own. Rehoboam, Solomon's son (1 Kings 12), supplies a good example of the fact that most dictatorships turn out to be cruel and oppressive. Ian Smith was the Prime Minister of Rhodesia prior to the independence of Zimbabwe that came in 1980. He toyed with another system of governance called "meritocracy" whereby only those with merit were allowed to vote or be voted for. The Whites enjoyed the greatest merit, and they "deserved" to rule. Smith hated majority rule. He vowed that this would not come to Zimbabwe in his life-time – or even in a thousand years. The liberation struggle was about overturning such an evil system of "meritocracy" that judged some human beings as being inferior to others.

The democratic system, on the other hand, comes closest to our understanding of human beings created in the image of God. God's image includes the ability to choose, and that is what democracy in theory provides. Democracy, while being a human system, also helps in the promotion of biblical values which remain unchanging in God's scheme of things. The values include justice, peace, truth, respect for human life and dignity, human freedoms, respect for other persons, good governance, rule of law, participation, equality of human beings, accountability and excellence. All these values find support in the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testaments. The fact that these values are endorsed even by those who are not Christians is an indication of their universality. God requires such values even in those who do not identify themselves as Christians. The Christian teaching is that God rewards those who abide by these values and punishes those who do not.

Each nation must choose leaders and a system of government that can best ensure the promotion of those values so that God's blessings can

rest on the nation. Zimbabwe and the majority of other nations have chosen the democratic system of government. It is not a perfect system; but we have judged it better than other systems in terms of promoting the values articulated above. Having done that, it becomes necessary that we honestly adhere to democratic principles and ensure the promotion of the godly values within our chosen system of government. This leads us to consider the role of theology in the promotion of social democracy.

Role of theology in the promotion of social democracy

We have established above that any system of social governance is abusable and no system is perfect. The heart of the problem, however, is the problem of the heart and not the system of government *per se*. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "the human heart is evil and deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who really can know how bad it is?" Therefore, the problems associated with democracy have to do with the human heart, and not with democracy. For this reason, theology should activate the church to work towards a change of heart as the best way to ensure that democracy succeeds. Apart from evangelism how can this be done in practice?

Firstly, through relevant theological education, Christians must maintain the balance between their identity and their involvement in the socio-political realities of their time. This is emphasized through Jesus' use of the image of salt and light to describe the stance his followers must take in the world (Mt 5:13-16). In order to be useful, salt and light must always maintain their identity (saltness and lightness). For Christians, that implies maintaining their vital relationship with God, and maintaining the Christian integrity that goes with that vital relationship. If Christians wish to promote democratic values, they must themselves exhibit such values in their church governance and daily practice.

Christian integrity must, however, be accompanied by being *involved* in transforming our world. Salt would be no good if it only maintains its integrity (saltness) while remaining in the saltshaker. The tendency to exalt spirituality at the expense of involvement must be resisted. Christians should not be so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good, just as they should not be so earthly minded as to be of no heavenly good. Thus, Christians have to be involved in promoting social democratization. In Zimbabwe the Catholic Church is playing a leading role in this endeavour. They do this by periodically issuing Pastoral Letters such as

"God hears the cry of the oppressed: Pastoral letter on the current crisis in Zimbabwe (2007). Following the political violence of 2008, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (2008) published *Graveyard governance: A report on political violence following the March harmonised 2008 elections*. The Jesuits also published the journal for Zimbabwe called *Mukai/Vukani* which is an awakening call to the people of Zimbabwe. More significantly, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Christian Council formed the Ecumenical Peace Initiative which in 2006 published *The Zimbabwe We Want: A National Vision for Zimbabwe*. This was a credible, though belated, effort by the church to promote a democratic culture in Zimbabwe. In South Africa, the best example of combined Christian effort at promotion of democratic values was the *Kairos Document* of 1987.

Secondly, this chapter calls for doing theology contextually. Frostin (1988:8) explains that the Liberation Theology paradigm 'implies that theology should not be ahistorical but that the theologian must analyse his or her role in the social conflicts, to discover how the context shapes the perception of theologically relevant issues.' Contextual theology of liberation insists on context as the primary determinant of a theological method (Mofokeng 1990:169). Contextual theology of liberation does not claim to be politically neutral. It adopts what is commonly known as the 'preferential option for the poor and marginalized' and is therefore vitally interested in creating a democratic space for them.

This leads to the third consideration: a focus on the oppressed and the marginalized as interlocutors of theology. The experience of the oppressed and marginalized is lifted into a theological category. This is highly significant, for when theology speaks with the voice of the marginalized, the oppressive, dominant ideologies are subverted (Frostin 1988:94f). The liberation of the poor becomes a worthy theological goal in the democratization process. This is done by empowering the poor to be agents of their own liberation in the process that Paulo Freire (1993) calls conscientization.

A fourth, and related concept in theology's contribution to democratization is defining the importance of theological praxis. This consists of a dialectic between action and reflection. Frostin (1988:9) summarizes this stance of Liberation Theology by saying ""doing theology" is here seen as a "hermeneutical circulation" of theory and praxis where action forces the theologian to look at theory and theory forces the theologian to look at action again." According to the liberation paradigm, knowledge is not

an intellectual activity of grasping reality as it is, but one of transforming and constructing a new world (Frostin 1988:9). Therefore, for Liberation Theology the dialectic between theory and praxis is closely related to the insistence on a contextual methodology which is a major contribution to the social democratization process. It is this kind of theology that we believe the Zimbabwean and indeed other African Christian communities need to adopt for the democratization of their spaces.

Conclusion

The unfortunate paradox that sub-Sahara Africa should have huge social problems when it is a largely Christian region has been explained in this chapter on the basis of an overspiritualized Christian faith which is not involved in socio-political issues of our time. The chapter has suggested the way forward, being the pursuit of relevant theology that promotes social democratization. Such a promotion of social democratization becomes a good vehicle for the inculcation of values that matter to God and to society – values such as justice, truth, respect for human life and dignity, human freedoms, respect for other persons, good governance, participation, equality of human beings and accountability. The role of theology can legitimately include creating conditions for the success of social democratic values through the eradication of lack of knowledge and lack of power. What Paulo Freire calls conscientization is in fact a legitimate exercise of the kind of theology that has been characterized as orthopraxis.

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PART B | DISABILITY AND POVERTY

Francis Machingura & Nyasha Madzokere

4 | "Do you want to be healed?" – The Pentecostal Churches' Engagement with Persons Living With Disabilities

Introduction

Any talk or discussion about disability has divided people as to how best to inclusively involve them in the development of the nation as well as their involvement in Church activities. The major hurdle lies with the Pentecostal Churches' definition, understanding and interpretation of disability which seems to have contributed to the disempowerment of persons living with disabilities (PLWDs). As a result, it is the society in general and the Church (in this case Pentecostal Churches) in particular that disable certain groups through certain beliefs, practices, teachings, stigma or religious attitude, resentment and selective use of certain biblical texts against PLWDs. Is the Bible clear on what disability is? Is what we find in the Bible exactly how we understand disability in the contemporary sense? Is the Bible contributing to stigma and discrimination faced by PLWDs? Is every form of disability a sign of sickness or demon possession? Does any form of disability need divine healing or faith for one to be healed? If taken as demonic, how will one explain the disability that may have developed or been acquired in life through illness, age, accidents or medication? How best can churches, especially Pentecostal ones, use the Bible when dealing with PWLDs? This chapter uses the Tripolar methodological approach to analyse biblical texts like Luke 4:18-21 that have negative insinuations on PLWDs. It also seeks to find out how best such texts can be used in a liberative way. Reflections on disability in African theology and religious studies have highlighted the capacity of biblical and cultural texts to be interpreted in liberative ways, even though the dominant paradigm has been the oppressive one (see articles in Kabue, Amanze & Landmann 2016).

Selected Biblical Texts on Disability

The Bible has been invoked several times in light of disability. It is not surprising that, certain Old Testament texts have ifluenced how PLWDs are viewed, for example, the levitical laws which seem to associate disabilities with 'blemishes' that make them ceremonially unclean. There are Old Testament texts which are so disturbing to read or hear them being read in light of disability. For example, Leviticus 21:16-23 states:

> The Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: "For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; no man with crippled foot or hand, or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles.

This text from Leviticus promotes segregation, stereotypes and cultivates the ableist notion that paints PLWDs in bad light and suggesting that they require cure before they are included into the ministry of God. Physical disability is negatively portrayed as reflecting spiritual disfavor, perhaps assumed to be emanating from sin and disobedience. What is interesting is that, by associating sin and moral transgression through reading such texts, our society has found an apparent justification for stigmatizing the disabled. Old Testament writers' view is that, God brings disability as punishment for transgressions for sin or as an expression of God's wrath for people's disobedience. Jaeger and Bowman (2005) add that, both the Old and New Testaments equate disability with divine punishment hence evidence of immoral behaviour or sin.

Disability is seen as a curse that results from unbelief, disobedience and ignorance (Otieno, 2009). It is such scriptures that need hermeneutics of redemption and empowerment for PLWDs. Vondey and Mittelstadt (2013) suggest a redemptive Christological reading of the Bible that takes and recognises Christ as "the unblemished and undefiled sinless Great High Priest whose crucifixion fulfils priestly functions though with an impaired and disabled body." For some Christian believers, what happened to the recipients of Jesus is expected to also happen to PLWDs especially when they visit the Church. The recipients of Jesus who had disabilities were compassionately healed. The witnessing to God's healing power through Jesus as shown in the New Testament has shaped the history of Christianity in Africa. Zimbabwe is not an exception when it comes to how healing takes a central role in most Pentecostal churches. According to Dayton (1987), the early modern Pentecostals embraced a fourfold gospel of Jesus as saviour, baptizer in the Holy Spirit, healer,

and coming King. Edmonds (2011) adds that, faith healing and theatrical healing practices involving laying on of hands, mutual prayer, speaking in tongues and anointing with oil are known features of Pentecostal services. However, healing has of late become a central pillar of Pentecostalism which is associated with Pentecostal language of the 'full gospel' by relating to the physical welfare of Christians than just spiritual salvation through conversion.

According to Cartledge (2010), healing may occur either spontaneously or gradually and sometimes with the assistance of medicine. In some cases, people choose not to go to hospital and ignore whatever pain that they go through in the hope that through their faith, the pain would go away hence a soteriological metaphor of healing (Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24). It is important to note that Pentecostals, especially in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, are divided when it comes to the medical model versus the spiritual model. Traditional Pentecostals in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe are against taking the medical route when one is sick. Traditional Pentecostals believe in the power of prayer and faith, whereas modern Pentecostals are no longer opposed to medical science. Modern Pentecostals believe that healing can still take place where God can still heal through prayers or medicine (Anderson, 2013). In fact, modern Pentecostals may even pray for God to guide the hands of the surgeons, make medicines efficacious or work through psychological counselling, and still credit God for any healing achieved (Brown, 2011). For Yong (2007), the progress of Pentecostal Christianity in the Global South is not only due to the movement's focus on faith healing but also because it fits into their indigenous cultural beliefs and expectations, for example, the causation of illness. Any illness and disability is diagnosed as caused by demons, devil or the spirit of the deceased. In the Pentecostal worldview, angels of darkness manufacture diseases, sickness and all forms of disabilities. However, the position of Jesus as the healer of the body has remained central in most Pentecostal churches especially the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. According to Henderson, Littles and Milhouse (2006), Christ's techniques of praying and commanding the sick to be well by laying on hands and instructing the afflicted persons to pursue a specific course of action have been adopted by modern Pentecostal evangelists. As a result, the Bible, especially the gospels, has become problematic in the way it portrays Jesus and his interaction with PLWDs. For critics, the impression given is that Jesus healed all PLWDs that he met. The portrayal of Jesus has become

an important source of reference in many churches to wrongly imply that, Jesus' ministry rid PLWDs of all kinds of their disability. It is important to note that, the society at large and Pentecostal churches in particular, must accept responsibility for socially constructing actions, practices, beliefs, feelings and attitudes that negatively regard and further marginalizes PLWDs. The Bible and its pages are not an exception in being an accomplice in the negative portrayal of PLWDs. As a result, some PLWDs have developed a feeling that, life is not worth living in their condition.

Jesus and Disability: The Lukan Version

Luke 4:18 is another biblical text that has been used in propagating the healing of all persons living with disabilities. It is used to fulfil the claims made by Jesus when he said:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

Dunn (1975:63) describes Luke 4:18 as "almost certainly a Lukan construction on the basis of Mark in which Luke brings forward in anticipation of an earlier reference of messiahship than historically probable on the basis of Isaiah 61:1-2." Luke 4:18-21 is regarded as a programmatic "Special L" verse in which the Lukan Jesus recites Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6 followed by the statement in verse 21 that "today this writing has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Rothschild, 2004; Pilgrim, 1981; Busse, 1978; Knight, 1998; Spencer, 2007 and Conzelmann, 1961). Harvey (1982) also believes that, it was from Isaiah 61:1-2 that Jesus' followers, if not Jesus himself, came to think of their master as the Master, that is, the anointed one. Luke 4:18-21 is often used as a 'proof' that one of the signs of the future kingdom of God to be realized in the lives of believers is through healing and curing of people with disabilities (Bacon & Morris, 2011). It is not surprising that many of the biblical narratives that touch on healing miracles have found home in most of the Pentecostal churches. Therefore, whether one accepts the Lukan portrait of the Nazareth sermon as authentic or not, it is quite probable that Jesus or his followers did quote Isaiah 61 as illustrative or determinative of Jesus' ministry (Porter, 2006; Chilton & Evans, 1998). The public pronouncement by Jesus in Luke 4:18-21 also discloses Luke's guiding hermeneutical principle of Jesus' ministry to humankind where the qualities of the prophet

in Isaiah 61:1-2a serve as an outline of several aspects of Jesus' works of salvation in the gospel (Rothschild, 2004; Moyise & Menken, 2005). Whatever case, the passage in Isaiah played a very important role in shaping of the Christology of the historical Jesus and then his followers after his departure. As a result, Luke 4:18-21 has been interpreted variously and evoked to address different situations. In South Africa, most black theologians used the text to negatively portray the apartheid regime (Boesak, 1977). In Zimbabwe, the text is used to address different scenarios. For Vengeyi (2013: 365),

> Luke 4:18 is a central text summoned usually in exorcism or deliverance sessions meant to bring forth liberation from spiritual powers that cause poverty. In recent years, Luke 4:18 have been widely accepted in Zimbabwe as a liberating text. However, Luke 4:18 overturns not only the prevalent Pentecostal-spiritual interpretation but also the Zimbabwean churches' understanding of the oppressors and the oppressed.

The text is a revolutionary call where Jesus' intention was good in bringing liberation to PLWDs, though the text has created problems in terms of attitudes generated towards PLWDs. Yet Jesus' salvation as portrayed by Luke seeks to give new dignity to the physically weak, socially ostracised and the morally degraded and place them in the mainstream community through their relating to Jesus (Vanhoozer, Bartholomew, Treier & Wright, 2005). Jesus' healing of the blind, the lame, the deaf, the mute, and other disabilities may serve to confirm the usual stereotypes that people have on PLWDs, for example, regarding PLWDs as passive and pitiable objects of charity who need God's redemptive healing power of Jesus for them to be accepted in the mainstream society.

PLWDs are always at the mercy of those who regard themselves as able bodied or normal or non-disabled. It is not surprising that whenever many Christians come across PLWDs at public Christian gatherings, the assumption is to regard them as having come for divine healing sessions and not just fellowship with others. Texts such as Luke 4:18 have been used to give the impression that salvation cannot be experienced in a disabled condition (Bacon & Morris, 2011). Therefore, it is hermeneutics of "otherness" where the text is used for the othering of PLWDs (Botha & Andinach, 2009). It is the type of reading of scriptures that increases the vulnerability of the weak and poor. The world of the text and the world in the text are ignored to serve the privileged powerful. Most Pentecostal Christians believe in the authoritative verbal inspiration or inerrancy of scriptures such that all healing activities are regarded as supposed to be experienced by the sick and disabled. It is not surprising that

Zimbabwe has of late witnessed multiple deliverance evangelists and prophets who claim to be under the command of the Holy Ghost to engage in divine healing. Jesus is portrayed as having been wounded or suffered for the healing of everybody. To support this, texts such as 1 Peter 2:23 which stipulates that, "by his (Jesus) wounds you have been healed," come in handy. It is common to find PLWDs being ushered or coerced against their will to go for deliverance. Any form of disability is generally regarded as a sign of sickness or disease. It is not surprising that from the interviews we had with followers in three Pentecostal churches, when Pentecostals are praying for divine healing, they have in mind physical cure from disease or any disability. What is confusing is that both disabled and non-disabled slavishly depend on God for survival. Yet that must not be the case with non-disabled. It does not make sense at all to drag PLWDs for healing if they understand their disability positively hence centrally being part of their identity. Is it demonic for people to experience disabilities when they grow old? We have seen a number of the elderly people who use wheelchairs or crutches which they never used earlier in their lives. Everybody is vulnerable to disability as long as one is still on this planet called earth. The grace of God is on both the disabled and the abled. Human beings have various limitations which disable them in various ways.

Respected Church Fathers like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas also had a negative perspective of disability. According to Augustine (Bacon & Morris, 2011), deafness is a hindrance to faith itself, as they thought that this was confirmed by Apostle Paul in Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ." The implication here is that, if one is deaf there is no possibility of being saved and witnessing the word of God. This was suggested by Thomas Aquinas (Bacon & Morris, 2011) who underlined,

> Now man attains to belief both seeing miracles and by hearing the teachings of faith /.../ it is said that faith is through hearing. Therefore, man attains to faith by acquiring it.

If faith is associated with hearing and seeing, then it is clear that the visually impaired, those with hearing impairment and mental disabilities will not be saved unless the disabilities are not reversed or addressed. In this sense, healing is regarded as the only entry into the kingdom of God. It is only the abled who are portrayed as the favoured ones of God. Any form of disability is taken as a barrier for one to experience the salvation of God. Yet Luke comes up with a different portrayal

of Jesus. For Thiselton (2006), Bartsch (1963) and Wilson (1973), Jesus' universally recognised concern is about women, the poor and the outcasts, serve to de-privilege any suggestion that the Gospel addressed primarily the religious elite. For Vengeyi (2013:375), the poor in this sense as portrayed in Luke included all levels of society like the economically poor, the sick, the dishonoured, those excluded from God's people by their fellow Jews, those held by satanic bondage and those in need of forgiveness of their sins. As for the well to do, they always have so many other means and they do not normally rely on spiritual solutions. The suffering poor appeared to constitute the single largest group responding to Jesus' ministry.

It is then not surprising that it is always the sick, disabled and those who were spirit possessed that consisted the majority who followed Jesus in order to have their problems addressed. Their conditions in life exposed them to poverty and had no other option except to trust in God. For Luke, the credibility of Jesus' gospel was in making a difference in the public world, by making sure that even outcasts are part of the big family of the Church. This is something that we feel is being missed by most Pentecostal churches when it comes to PLWDs.

The Pentecostal Understanding of healing and disability: 'The Tyranny of the Normal'

Healing occupies a central place in Pentecostal Christianity. This is clearly shown in most of the literature produced by Pentecostal Christians and their teachings in churches or public gatherings (Shanduka & Togarasei 2018). The portrayal of PLWDs as needing normalization through healing, however, is not unique to Pentecostal-charismatic traditions but cuts across most Christian traditions though differing in levels or degrees of stereotypes. Mainline churches like the Catholic Church have of late witnessed the charismatic renewal that focuses on prayer, fasting and healing of diseases, sicknesses and disabilities. However, to associate faith with salvation and healing of any disabilities clearly reflects the form of tyranny by those who regard themselves as normal and able-bodied (Bacon & Morris, 2011). It is the 'tyranny of the normal and their theologies' that manifests in Pentecostal churches. Such tyranny needs to be challenged for the betterment of the conditions of the lives of PLWDs. Societies cannot afford a mentality, attitude, teachings, bibli-

cal texts and theologies that still promote the exclusion of PLWDs. Ac-
cording to Bacon & Morris (2011),

> Such exclusion, whether of some or all disabled people does not seem
> consistent with the idea of a God who comes alongside the marginalized
> and stands in solidarity with the excluded, who 'brought down the power-
> ful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly (Lk 1:52).' And, if disability
> is indeed a social construct, it does not seem at all reasonable that God
> excludes from His salvation plan those whom a particular culture at a
> particular time deems to be 'disabled.'

Salvation must be inclusive, all-encompassing and universal inspite of
one's status, human capabilities, gender, political affiliation, class, sex,
race, colour and tribe. The Pentecostal churches' theology on disability
must be inclusive and positive by not discriminating against PLWDs.

Cartledge (2010) calls for an inclusive and holistic theology, ecclesiology,
pneumatology, anthropology, Christology, soteriology and eschatology
that includes and respects PLWDs in all activities of the church. If the
theology negatively portrays PLWDs; it falsely deploys the image and
nature of God in terms of His love towards humanity. If PLWDs are
excluded now in the constructed kingdom of God on this earth, what
assurance is there for PLWDs in the coming kingdom of God? Salvation
must not be narrowly regarded as that healing of the body, soul and
spirit but it includes relationships as well. Yet for Yong (Stephenson,
2013), the contours of salvation include at least the following seven di-
mensions:

1) Personal, that results in the transformation of an individual into
   the image of Christ marked customarily by repentance, bap-
   tism, and reception of the Holy Spirit;
2) Familial, that results in the conversion of entire households,
   clans, or tribes;
3) Ecclesial, that results into baptism into the body of Christ and,
   thus, into a new communal way of living;
4) Material, that results in the healing of the body, soul, and mind;
5) Social, that results in deliverance from structural evils resulting
   in race, class, and gender reconciliation;
6) Cosmic, that results in redemption of the entire creation;
7) Eschatological, resulting in the final consummation of the other
   six dimensions.

The Pentecostal understanding of salvation must be holistic, instead of
narrowly focusing much on the material. Yong (2007) is right in under-
standing salvation by expanding on the Pentecostal fivefold gospel, as

this helps to realize that the concept of salvation is very broad and deep. If the Church perceives disability as positively good and part of the person's identity, its attitude and theology changes for the good of everybody. PLWDs must be treated with dignity when they experience freedom and inclusion hence an affirmation of their humanity.

Critics have raised concerns on the Pentecostal theology of healing and disability. Yong (2007) argues that the complaints about Pentecostal-charismatic healing practices are legion as reflected in the disability literature. The first criticism is that, the Pentecostal theology of healing is a great discouragement to those people who experience the onset of disability later in life but being drawn to healing revivals where hands are laid on them but still remaining in their disability condition. As a result, they get disillusioned and despondent to realize that God had not healed them. The disillusionment leads some to think that God does not love them. It will not be surprising that, some get labelled for lacking faith or spiritual grace of God in the first place. Lovering (1985) retorts that, "to be taught and believe that God- yours or mine- selectively reaches down and restore some disabled persons to wholeness is a cruel and damaging hoax." A number of PLWDs who we interviewed indicated their discomfort whenever they think of going to church. What comes to their mind is the treatment they get from the broader Christian community, how the Bible and certain preachers try to prove their callings through divine healings of PLWDs.

The preachers do not care how PLWDs feel when nothing happens and still being encouraged to raise their faith for a miracle to take place. The same attitudes and fears dispelled against PLWDs by preachers has cascaded down to their followers who find it difficult to interact with PLWDs. PLWDs painfully realize it as reflected by Mary Semple (cited in Yong, 2007:242) on her disability experiences with churches that,

> People, who don't go to church, don't profess to be Christian, yet offer me more comfort than those who do. They openly acknowledge my obvious deformities without fear. They see beyond themselves to me. For those moments, they put their feet into my shoes and glimpse my pain. They ease my burden in this way. They validate my presence and my worth.

For critics, the observation by Mary Semple is true as many churches, especially Pentecostal ones, have ceased to be places of love, security, hope and peace for PLWDs because of how they are perceived. This emanates from the perception of taking them as sick or ill hence in need of divine medication or healing. PLWDs face a lot of challenges in

churches and fewer problems outside the Church. They are all generally portrayed as needing God's intervention even though some would have been saved by God in accidents. Some have proven to be able academically, financially, socially and politically but ironically get shunned in many churches especially Pentecostal ones.

It is likely that, in Zimbabwe, the challenges faced by PLWDs are worsened by indigenous beliefs. In the Shona world view, any form of disability is usually associated with the spirit of the deceased, curses and witchcraft. The same perception is common with Pentecostals where any disability, sickness or illness is associated with demonic spirits or the work of a living enemy. According to Tariro Machinga (interviewed, 18 November 2014), a parent with a disabled child is not spared from the condemnation or negative label of being regarded as having sinned and cursed by God. The Church is understood as a place for reversal of such curses and forgiveness of sins, ostensibly resulting in the divine healing of any disability. It is not surprising that Pentecostal churches such as the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe find it very difficult to have a position or policy as a church on disability or PLWDs. PLWDs find it very difficult to associate themselves with Pentecostal churches outside the realm of healing. It is rare to find preachers living with some disability in most Pentecostal Churches being given the opportunity to serve God. The Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe has a few pastors who live with disability, though that arose when they were already in ministry. According to Rev. Masunda (not his real name),

> One of the legendary Evangelists in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, Pastor Chitauro used to be prominent at conferences and church gatherings because of healing miracles that he performed. Things changed for the worst when he experienced a stroke and became disabled and lived with some disability. Yet this is somebody who used to pray and PLWDs would experience some divine healing. However, from that day, no one (even the leadership and his local assembly) wanted to be associated with him until his death. The trend in Pentecostal churches is that of preachers who change their sermons whenever they see PLWDs in their gatherings because of their perception of disability. You rarely find messages that encourage and empower PLWDs.

As a result, some clergymen and women in Pentecostal churches have suffered rejection and psychological torture after falling sick to the extent of disability. One of the student pastors (requested to be anonymous, interviewed, 21 October 2014) at Living Waters Theological Seminary, Tynwald campus, confessed and lamented that,

> I have got a girl child who is physically challenged. My wife suffered some prolonged labour, only delivering on the fourth day. On the ninth day after birth, my child suffered meningitis such that the mother and the child were detained for a month in hospital. As a result, my daughter has problems walking properly. What pains is that, when I go to church with my child, many people gaze at her as if she is not in the right place. Some go the extent of advising us to raise our faith for her to experience divine healing. Now it's affecting our daughter who is twelve years old whenever she overhears people making disparaging comments about her condition. We prayed and fasted for a change in her condition but God has other plans. Now we have peace of mind, knowing fully well it's fine as it is. The challenge now is with my brethren and their perspective of my daughter in light of disability.

There are exceptional cases like that of the late Evangelist Ezekiel Junior of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Forward in Faith, who went to different parts of the world preaching the gospel though he lived with open disability. He could not walk or talk without the help of his assistants. His case was different by virtue of him being the only son of the Archbishop Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti. Perhaps if Evangelist Ezekiel Junior were not the son of the founding Archbishop, we would like to believe that it would have been a different case considering the Pentecostal attitude towards PLWDs. One of the pastors, who preferred to be anonymous, argued that:

> Most Pentecostal churches' constitutions do not have anything on disability. In the case of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, the church's constitution focuses on widows and orphans (Manhinga children's home), something good but nothing on PLWDs. What is the church saying about disability? Visiting theological institutions where our pastors are trained, one won't find any pavements for wheelchair users when attending classes and chapel services. The Pentecostal churches' infrastructure confirms their attitude towards PLWDs, for example, the church buildings and toilets are not accessible for PLWDs. Churches and homes must be constructed with the understanding that we have PLWDs.

It is such attitudes, theologies, beliefs and practices that promote inequalities and disempowerment of PLWDs. It is as a result of these challenges on disability and healing that A. J. Block (2000) and Yong (2007), who have made extensive researches on Pentecostalism and disability, have suggested that the only way forward out of the dilemma that people face is distinguishing between disability and illness, sickness or disease. For Block and Yong, people with illnesses or sickness need to be cured in order to be whole whereas people with disabilities may take a cure but do not need the cure in order to be whole. For Brown (2011), people

flock to faith healing Pentecostal proclaimers because of the poverty that stops them from visiting expensive medical practitioners for help. However, followers of Pentecostal theology on healing still maintain that the reason why people still flock and continue to be drawn to Pentecostal Christianity is a result of having been touched by God through the healing experience they pass through or the experience of their family members and friends. It is such major experiences of healing that are sometimes celebrated within churches that have moved people into Pentecostal churches. The divine power and faith healing are regarded as only to be experienced by those who truly and faithfully seek after it.

In most cases, preachers bombard PWDs with healing messages because of the notion that disability is connected to sin. It should be pointed out, however, that sometimes this attitude is influenced by sympathy and love, for example, wishing well to PLWDs. While the paternalistic approach may be well meaning, it subjects PWDs to unwarranted or uninvited sympathy and pity which to some extent takes away some measure of freedom from PLWDs. It is only in few cases that some Pentecostal leaders selfishly do it so as to market their churches through the miraculous healing of PWDs (Machingura & Masengwe, 2014; Machingura, 2013). It is not far fetched that faith healing is likely to increase in scope as many Christian believers and non-believers see divine healing as a theological truth that can only be grasped by those with faith. Such an understanding has defined the spiritual climate and market in Zimbabwe. People are not interested in examining the consequences of such faith healing beliefs and practices to PLWDs. From the interviews that were carried out, we realized that people are divided between those who still insist that the biblical promises must be witnessed where all PLWDs are healed and those who argue that not all are healed because God is not interested in divine healing but seeing them being saved and living righteous lives. The later emphasized on the salvation of the souls of PLWDs as God knows better why he created them like that. Elder Ndlovu (Interviewed, 20 August 2014) argued that,

> The Church's role is to pray to God so that PLWDs are given the strength to carry on with their lives. I have a son who cannot walk properly as a result of polio. We have heeded many altar calls with no results. It doesn't mean we had no faith but we now feel God is happy to see my son in his state. We are now at peace with God and no longer listen to any altar calls for divine healings. We know that God heals but cannot be forced against His will when it comes to the divine healing of PLWDs. What we want from brethren are words of encouragement and biblical texts of love not condemnation. Yet some Pentecostal preachers use that

condition of disability to lure people to their churches and some even go the extent of lining their pockets by making adverts that market them as miracle workers on any disability. It's really painful to know about it.

Most Pentecostal churches such as the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe do not have trained personnel or pastors who can interact effectively with PLWDs save to talk of divine healing. However, there are exceptional Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe pastors such as Pastor Togara Mapingure who have tried to establish an organisation that deals with PLWDs. The project failed to take off because of the attitude of the broader church and lack of financial support. Yet, as rightly observed by Vengeyi (2013:375ff), Jesus, in Luke 4:18-21, takes sides with the oppressed; the wretched, the despised, the malnourished, the naked, the disposed and the soldiers with them in their battles against their oppressors; the land grabbers, the well nourished who celebrate unending feasts, the well dressed and the corrupt who manipulate religion to their benefit, so as to authenticate their corrupt ways. Preachers must live out the gospel of love (1 Corinthians 13) which they preach. Love must be shown to everybody, including those with disabilities. Pentecostal churches must move away from the self-centeredness that has recently characterised men and women of the cloth when they forget our brothers and sisters living with disabilities. In fact, Pentecostals unfortunately prefer to pray for them or expect healing miracles or to see them being looked after in charity homes such as the Jairos Jiri centre for the PLWDs.

Conclusion

Disability is not inability and disability does not mean PLWDs are the sworn candidates for divine healing or healing miracles. Pentecostal churches must be inclusive when it comes to PLWDs; for example, the churches' infrastructure must accommodate all the people. In most cases those with hearing impairment are literally ignored though they also want to be part of the Church because the Church does not have personnel with sign language skills. PLWDs must be involved in all church activities of their interest, just like any other believer. The Pentecostal churches and their institutions that train pastors must be ready for all the people, including PLWDs. Conditions must change for the better and the Church and its institutions must deploy the love of God to everybody in light of PLWDs. Through such liberating approaches, the

Church will contribute towards the de-marginalization of PLWDs in Zimbabwe and influence attitudes beyond the country positively.

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5 | PERSONHOOD AND DISABILITY IN ZIMBABWE: A CRITICAL PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

The issue of disability has for years been an ongoing debate among academics, health professionals, social workers and the disability movement. Advocates of people living with disabilities have been fighting for them to be included in the social fabric as equal individuals to their counterparts not living with disabilities. This followed the social trend that people living with disabilities tend to be marginalized and discriminated against, be it in their employment or social lives. They are seen by the able bodied as being less equal and as helpless. This chapter is then motivated by the need to find out whether one's impairment can determine one's personhood. We therefore trace the roots of the debate on personhood from Western scholars and see how their debates fall short and fail to incorporate people living with disabilities, especially in an African context. The chapter also establishes the African conception of personhood, addressing the major questions, as to what it means to be a person, and the essential elements for personhood. It will then critique how African views on personhood can or have accommodated people living with disabilities. Disability is widely regarded as an individual failing and a personal tragedy. This is confirmed by its pre-eminent medical diagnosis in terms of individual pathology and associated deficits, abnormalities and functional limitations (Creamer 2009). Crucially, these difficulties become both the explanations for the wide-ranging social disadvantages and dependence of disabled people. In light of these limitations, dominant social groups seek ways to perpetuate and enhance their privileged position and to secure the compliance of subordinate groups, whether by overt use of power and authority or through more covert influence and manipulation, perhaps by generating a set of ideas (ideology) that reflect and sustain the position of the social group (Barnes and Mercer 2010). This perception of people living with disabilities leads to their discrimination and marginalization by the able-bodied members of the society.

Disability: A Definition

There is no clear-cut definition of disability. Disability has been defined in different ways at different times and by different categories of people. Scholars such as Samuel Kabue (2011:4) argue that, the term 'disability' is a creation of modern society in its attempt to group people with different characteristics. For him, it is not a term that existed either in the Western or African traditions and neither is it found in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It therefore means definitions remain contestable. However, the modern definitions of disability fall into two main categories, that is, the medical model and the social model (Chimedza & Peters 2001:10).

In current scholarship on disability studies, distinctions are often drawn between terms such as impairment, disability and handicap. Impairment usually signifies an abnormality or loss of physiological form or function, for instance, a damaged optical nerve is classified as impairment (Creamer 2009). Disability describes the consequences of the impairment, which may be an inability to perform some task or activity, for instance, the disability might be an inability to see (Creamer 2009). 'Handicap' literally' meaning 'to hinder' or 'to place at a disadvantage', denotes the disadvantage that results from an impairment or disability (Creamer 2009).

In 1982, The National Disability Survey of Zimbabwe came up with a working definition of disability as 'a physical or mental condition, which makes it difficult or impossible for the person concerned to adequately fulfil his or her normal role in society' (Zimbabwe Department of Social Services, 1982:8). In 1996 the Disabled Persons Act of Zimbabwe expanded on this to define a disabled person as 'a person with a physical, mental or sensory disability, including a visual, hearing or speech functional disability, which gives rise to physical, cultural or social barriers inhibiting him from participating at an equal level with other members of society in activities, undertakings or fields of employment that are open to other members of society' (Zimbabwe Government, 1996: 51). We need to point out that in spite of all the contestations surrounding definitions of disability, we subscribe to the World Council of Churches' definition. The World Council of Churches defines disability as the "differently abled". This definition is significant because people living with disability are not disabled in all respects, apart from the fact that they are abled in some areas that people who are not considered as disabled are actually disabled. We argue along these lines because there are many

people who are considered abled by society, but they are not able there-fore the study construes this as a form of disability. The section below focuses on the discrimination of people living with disability.

Discrimination and Disability

Disabled people all over the world face discrimination and prejudice throughout their lives. They are portrayed as tragic victims of some un-fortunate accident or disease, as people who do not function normally. This has a number of implications. First, non-disabled people's percep-tions of disability are based on stereotypical beliefs about dependency and helplessness (Watson cited in Shakespeare 1998:147). This can re-sult in the creation of barriers induced by a fear of contamination, of physical and psychic damage. People who have impairment can act as a reminder to our own frailty, our own susceptibility to mobility and mor-tality (Shakespeare 1998:147). Second, the rise of 'consumer behaviour', the genesis of 'commodity culture', with its focus on the body, can create anxiety in those who do not conform to cultural and social norms (Shakespeare 1998:147). These reactions serve to remind the disabled person that they are 'different' even if they see themselves as normal. According to Goffman (as cited in T Shakespeare 1998:147), "the stand-ards he [or she] has incorporated from the wider society equip him [or her] to be intimately alive to what others see as failures, inevitably caus-ing him, if only for moments, to agree he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be."

Furthermore, social model theorists argue that disability can best be understood as an interactive process, an interaction at both micro and macro levels. According to Oliver (cited in Shakespeare 1998:148), disa-bility is not a pathological or medical problem, and research into disa-blement and social policies aimed at overcoming disablement should focus not on the disabled individual but on society. Attention should be paid at an interpersonal and institutional level. They argue that we al-ready know that disabled people are stereotyped, that they lack cultural capital and consequently we do not need any more research into how disabled individuals ascribe to their impairment or how they organise their day to day lives (Shakespeare 1998:147). Disability is a structural issue, and by removing disabling structures, disability itself can be elim-inated (Shakespear 1998:148). Disability is an arbitrary, group-based distinction, based on the fallacy that it is an essential characteristic. If discrimination were to be removed, disabled people would be free to

choose the lifestyle they wish, unencumbered by stereotypes (Shakespeare 1998:148). According to B. Ingstad & S. Reynolds (1995:10) one of the basic questions for cross-cultural research on disability is that of how biological impairments relate to personhood and to culturally defined differences among persons. This leads us to ask; are people with impairments impaired people? Are they valued differently from other members of society?" Irving Zola (as cited in Ingstad & Reynolds 1995:10) speaks of the invalidation and infantilization of disabled people, one's validity as a full person is denied. In this regard, does being different mean being less and what is the criterion/a of determining the less?

The questions that this chapter poses are; what does it mean to be a person? Is there a special set of criteria that must be met in order for one to be correctly called a 'person'? Are all humans persons? Or can it be that some humans are not persons? Both Western and African philosophers have for years grappled with these questions and it seems that there have been few concrete conclusions. There is, therefore, need to give an in-depth analysis of the root concept of personhood and establish how this infringes with the disability discourse.

Roots of the Concept of Personhood and its implications on disability

The question of personhood has been a debatable issue since time immemorial. The problem has its roots in Western philosophy. These views see the self as having a prior existence, being a psychological or biological entity. In this section we deal with the question of what it is that is the common characteristic that everyone like us shares which distinguishes us from other things. Generally, there are two schools of thought on the concept of personhood in Western philosophy. Firstly, for Sullivan (2003) there is Empirical Functionalism which states that personhood is a set of functions or abilities. Such abilities must be present in actual, not potential form. These functions and abilities have been listed by philosophers to include such ideas as self-awareness, higher brain functions, and the ability to relate to others. However, if we try to examine the place of disabled people in empirical functionalism, we realize that this group will be highly marginalized and does not fit into this criterion of personhood. Empirical functionalism in the light of disability, reduces human value to a sum of a human's parts, and what abilities they offer the world. One of the many problems with this viewpoint is that it denies personhood to anyone who does not contain these qualities at all moments of life. According to Sullivan (2003), this means

that people sleeping, infants, the elderly, and those with a mental illness might not be considered persons based on these circumstances.

On the other hand, there is Ontological Personalism which states that all human beings are human persons. On this view, the intrinsic quality of personhood begins at conception and is present throughout life (Sullivan 2003). Such individuals are not potential persons or "becoming" persons; they are persons by their very nature. There is no such thing as a potential person or a human non-person. Personhood does not depend on what one can or cannot do; all that matters is that one is a biological human being (Sullivan 2003). This view is more accommodative to people living with disabilities for it does not define a person according to their psychological and physiological functionalities. For this, characterisation of us as humans is the most important thing that we and others share.

Furthermore, philosophers such as Immanuel Kant argue that we are all humans and share in the realm of ends by virtue of possessing rationality. This understanding dates back to Ancient as well as Medieval philosophers who argued that humans were the only rational animals and that only humans had immortal souls. However, Kant's overemphasis on rationality does not go unchallenged. After Darwin, we understand that the human species is one biological species among others, so that if something is a 'rational animal' it need not be, by definition, a human animal. It is by no means conceptually impossible that we might meet rational creatures that are not humans. Applying Kant to the disability discourse, persons with mental illnesses will be discriminated against, since they would not qualify to be persons in his rational scheme.

Modern philosophers argue that humans are distinct from other species since are bearers of 'human rights'. The reason why most philosophers held that being human is the most characteristic that unites us and distinguishes us from everything else is because humans, unlike everything else are rational beings, and because humans unlike everything else possess some intrinsic basic rights. This therefore points to the view that being human is of major importance due to their exceptional ontological and moral position in the universe. However, the issue of human rights which are peculiar to humans only is highly controversial and this led Jeremy Bentham (in Igwe 2015) to argue that human rights are nothing else but 'rhetorical nonsense upon stilts' to admit that it would be morally dubious to deny these rights from otherwise similar creatures who just do not happen to be humans.

Secondly, there is the belief that all of us share in the immortality of the soul. For Descartes, "when we know how much the beasts differ from us, we understand much better the arguments which prove that our soul is of a nature entirely independent of the body, and consequently that it is not bound to die with it. And since we cannot see any other causes which destroy the soul, we are naturally led to conclude that it is immortal" (Morton 1997:103). Because human life cannot be reduced to the sum of the motions of the human body in the same way that (perhaps) animal life can be, human beings have reason to hope that the end of their bodily life does not spell the end of the soul's life. This view is problematic in the sense that the belief in immortal souls does not go unchallenged. Firstly, even Descartes himself failed to prove that immortal souls actually do exist. Even if we were to hold that there exist immortal souls, is it in our power to restrict them to humans only? Notwithstanding its drawbacks, this criterion of personhood may seem to represent well and does not discriminate against the disabled since every individual that exists (able-bodied or not) does have a soul which happens to be viewed as immortal.

From the discussion above, it can be seen that, the Western conception of personhood has an individualistic tendency which sees the self as having a prior existence, being a psychological or biological entity. In the Western tradition, the concept of individuality has taken precedence over social relations. Linked to this concept of individuality has been a growth in the ideal of self- reliance, for independence. Applying these sentiments to disability, it is only by being independent that we can truly forge our own sense of self, our personhood. Disabled people are seen as dependent, helpless people who are at the mercy of able-bodied people. They are viewed as lacking independence which is perceived as integral to one's personhood. Unlike the Westerners, the African concept of personhood is understood in a way that views the individual in relation to others. The focus of the next section is to look at the African concept of personhood and see how it can be more favourable and accommodative to people living with disabilities.

The African conception of personhood and its implications on disability

Over the years, many African thinkers have put forward a view of the individual that is quite in contrast to the one represented by the West-

erners, arguing in their different ways that humans are social beings and would not be able to develop their full capacities as persons outside their relations with others. They would not, for example, be able to develop communicative capacities, which include mind, or the capacity to develop language and form concepts except as part of a society (Masolo, 2010:139). They have argued that because personhood is socially generated, interaction or intersubjective penetration, not aggregation, is the formative foundation of human nature and the conduit through which humans develop their sense and basis of the moral and cognitive values (2010:139). Drawing parallels between the Western and African conceptions of personhood, Menkiti (1984:171) argues:

> The first contrast worth noting is that whereas most Western views of man abstract this or that feature of the lone individual and then proceed to make it the defining or essential characteristic which entities aspiring to the description "man" must have, the African view of man denies that persons can be defined by focusing on this or that physical or psychological characteristic of the lone individual. Rather, man is defined by reference to the environing community. As John Mbiti notes, the African view of the person can be summed up in the statement "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am."

There are two philosophical conceptions of personhood in African thought: the descriptive metaphysical and the normative (Gbadegesin 1998 and Wiredu 1996). A metaphysical account of personhood may seek to analyse the essential ontological make-up of a person, examining, for instance, whether he or she is essentially material or immaterial, or whether he or she has one or two essential natures. Analyses of the nature of the mind and body, and the relationship between them, are efforts to give metaphysical accounts of personhood (Gyekye 1984). However, it is the normative and not the metaphysical idea of personhood that is germane to African communal traditions as personhood is a status earned by meeting certain community standards, including the ability to take on prescribed responsibilities that are believed to define personhood. Such responsibilities may be defined in terms of personal achievements that are worthy of social recognition.

Normatively, in Africa, personhood is not something one is born with. It has to be acquired through internalization of, or at least commitment to, societal values. From this perspective, a person is not just any human being, but one who has attained the status of a responsible member of the society. From the above analysis, we can argue in line with A. B. Onwubiko (2013:41) that,

...the concept of human dignity can be understood as an anthropological construct, ... interpreted in the community as a functional concept embedded in one's... ability to achieve a set of societal goals and expectations. Thus one's dignity is only respected and acknowledged in the community for being first and foremost, a human being but not just because he is a human being... rather only through attracting respect engendered by concerted effort and achievement; by becoming a person in the community through the process of personhood; by the acquisition of riches, wealth and titles and by meriting a befitting burial rite.

Furthermore, B. Matolino (2011) argues that, the essential position of the communitarian view is that personhood is the sort of thing that is realized in the quality of relationships that one has with fellow community members and the good communal standing that one commands. Further, personhood is not seen as an abstract or theoretical concept but as an activity that is socially sanctioned. Matolino cites Dzobo who further argues on this point that; "The person who has achieved a creative personality and productive life and is able to maintain a productive relationship with others is said to 'have become a person'."

Arguing from the African view of personhood we, can observe that it is not an isolated quality such as rationality or the ability to will that defines one as a person. Most people, especially those living with disabilities in Zimbabwe have been contributing a great deal in the Zimbabwean society, be it in entertainment areas or architecture. For instance, the country has a number of visually impaired musicians who have managed to contribute much to the society through their music which contains rich and educative messages. One's achievements are also considered amongst the Africans as what makes someone a person. The late Paul Matavire, who was visually impaired, was one of the best musicians in Zimbabwe and made significant contributions to the music industry. His music touched on almost all societal issues, that is, from religion to marital issues. Matavire is well known for his hit song *Dhiyabhorosi Nyoka* (the Devil the Snake) which tries to interpret the biblical Adam and Eve story bringing out as his argument that women are the major cause of every man's troubles, but at the same time acknowledging their significance in society. Apart from Matavire, there are other visually impaired musicians such as Chamunorwa Nebeta, whose band was well known for its fast *sungura* beat. David Mabvuramiti is another visually impaired gospel musician who is well known for his song *Mune Simba MuropaRaJesu* (There is power in the blood of Jesus). Though he later gained his sight, he has contributed a great deal to gospel music, and he did set a pace for most praise and worship teams in Zimbabwe.

Munyaradzi Munodawafa is also another gospel musician who is also well known for being among the best keyboardists in Zimbabwe though he is visually impaired.

Furthermore, there is evidence in the Zimbabwean media of deaf people showcasing their talents. Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) broadcast online on the 9th of March 2013 the pending exhibitions of people who are physically challenged, but who are also capable of producing quality work using stones, metal and wood. This clearly indicates that there is a lot of talent in people living with disabilities. This raises the question of whether disability is inability. The case of Nompilo Nkomo is another captivating story of people living with disabilities being able to do something as a contribution to their communities. Nkomo uses her feet to paint and do other things like writing and using her cell phone (www.thezimbabwean.co/news/zimbabwe-news/69135/ nobody-is-disabled-artist.html). This shows that even if one does not have hands, eyes, or any part of the body, there is something that one can do. From the perspective of African philosophy on personhood, because the person contributes to the well-being of a society, they are full persons.

Thus, in this chapter, we argue that one's functional abilities cannot be used as a measure of one's personhood. Also, we argue against the 1982 National Disability survey of Zimbabwe's definition of disability as 'a physical or mental condition, which makes it difficult or impossible for the person concerned to adequately fulfil his or her normal role in society'. The question that we pose is who defines one's normal role in a society? Is it the case that when one is born, they already have prescribed roles? This definition leaves a lot to be desired and we argue that religious and cultural views on disability have largely framed biases on persons living with disability.

Our argument is that one is not born with a specified role that they are supposed to fulfil. But to use Menkiti's ideas, one achieves his or her personhood by his or her contributions to the common welfare of one's community. If this is the case, then blind, deaf, mute, physically challenged people can all make significant contributions to their societies. One of these contributions which are valued the most in Africa is the idea of family. All these above listed groups are capable even with their perceived 'abnormalities' to bring seeds to earth and hence make a great contribution to the continuity of the community. However, this is not to suggest that individuals who do not have children are 'incomplete' in

any sense. The other challenge is that if physical appearance defines personhood, then one who can be handicapped at a later stage in life loses personhood.

Even those with mental illnesses were valued in Zimbabwean traditional societies. This can be supported by the existence of such sayings as *benzi rakareva hondo* (a mentally challenged person warned people of a pending war). What it basically means is that we should not look down at such people with mental illnesses for they can contribute in a different way (warn of pending danger), hence we should take heed of what they say. In this case, their inability to reason does not exclude them as persons but their ability to contribute to their societies is acknowledged. This demonstrates that even people who are mentally challenged are important and worthy of respect in an African society. Thus, any discrimination or marginalization of people living with disabilities based on their condition is akin to racism or sexism. We therefore challenge society to retrieve the positive lessons embedded in African traditional religion and cultures to embrace persons living with disabilities.

Conclusion

We began this chapter by tracing the history of the debate on personhood. The debate has its roots in the Western world. The Westerners had different views of what really characterises personhood. Some argued for functional abilities, human rights, capability to rationalize, immortality of the soul, while others argued for the biological make-up as key to personhood. However, one common trend amongst these views is that they see the individual by one quality or the other. More emphasis is on the individual to the exclusion of the society which they are a part of. This leaves less room for people living with disabilities as they are defined by this or that quality. The African conception put forward circumvented some of the challenges faced by the Westerners and has managed to accommodate people living with disabilities. Personhood is not defined by one's functionalities, rationality or biological make up, but by one's ability to make a contribution to his or her community. With this in mind, even the blind, deaf, mute and the mentally challenged (to mention a few) can make significant contributions to the society in different ways. In short, there is no philosophical or any other justification whatsoever for the discrimination and marginalization of people living with disabilities.

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E R A 5   2020

Shoorai Konyana

6 | RESPONSES OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES TO THE SITUATION OF THE POOR
The Case of Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe assemblies in Chipinge District

Introduction

The experience of poverty, dependency and socio-economic deprivation are common and real in Zimbabwe. Government and Non-Governmental Organisations are putting up efforts to alleviate the overwhelming problem. Since the United Nations has accepted that prosperity is not exclusively material, that gives room for the need to allow religious organisations to help others recover their holistic well-being is now imperative. The ways by which the four Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in Zimbabwe assemblies in Chipinge town contribute in their special areas are the foci of this chapter. However, even when the assemblies are contributing to the welfare of their members, there are areas where they can still improve.

AFM in Zimbabwe is one of the oldest and biggest Pentecostal churches in the country. Most of the Pentecostal churches/Church Ministries such as the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa/ Forward in Faith International, United Family International Church; Heartfelt International Ministries had their founders emerging from the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (see several chapters in Togarasei 2018). Unfortunately, only a few academic research papers have been written about the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. A lot of focus on Christian studies in Zimbabwe was originally on mainline churches and then African Independent Churches or the Zionist Movements. The focus of this chapter is to establish the response of AFM in Zimbabwe church to the plight of the poor and the marginalized both in and outside the church.

There are four AFM assemblies in Chipinge town. Two are in Gaza Township; one is in Chipinge Medium density suburb and one in the Town centre which is Agape Fellowship Centre. Every October AFM Chipinge Agape Fellowship Centre holds an evangelical crusade to win

more souls to the church. At the same time, the church raises funds and goods that are donated to Manhinga Children's Home and also to another children's home called Colberg Children's Home which is run by another church organisation. The charitable work of this assembly prompted the in-depth enquiry into the church's involvement with the plight of the poor. To gather data, interviews and observations were carried out to collect qualitative data.

Background of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe

Machingura (2011) maintains that the origins of AFM can be traced back to Topeka of Kansas (USA) in 1901 under the leadership of Charles Fox Parham and William Seymour. Parham was a former Methodist preacher. It was Parham who formulated the basic Pentecostal doctrine. After two years of its formulation, the Pentecostal movement had centres throughout the United States of America, many northern European countries, India, China, West and South Africa.

The AFM church credits a Canadian-born John G. Lake for spearheading the missionary work through the help of migrant workers in founding the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa, which was later instrumental in the formation of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. He landed in Cape Town harbour on May 14, 1908. By 1914 the Apostolic Faith Mission had spread to Zimbabwe through migrant workers who were Lake's converts. The group's impact was enhanced in 1922 by Kruger who went with a large group of missionaries to Zimbabwe (Machingura 2011). It is believed that one of the prominent missionaries that Kruger worked with was Zacharias Manamela who entered the Gwanda district as part of the movement's expansion from the northern Transvaal of South Africa. Since then the AFM has become one of Zimbabwe's largest Pentecostal churches as well as the regional leading spiritual contender, hence making it the major catalyst in the Pentecostal movement. This makes AFM one of the largest and successful Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches and one cannot talk of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe without mentioning the AFM. The Church's national official records claim a following of more than 2 300 000 followers in a population of twelve million people and more than 1000 assemblies run by full-time Pastors in 'sixteen' provinces (www.afminzimbabwe.org). Munjeyi (2006) maintains that the Church has managed to plant assemblies in every district of Zimbabwe, and it has branches in Africa, Europe, Australia and America. It has two Bible Colleges which graduate more than

one hundred pastors every year. These are Living Waters in Harare and Azuza Theological Seminary in Bulawayo. With this background, the next section will look at the biblical conceptual framework on the poor and poverty.

Conceptual framework

The Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible say much about the poor and the needy. These could be categorized into verses which deal with:

- *God's commands concerning the poor*, for example. Leviticus 19:9-10, Deuteronomy 15:7, Deuteronomy 26:12, Psalm 82:3-2, Proverbs 31:8-9, Isaiah 1:16-17.
- *God's heart for the poor*, such as Deuteronomy 26:6-9, Job 34:17-19, Psalm 10:14, Psalm 140:12.
- *God's blessings for those who serve the poor*, for example Deuteronomy 15:10, Psalm 41:1, Proverbs 19:17, Proverbs 22:9.
- *Why no one should neglect serving the poor*, like Exodus 22:21-27, Proverbs 14:31, Isaiah 10:13, Jeremiah 5:28-29, Ezekiel 16:49.
- *Biblical attitudes for believers towards the poor*, such as Luke 6:33-34, Acts 2:44, Act 4:32-35 and
- *God's identification with the poor*, for example, Psalm 9:9, Psalm 10:17-18, Proverbs 14:31.

Of these biblical verses, the closest to defining "poverty" is Prov. 30:8 where the writer distinguishes poverty from riches and from having one's *daily bread*. This verse implies that living at daily "maintenance level" is neither poverty nor "prosperity." Some sociologists define "poverty" as "deprivation of basic human needs to support life" (Haralambos *et al* 2013, Giddens 1993). This implies destitution, defenselessness, affliction, oppression, lack, need, weakness, dependency, and social inferiority.

The World Bank Organization (https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview) describes poverty in this way:

> Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time.

The main weakness of this definition is that it is too narrow and limited to material poverty, leaving out other forms of poverty faced by Zimbabweans. R. Chambers in Myers (2002) notices the ever-broadening

meaning of poverty to include lack of sufficient material needs, physical weakness, lack of essential services and information, few shields against emergencies or disaster, and lack of ability and knowledge to influence one's environment. However, Jayakumar (1998) introduces scholars to the spiritual dimension of poverty to include spiritual deception and enslavement (2 Cor 4:4; 2 Tim 2:26; and Gal 4:3). Jayakumar (1998) argues that while poverty could be politically motivated, there are times when poverty in particular instances could be a result of demonic attack and manipulation.

Although Matt 5:3 indicates the existence of spiritual poverty, only a few scholars of religion have recently begun to pay attention to this type of poverty. Usually, people talk more of material than spiritual poverty. The term poverty, therefore, covers something broader and more complex than material destitution. It has sociological, psychological, health and spiritual dimensions and a single method of tracking and dealing with it is not adequate. It is clear that poverty is better observed or even experienced than just discussed to understand it well.

While much progress has been made in measuring and analyzing poverty, the World Bank is doing more work to identify indicators for the other dimensions of poverty. This work includes identifying social indicators to track education, health, access to services, vulnerability, and social exclusion.

Causes of Poverty

There is no one cause of poverty, and the results of it are different in every case. Poverty varies considerably depending on the situation. Feeling poor in Canada is different from living in poverty in Russia or Zimbabwe. The differences between rich and poor within the borders of a country can also be great. Since the worldviews of the Africans differ significantly from those of the Westerners, it is expected that Christianity in Africa would address particular crisis situations of its audience without neglecting the need for deliverance from sin and its power. Folarin (2011) maintains that the church in Africa is regularly confronted with its people's problems to which it is called upon to give answers. Apart from ministering to the spiritual poverty brought upon them by sin, the church in Africa also needs to minister to their problems of poor health and infertility, especially when they appear to defy conventional medication, failure to find spouses to marry, and other mysterious en-

counters of members. The ways Chipinge urban AFM assemblies minister to these forms of poverty in Zimbabwe is the focus of this chapter.

Statement of the Problem

The message of helping the needy is really very simple in the Christian Bible. It is not hard to understand; it is just hard to do. The message is continuous. It is in the Torah, it is in the Prophets and Psalms, it is in the gospels and it is in the epistles. How many Pentecostal churches emphasize serving the poor as much as the Bible itself does? Would the world look the way it does if all believers followed these commands?

Research Question

What is the AFM church in Chipinge urban doing in response to the plight of the poor and the marginalized, both in and outside the church?

Significance of the Study

Poverty alleviation is not only an issue of political concern. It is also a religious issue since some issues like infertility and certain types of sufferings are believed by some people to be linked to demonic attacks and manipulations that without help human effort cannot contest with. The issue of poverty and efforts to fight it in Zimbabwe is important because poverty is common, notorious and horrible in the country. Since spirits are believed to be stronger than humans, many attend Christian churches for divine help to combat them, especially when mainstream solutions appear helpless and the victims no longer want to seek help from the African Indigenous Religions that they have already left. The issue is significant because the rate at which people run to religion and especially Christianity in search of solutions is overwhelming. The subject of religion and the poor is important because there abound testimonies of deliverance that are difficult to ignore because they are given by the sophisticated and the simple, the young and the old, and the trustworthy and the suspicious. Also, the rates at which many of the churches involved in ministering to this type of poverty are growing suggest that their services are recognized by the society as relevant.

Methodological Issues

In this study I adopted the qualitative interpretivist approach, which is ideal for understanding a phenomenon holistically; in the way it is lived or experienced by participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1988). I chose the case study methodological framework which lends itself more to the qualitative research paradigm or design.

Religious phenomena, by their nature, lend themselves more to interpretive analysis, hence are best explored by use of case studies (Cohen *et al* 2007). Furthermore, the case study design was employed in this research because it is the only qualitative research design that displays the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not simply loose connections of traits. As a result of this belief, researchers who use case studies hold that to understand a case, to explore why things happen the way they do, and generalize or predict with certainty from a sample of cases, require an in-depth investigation of the interdependences of parts or samples and of the patterns that emerge thereof.

The research was qualitative and relied heavily on interviews and participant observations. In order to understand the position of the AFM in Zimbabwe church on the plight of the poor, the feelings or attitudes and perceptions of the participants had to be considered. Through interviewing pastors, evangelists and congregants, the study was thus able to gather in-depth data on the level of response to the plight of the poor and the marginalized by the AFM in Zimbabwe church and the measures put in place by the church to cater for the poor in the community.

This study is a case study of four AFM assemblies in Chipinge town. The four assemblies were selected due to their accessibility and convenience since they are relatively close to each other in one town and also, they join each other for church crusades and revivals. When generating data for this study I chose a small sample of sixty people, fifteen from each assembly so that I could spend a considerable amount of time with the participants. In generating data, I used church service observations, pre-church service interview and post-church service or crusades interviews.

Findings

It was established that the four assemblies respond to the plight of the poor in different ways. The most common view is that poverty is a curse. There was the firm belief that one must be delivered from this curse and claim his or her riches here on earth. Therefore, it was observed that there are two levels of poverty, namely, material poverty and spiritual poverty which is believed to be caused by demonic attacks. Out of the four AFM assemblies under study, only one assembly has taken up the mandate to go beyond helping Manhinga Children's Home to address the other needy persons in the community. The assembly holds annual crusades dedicated to helping the poor. A whole week is dedicated to powerful prayers, preaching and messages delivered with eloquence by articulate preachers, often supported by praise and worship teams. The 'love offerings' and other donations collected during this highly colourful event are donated to the poor.

However, the other assemblies do a lot to help the poor, especially those in the church. The teachings given to the adherents prompt them to want to work hard through manual work and through prayer to fight poverty. One of the interviewed pastors teaches that poverty is a sin. In interpreting 2 Cor 8:9, he teaches that sin brought material poverty, penitence restores material blessing, and the Christian that remains in material poverty is sinning against redemption. The other pastor agrees that material poverty is a consequence of sin, that Jesus died to pay for humanity's sin and its consequences, and that the Christian who fails to claim his/her material heritage in Christ would remain poor but would not be committing sin as the other pastor alleges.

It emerged from this research that the AFM in Zimbabwe engenders hope, imparts vision, and awakens the sense of destiny through its success theology (Gifford 2007). Some of the assembly names like "Grace Life", "Agape Fellowship Centre", and "Ebenezer" support this finding. The titles and themes of their crusades and conferences support this contention. Some of the crusade titles are: "Open Heavens", "The appointed time for my breakthrough"; "Raising a generation of champions" and others. Therefore, I concluded that at least in that sense the church is providing laudable services to Zimbabwe.

In line with the prospect in Ps. 34:6 that the person who cries to the Lord would be saved from all his/her troubles, the mottos of the AFM Chipinge urban assemblies reveal their focus to be on success. For Agape Fellowship Centre it was "2012, year of the manifestation of kings; 2014

year of manifestation of winners." Other mottos such as "My year of breakthrough", "My year of divine solution", My year of Open door", "My year of announcement", "My year of distinction", "My year of Perfection", "My year of divine help", "My year of divine favour", "My year of glory", are common in the AFM assemblies. All the mottos are interpreted to address the problems of poverty, with the promise of God's intervention at the people's point of need.

A criticism often justifiably levelled at Pentecostals (AFM included) is that they have sometimes expounded a theology of success and power at the expense of a theology of the cross. However, my observation was that to a greater extent, in AFM, the success or prosperity Gospel complements the gospel of the cross. Anderson (1992) argues that there are not always instant solutions to life's vicissitudes, and spirituality is not to be measured in terms of success. People are not only convinced by the triumphs of Christianity, but also by its trials. The Holy Spirit is also a gentle dove, a Spirit of humility, patience and meekness, of love, joy and peace. Anderson (1992) maintains that the Christian faith must not only provide power when there is a lack of it but must also sustain us through life's tragedies and failures, and especially when there is no visible success.

Another evangelist alleged that the issue of helping the poor is not given precedence as opposed to giving to the church. According to this evangelist, in the AFM, emphasis on giving to the church and the 'man of God' in form of pastor's appreciation outweighs the issue of helping the poor. He further pointed out that with the exception of Manhinga Children's Home (which is under the auspices of AFM) it is not mandatory to engage in any charity work. Therefore, the few pastors who engage in charity work claim to have a vision along that line, but it is not a church directive.

It also emerged in this study that a few AFM District assemblies engage in charity work. An example given by one deacon was that of District Outreach for Care and Support (DOCAS). It is a registered faith-based organization operating in Manicaland Province. DOCAS uses development evangelism as a pragmatic approach for firming new converts in the Christian church. DOCAS has distributed more than 100 tonnes of food to identified vulnerable people. It has distributed blankets and clothes to more than 500 Internally Displaced Persons.

Discussion

From the above findings, one can say that Gifford (2007) is correct in observing that the significant thing about the Pentecostal movement is the hope engendered, the vision imparted, the sense of destiny awakened in the adherents. A persistent message of assurance distinguishes these Pentecostal movements including AFM churches, a message which is delivered with eloquence and flair, by extremely gifted and articulate preachers. For the adherents to be told that they matter, that they belong at the top, that they will have what they desire, must provide encouragement in circumstances where one might have easily given up. Thus, despite its weaknesses, AFM in Zimbabwe contributes positively in some ways to deal with its adherents' sense of poverty. The church communicates to its adherents that God is interested in their affairs for if the Christian gospel fails to touch the problems of these Christians, the people risk returning to their former religions for help. The services of AFM in Zimbabwe prevent or reduce such drift and even attract many others to Christianity. Furthermore, the AFM and other Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe with messages that God is ready to deliver the oppressed in the here and now, have brought about numerical and geographical growth to Christianity in Zimbabwe.

However, the weaknesses of the AFM in Zimbabwe are also enormous. They range from theological to practicability and then to psychological. Theologically, the teaching that things would be perfect here on earth for Christians does not conform to the general teaching of the Bible (Folarin 2011). It neglects passages on discipleship and tribulation. It overestimates the devil and his power. Furthermore, an over-emphasis on giving to the church at the expense of giving to the poor is against the teachings of Christ on the poor. In an attempt to be relevant, AFM assemblies with emphases like these sometimes preach a simplistic gospel that is not faithful to the Bible. It emerged in this study that only a few AFM in Zimbabwe assemblies give precedence to giving to the poor but all of the assemblies under study preach giving to the church. The issue of giving to the church is well documented and systematic in the AFM. It begins at the top cascading down to local assemblies. There is nothing wrong in seeding in the house of the Lord, but there is a problem when the church has gathered these seeds in the form of money and other gifts but it fails to share that with the poor both in the church and in the community. The AFM should be informed by Pastor Tom Deuschle who

climbed Mt Kilimanjaro in celebrating his sixtieth birthday in a bid to raise funds to help orphans (The Sunday Mail 5 October 2014).

In an interview, Pastor Deuschle observed that "true religion is to look after orphans and widows." Therefore, if in life all can endeavour to change one person's life, just one, this world would be a pleasant place to live in. In other words, if the AFM church preaches giving to the poor with the same emphasis with which it teaches giving to the house of the Lord, Zimbabwe would be a better place to live, since the church has a significant following in the country.

Practically, it is not possible to have a problem free society, even for the righteous. For one thing, success is relative. Even "rich" people have their own fears. Again, even the person already exorcised may continue to experience unexplainable things, although these may be at a lower level. With higher critical ability, some of the apparent mysteries people complain of may be explained and the psychological trauma faced by some "of the burdened" can be treated with medical provision. This is, however, not suggesting that demonic activities do not exist or that prayer cannot be used to fight them. But there often occurs cases that are incorrectly diagnosed as results of demonic attacks.

Those that came to these churches for deliverance and do not get delivered after some time may become discouraged. Some situations even become worse and the church seems to blame the victims for their failure to receive deliverance. While these problems are not planned, they often appear as incidental.

Conclusion

A study of four AFM in Zimbabwe assemblies in Chipinge urban revealed that the church addresses the spiritual poverty of its adherents and poor people in the community more that it focuses on their material poverty. AFM emphasizes deliverance from sickness, demon possession, barrenness and poverty. They believe that society has struggled with these problems for a very long time and so feel justified in ministering to the needs of the people. They believe God is supposed to meet the needs of these AFM adherents if God has to remain worthy of their worship. They teach that God has to be more powerful than the evil forces that mess up with people's destinies. The AFM is providing answers to these types of challenges.

However, the study also proved that very minimum effort is given to alleviating material poverty since the prominent teaching is that if one is delivered from spiritual poverty material prosperity will naturally. The church needs to re-work its theology to better conform it to the teaching of the Christian Bible on the poor. The AFM would do better in addressing the situation of the poor if it "walks its talk". The church is well known for preaching on giving but the giving is pointed towards the church. If the church in turn points its giving towards the poor, Zimbabwe would be a better society.

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PART C | LEADERSHIP

Lovemore Togarasei

7 | RECONSTRUCTION THEOLOGY AND THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN POST-CRISIS ZIMBABWE[1]

Introduction

The call for a theology of reconstruction was first made by Jesse N. K. Mugambi of Kenya in 1990 during the Executive Committee meeting of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi, Kenya. Mugambi made this call as he was trying to rethink the role of the Church in post-colonial Africa. This was against the historical background of liberation theology of Latin America, USA and Africa (Mugambi 1995). With all the signs that South Africa, the last African country under colonialism, would soon be independent, Mugambi felt that it was now time to move from liberation theology that had preoccupied the African Church to a theology of reconstructing that which had been destroyed by colonialism.

This chapter takes seriously the need for a theology of reconstruction in societies that have undergone instability, whether political, economic or social. It takes as its starting point other scholars' use of the theology in different contexts in Africa and particularly Masiiwa Ragies Gunda's (2009) proposal. It argues that the post-crisis Zimbabwe Church needs to engage the theology of reconstruction if it is to be relevant in the reconstruction of the country and address the needs of the marginalized. Indeed, the crisis period in Zimbabwe saw a number of people being marginalized by the state, political parties, churches and society in general. To achieve its objectives, the chapter opens with an outline of the theology of reconstruction as first presented by Mugambi and later developed by other scholars. It will then consider how other scholars have responded to Mugambi's theory. In particular, it will review Gunda's thesis proposing the way forward for post-crisis Zimbabwe.

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[1] This chapter is a product of lectures I delivered at the Harare Anglican Diocese Clergy Academy held in Harare from the 4th to the 8th August 2014. I am grateful to the organizers of the academy and to the clergymen who provided very insightful challenges to my views and from whom I learnt a lot. Naturally, I remain responsible for all the views expressed herein.

Reconstruction theology: definition and outline

To develop the theology of reconstruction, Mugambi (1995) used the books of Ezra–Nehemiah. Written in the post-exilic era, Mugambi saw the reconstruction programmes of these books as reminiscent of post-colonial Africa. In view of what this theology would do, reconstruction theology can therefore be defined as a theology responding to the new challenges facing post-colonial Africa. Its aim, according to Jean- Marie H. Quenum (undated) is to make God present in the world of the socio-political, cultural, economic and legal institutions. Reconstruction theology also aims to transform all structures that expose Africa to poverty, injustice, oppression, imperial rule, patrimonial states and gender imbalance. The theology therefore calls the Church to be involved in the civil life of the people through promotion of forgiveness, reconciliation, non-violence and human rights. The objective is to allow Africans to live a dignified life free of human rights abuses, rampant corruption, tribalism or sexism. In this context, the Church therefore encourages multiparty systems, free and transparent elections and public debates on all social issues affecting people. Theology of reconstruction values religious differences seeing them as constructive ways of being in living dialogue in search of communion with all God's creatures. In short, Quenum says, guided by theology of reconstruction, the Church becomes a voice of countless people undergoing sufferings and hardships. According to Mugambi (1995), there are three levels of reconstruction. First, is personal reconstruction which calls individuals to reconstruct themselves first before they reconstruct their societies. This reconstruction is both physical and professional. Thus, Ezra and Nehemiah had to physically and professionally reconstruct themselves before they called others to reconstruct Jerusalem and its community. Second, is cultural reconstruction. Culture needs reconstruction because it can be a vehicle for development or even inimical to development. Culture may result in the marginalization of certain people in society. Third, is ecclesial reconstruction. Since reconstruction theology is done by the Church, the Church needs reconstruction in all its dimensions: mythological, doctrine, ethics and rituals. The reconstruction should also include the Church's management structures, financial policies, pastoral care, human resources development, research, family education, service and witness (Mugambi 1995).

Mugambi also provides conditions that promote theology of reconstruction. First, he says reconstruction theology will be most effective in Afri-

ca if the social and physical reality of the continent and its people is accurately and comprehensively understood and reinterpreted. In other words, Africa should find solutions to her own problems bearing in mind that solutions that have worked elsewhere in the world may not work in the African context. But Mugambi cautions that this does not mean that Africa has to 'reinvent the wheel' but rather should know how to use the 'wheel' in the African terrain. The second condition required for reconstruction theology in Africa is acceptance of cultural differences. He says reconstruction works when none in our society considers their culture superior to others'. There must be an appreciation of the Christian Gospel as a challenge to every culture's weaknesses for reconstruction to work. Third, Mugambi says reconstruction should be guided by the Pauline trilogy of life which are hope, faith and love. Quenum (undated) calls these the 'building blocks' of reconstruction theology and adds to them justice, solidarity, hard work, creativity and humble service to others.

Scholarly responses to the call for reconstruction theology

Mugambi's call for reconstruction theology as a new alternative for African theology was generally well received. Charles Villa-Vicencio of South Africa (1992), Jose Chipenda of Angola (1991) and Ka Mana of Democratic Republic of Congo (1992) all embraced the theology suggesting ways in which it could be used in their own countries. They argued, with Mugambi, that like the post-exilic Israelite community, Africa is living in a post-slave, post-colonial and post-Cold War era, an era that threatened African land, human resources, culture and religion. Recent supporters of the call are Julius Mutugi Gathogo (2007) and Josia Kinyua Murage (2007). Murage, for example, sees the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a programme proposed by Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa, as being, "in line with the theology of reconstruction which is geared towards the renewal of Africa's socio-economic and political structures" (Murage 2007:149).

There are some scholars, however, who were pessimistic about the call for reconstruction theology. One such scholar is Tinyiko Sam Maluleke (1997) of South Africa who is of the view that reconstruction theology will not serve the needs of ordinary Africans but the same needs of Africa's former oppressors. Maluleke also criticized reconstruction theology for pushing away older African theologies like inculturation and liberation theologies which he thinks still have a role to play in the post-

colonial Africa. Other scholars criticized Mugambi for the choice of books he made to propose reconstruction. U. C. Manus (2003) of Nigeria, for example, criticized Mugambi for failing to recognize and use the figure of Jesus to call for reconstruction. For him, Jesus is the Master Reconstructor of every society and therefore his figure should be used to call for reconstruction theology. Another serious critic of the methodology of reconstruction theology is Masiiwa Ragies Gunda (2009:84-102) of Zimbabwe. Gunda, like Maluleke, has problems with the divisiveness and claim to superiority of reconstruction theology in its dismissal of earlier African theologies. His major criticism, though, is that reconstruction theology is based on the wrong assumption that Africa is independent. Wrestling with the meaning of 'independence', he sees many Africans as not independent from dictatorial leaders. With Ka Mana of DRC (1992), Gunda sees many Africans as only having changed oppressors, from white to black, from foreign oppressors to oppression by their own brothers and sisters. In view of this, Gunda fumes with rage against Murage's call for reconstruction theology to support NEPAD. For Gunda, the problem of Africa lies with its leadership, both in Church and in politics. Reconstruction therefore should focus on addressing this leadership that Gunda believes is the major cause of Africa's calamities. I shall come back to this criticism later in the chapter. Gunda also has problems with Nehemiah as a figure of reconstruction. This is because Nehemiah reconstructed that which had been destroyed by external forces while today, Africa is to some extent guilty of self-destruction. He, therefore, proposes Amos as a model of reconstruction.

I shall end this review of scholarly responses to the call for reconstruction theology by noting David Kuria's (undated) evaluation. Kuria cautions reconstruction theologians not to end up as politicians promising more than they can deliver. He thinks reconstruction theology on its own cannot be a solution to all of Africa's problems and therefore should be used together with other approaches to addressing Africa's problems. Kuria also cautions against the possibility that reconstruction theology may end up promoting religious indifference or syncretism as emphasis is now on the here and now of life.

From the scholarly works reviewed here, it is clear that many African theologians are agreed that reconstruction theology is necessary in postcolonial Africa. Differences only emerge in the methodology in as far as the models to be used are concerned and the extent to which the theology can solve all of Africa's problems. There is therefore need to keep

strengthening the theology, evaluating it in light of the purposes it should serve in every post-crisis situation. This is the contribution this chapter seeks to make in light of the post-crisis Zimbabwe. It does so by engaging with Gunda (2007) who was also addressing the same Zimbabwean situation.

Post-crisis Zimbabwe

The period after 2009 is often described now a post-crisis Zimbabwe (Chitando 2013). This follows the view that Zimbabwe experienced a crisis from the late 1990s to about 2009 (Maposa, Sibanda and Makahamadze 2011:250). This was a crisis period as the country fell from being the breadbasket of the region to a basket case. The crisis manifested in the social, political, economic and all other spheres of human existence. Beginning with the country's intervention in the DRC in 1998 and the payment of gratuities to liberation fighters of the 1970s war, the country fast accelerated into a crisis as lawlessness manifested in the forced occupation of white owned farms thereby destroying the once vibrant agricultural sector. Crisis followed crisis as elections results were contested, rejected and legitimacy of those in power questioned until a government of national unity was formed by the two contesting parties (ZANU PF and MDC) in 2009. The government of national unity normalized the situation in the country resulting in the 2013 elections that produced one winning party, ZANU PF.

Post-crisis Zimbabwe, however, still faces a lot of challenges. The country still remains isolated from Europe and United States of America. The political situation is still very fragile as the losing party, MDC considered the 2013 and the recent 2018 elections, fraudulent. Theselections have brought about the same level of polarization. On the economic front, much needs to be done. The government struggles to pay its workers in time and has frozen all vacant posts for lack of money to pay salaries. Roads are in bad state with many local authorities failing to provide residents with basic services such as water, electricity and other social amenities. Corruption is very rampant at all levels of society with people proverbially expressing it in such statements as "*Mbudzi inodya payakasungirwa*" (a goat grazes around where it is tied). Hospitals and schools are poorly equipped and although land is now in the hands of the majority black people, it is underutilized with accusations that the ruling elite have multiple farm ownerships. The country's mineral resources are only benefitting a few members of the ruling elite as income from them

is not getting into the national coffers. Businesses are closing down with the few employed losing their jobs. Unemployment is high resulting in lack of disposable income. As a result, there is current fear of deflation since there is little money to buy the many goods on the market.

Reconstruction theology in post-crisis Zimbabwe

As we have seen above, reconstruction theology addresses post-crisis situations. A number of Zimbabweans have already advocated for reconstruction theology to rebuild the country after the period of crisis. We have already discussed the work of Gunda. Others who have called for reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe are Richard Maposa, Fortune Sibanda and Tompson Makahamadze (2011: 248-267). Maposa, Sibanda and Makahamadze argue for reconstruction theology saying, "this theology offers an ideal platform for relaunching the Zimbabwean society and basing its identity on a more promising foundation." They go further saying, "reconstruction theology resonates with political, economic, social, religious and cultural programmes that intend to uplift society" (2011: 251). Quenum sees the mission of reconstruction theology summarized in Matthew 11:4-5, "the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear and the dead are raised." The Church in Zimbabwe is called to this mission because post-crisis Zimbabwe requires reconstruction both physically and spiritually/morally. It is the argument of this chapter that this way, the problems of marginalization of certain groups in society can be addressed. But how should the Church do this?

For Maposa, Sibanda and Makahamadze (2011), the Church in Zimbabwe (the Zion Christian Church in their case) has been involved in reconstruction theology unconsciously through such acts as involvement in cross border trading, building constructions and education. Gunda (2009) considers this to be the responsibility of political and Church leaders. As we stated above, Gunda (2009) sees the problems of Africa in oppressive leadership. Thinking mainly of Zimbabwean political leaders, Gunda mainly calls for the reconstruction of the political system. Emotions run high in his evaluation of political leadership that it is unfortunate that it ended up blinding him from seeing other sources of Zimbabwe/Africa's problems that require to be addressed by reconstruction theology as well. In fighting the blame game (e.g. blame of the West for Africa's problems) that has characterized post-colonial Africa, I find Gunda playing the same blame again also as he blames the political, and

to some extent, Church leadership for the failures of Africa. My argument in this chapter is that the blame is not at one level. All need to face the person in the mirror in order to effectively reconstruct post-crisis Zimbabwe. Following Mugambi's three levels of reconstruction, I focus on individuals and cultural practices that I think need to be reconstructed. I use the figures of Jesus and Paul in agreement with Mugambi (2003:i) that we need to always explore other motifs within the Bible that could be more relevant and applicable to our changing circumstances.

The need for individual/ personal reconstruction

The African philosophy of *ubuntu/hunhu* (I am because we are and because we are, I am) has been seriously undermined in post-crisis Zimbabwe. I do not know whether this is due to the legacy of Western materialism and individualism that emphasize personal accumulation of wealth or just mere greed. This manifests in rampant corruption in the country. From birth/death registration to hospitals and schools, services are rendered to those who can pay. If you cannot pay, you need to know someone along the structures of the organization who will 'connect' you to those who offer services. This is further exacerbated by the selfishness that I think characterizes a number of Zimbabweans. Zimbabweans compete to drive the latest and most expensive cars, to own the largest and most beautiful houses, to send children to the most expensive schools, and so on. Although I find nothing wrong in working hard to be one's best, the problem is doing so in a selfish way. There are people who do not want others to achieve what they have achieved, to own what they own and even to be educated as they are. The 'big man/woman' mentality of wanting everyone to look up to one grips many. Thus, one enjoys it when the rest have not. Selfishness is what I think has contributed to the crisis that Zimbabwe experienced. Engaging in reconstruction theology, the Church is better placed to fight this selfish mentality. It should teach its members to think of themselves, first as Zimbabweans, and then as individuals. It is when people identify themselves first as citizens of their countries that they can all work for the good of the country which in turn will be good for them as individuals. It is when people think of themselves as citizens of their country that they can work to keep it clean, preserve its environment, respect each other and not see others as means to their ends.

In addressing the selfishness that tends to characterize a number of Zimbabweans in the post-crisis period, I am aware that some individual

acts of corruption and ill will are caused by structural issues like lack of employment, poor salaries and so on but again these are partly a result of selfish tendencies even at government/ political levels. There is therefore need for personal reconstruction and it is my belief that the Church is best placed to do this task.

Cultural reconstruction

The area of the Church and culture is one that needs to be approached with sensitivity. This is because the Church has been accused by theologians of undermining Africa culture (Amanze 1998). Be that as it may, I think there are aspects of Zimbabwean culture which need reconstruction in the post-crisis period. One such area is *politics of patronage*. Alex M. Kroeger (2012) has studied politics of patronage in Africa noting that, "African politics are strongly influenced by vertical networks of dyadic patronage relationships that have a damaging effect on political systems, economies, and civil society." One area in which he sees this patronage is in the size of cabinets in Africa. In Zimbabwe, the size of the cabinets has not been in line with the economic capacity of the country to sustain it. Patronage is therefore used to promote loyalty to the leader. Zimbabweans are proud to know the cabinet minister at personal level, to have the national bank governor as a member of the parish. Like the scenario in the classic novel, *Animal Farm*, some animals are more equal than others and so favours are given on the basis of patronage. This has been a culture from colonial times, and it needs to be reconstructed. There is need for the Church to teach the worth and value of each individual whether he/she be a cleaner in an office or the president of the country. Using the doctrine of the *Imago Dei* (that all human beings were created in the image of God), for example, it should teach that our different callings and positions in society are enriching and should serve the common good. This should start with humility by those in positions of power.

Another cultural aspect requiring reconstruction is that of *gerontocracy*, that is, the rule of the elderly. The elderly are considered to be the fountains of knowledge and traditionally have always been respected with the belief that they are close to the spirit world (Hampsons 1990). Perhaps for this and other reasons, to date churches, politics, families are led by the elderly. It is no surprise that the then president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, was at 90 years old endorsed by his party as their candidate for the 2018 presidential elections. He was only stopped from contesting

through military action that removed him from office in November 2017. I believe Zimbabwe needs young leaders in schools, in churches and in government. Progressive societies and economies allow their young people to take leadership positions. Not only do they have the energy, young people also have fresh ideas and can see through long-term-projects. Before the Church calls on society to allow young people leadership positions, it should demonstrate this first.

The area of *gender* is another one that requires cultural reconstruction in Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, the Church stands guilty in this area and therefore needs to reconstruct itself first. Many churches in Zimbabwe do not give women leadership positions based on the way they interpret the Bible (Togarasei 2013). In post-crisis Zimbabwe, I believe women should be given leadership positions as long as they are qualified for the tasks. According to the 2012 national census, Zimbabwean women make 52% of the total population (Zimstat 2012). A society cannot succeed to its optimum when the majority of its members are not contributing fully and meaningfully to its development. There are also some men in Zimbabwe who still believe that the place of a woman is the home. A country can surely not succeed if some people do not contribute anything to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Church should therefore teach that as long as all members of a society are not working for the good of the country, the country cannot achieve its best. Everyone needs to work for their sustenance even as the author of Thessalonians teaches, "If anyone will not work, let him not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

One of the causes of the Zimbabwe crisis was the land grab by indigenous Zimbabweans. Whereas the idea of land redistribution was commendable, the manner in which it was carried out brought about the crisis. The same can be said about the manner in which the redistributed land is being used. *Traditional methods of farming* still persist in the commercial lands. This traditional way of farming (especially as it pertains to crop cultivation) has 4-6 months of cropping and the other 6-8 months of very little productive activity. In these 6-8 months people spend days in unproductive activities like beer drinking. The Church is well positioned to address this. It should advocate for building of dams and teaching its people the importance of production throughout the year. No society can prosper when it spends half of the year in unproductive work.

Although there are many cultural practices that I consider require reconstruction in post-crisis Zimbabwe, the last I will discuss here is *belief*

in witchcraft. What I consider witchcraft here can be described as super-stitions. It includes belief in sorcery and the power of magic or miracles. Witchcraft beliefs are inimical to the goals of reconstruction theology, which are, mutual love, mutual care and mutual sharing by all members of a society. Witchcraft beliefs instead divide members of a society and sometimes lead people to limit their capabilities on the belief that they are bewitched and therefore cannot achieve their best. Witchcraft beliefs sometimes also stop people from seeking solutions to their problems. Sometime in July 2014 I listened to one episode of a radio programme on Radio Zimbabwe where people phone in with their problems. On that particular day the presenter interviewed a man who said he had a problem of *tokoloshis* (goblins) that have sex with him in his sleep. He said after each sexual encounter, he wakes up so exhausted that for a long time he cannot have sex with his wife nor engage in any manual work. He also said the goblins had cast a spell on him that each time he was employed or sold something; he would not be paid. The presenter had invited a traditional healer who placed the blame on the man's rela-tives. I was shocked that a national broadcaster would divide families at such levels. Informed by the goals of reconstruction theology, the Church should advocate for the banning of such programmes on air. The Church should also teach against such belief systems most of which divide families and societies. The same is also true of the overemphasis of the miraculous in some churches especially the modern Pentecostal charismatic churches. Zimbabwe has been dominated by preachers of a prosperity gospel who promise miraculous fall of diamonds and gold from heaven and miracle money in the pockets and bank accounts of believers (Chitando, Gunda & Kuegler, 2013). This belief in miraculous riches and miraculous solutions to the country's socio-political and eco-nomic problems, especially as preached by Pentecostals, leaves human beings with little to contribute to their welfare. Elsewhere, I argue that such teachings promoted by a literalist and selective reading of some biblical passages by the Pentecostals, have pacified Zimbabweans leav-ing them at the mess of the crisis (Togarasei, 2018:21-38). The books of Ezra-Nehemiah, on which reconstruction theology is based, show the importance of the divine-human interaction in reconstruction of shat-tered economies and societies. They do not focus on God's miraculous intervention but call human beings to action. God cannot be left to build a country's roads, bridges or to feed the orphans and the elderly. Human beings have to do this.

Conclusion

Like any other theory, reconstruction theology has received its fair share of appraisal and criticism. This chapter has appraised it seeing it as presenting an opportunity to address challenges faced in post-crisis Zimbabwe. The chapter outlined specific problems that have led to poverty and the marginalization of the poor and then suggested ways by which the Church in Zimbabwe can contribute to their address through employing reconstruction theology. A number of the problems facing Zimbabwe are problems of poor leadership and this chapter has called upon the Church to provide that leadership for the good of the country.

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Kudzai Biri

8 | Man of God or God of Man?
Pentecostalism, Authority and Accountability in Zimbabwe

Introduction

I open this introductory section by quoting the words of Christian Oyakhilome, founder of Christ Embassy (Nigeria) and popularly known as "Pastor Chris", that have a bearing on the concept, "man of God" and capture some of the implications of the designation. Pastor Chris declared to his congregation through a live telecast saying:

> There are preachers and there are men of God. I am not a preacher; I am a man of God, and I go in the way I'm asked to go. You have to understand something about a man of God. A man of God is not just someone who worships God or preaches God. A man of God is handpicked by God, set on course by God. If you study the scriptures, you will not find one man of God go against God, sinning against God (Aribisala 2014).

Oyakhilome's words are important because they represent his perspectives about the so called "man of God" and the influence it has on believers and resultant consequences. In this chapter, I argue that the title "man of God" is biblical and can be traced from the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible prophets who were referred to as "men of God". In the Hebrew Bible, it is a title of respect for prophets and religious leaders that follow God in every way, obey God's commands and do not live for the things of this earth. In the New Testament, there is a reference to this title in I Timothy 6: 11-21. It gives us a glimpse of the qualities of the "man of God" that include faithfulness, righteousness and dedication. I also need to point out that while many Pentecostals have embraced the concept, there are variations in terms of authority and power that these leaders have. For example, the title may loosely refer to pastors and other leaders in the church that include elders and deacons. In the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), believers sometimes make references to the title in their salutations. However, this chapter focuses the analysis on specifically the founders of denominations or ministries who are at the apex of their specific religious movements, by utilizing structures in ZAOGA and other Pentecostal churches. The

objective of the chapter is to investigate the deployment of the title and its possible effects in marginalizing the followers from the leader (the man of God). Where does the use of the title leave the leader in his/her relationship with the followers? "Sowing into the ministry" or into the life of the "man of God" is common language across Pentecostal denominations. But where does the "seeded" money go to and who decides how to use the money? I argue for accountability because many Pentecostal churches have vast resources which require accountability. These vast resources led the then Minister of Tourism in Zimbabwe, Walter Muzembi, to propose taxing churches. These resources mostly come from the believers. Pentecostals "seed" or "sow" money and sometimes other resources in order to become wealthy.

Methodologically, the chapter is a result of information that was gathered through participant observation in ZAOGA and other Pentecostal churches reading published material and also listening to audio tapes of different "men of God" in other Pentecostal churches. The study therefore focuses on the selected sermonic discourses. The study focuses on "man of God" because in Zimbabwe the founders of Pentecostal denominations who have attracted attention and public debate are men, hence are the focus of the study. I write from a critical insider perspective, having experienced Pentecostal life from a young age. In this study, I am aware of the differences that run through different Pentecostal denominations in Zimbabwe. Further, there are also the ever-changing practices, the inventions or creativity under the guise of 'being led by the Holy Spirit". This has been one of the major challenges in studying Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe for some habits or traits are developed and dropped. While there is a commonality that runs through them, justice has to be done through enumerating some of the differences in these movements. Below, I briefly describe the "man of God" with reference to the founders in order to make a clear distinction from other leaders.

"Man of God": Doctrinal and Methodological Emphasis

The chapter probes whether the focus on Pentecostalism is on the God of man (God taking precedence over the leader and the believers) or man of God (leader taking precedence over God)? The title "man of God" seems to obscure the attention of believers to God as the man of God takes a centre stage. The rituals of 'seeding'/ 'sowing' into the life of the man of God and into the ministry become a cause of concern. It appears 'the man of God,' instead of God, ends up towering over the respective

movements. In one Big Sunday in Chitungwiza, in 2007, Guti raised concern over preachers' overlooking of the name of Jesus. He taught, "Count how many times the preacher mentions the name of Jesus. That will tell you if he is after Jesus or his own glory."

The majority of Pentecostal churches leaders in Zimbabwe are men and the title 'man of God' has therefore assumed prominence. There are women who have founded denominations and ministries in Zimbabwe such as Bishop Patience Hove of Elshaddai International Ministries. For such the title woman of God has not been quite common perhaps because the Bible talks more of men of God than women of God. The Shona translation of 'man of God' (*munhu waMwari*) surpasses gender connotations but the majority of Pentecostals, especially in urban areas, prefer to use the English rendering. This chapter focuses on men to whom this article is applied. The chapter also focuses on male founders because they have attracted a lot of attention and controversy through what they do, teach and decree in the name of their titles as "men of God". The use of the title and the emphasis given to it differ from one Pentecostal denomination to the other. The doctrinal and methodological emphasis depends on the teachings of the founders. Most important, the glittering archives of the founders constitute a theological history of the church that glorifies the founder and his divine encounters (Maxwell 2006, Biri 2012, 2013). These archives shape the history of the church and are often spelt out in books written by the founders as canonical history. Examples of such books include Ezekiel Guti's books, *Zimbabwe Assemblies of God's History of ZAOGA FIF, The Book of Remembrance, How it began and Where it is Going and* Tom Deuschles' *Building People Building Dreams.* While these books act as canonical histories of the movements, they help to authenticate the founder as a tried and tested "man of God". The man of God becomes an expert in almost every area of life by virtue of the divine call encounters and the tests he goes through, often characterised by suffering and endurance. This might explain why he embodies several titles (as discussed below), which all point to him as "the man of God". The title "man of God" couches in elements of charisma, thus becomes a charismatic title. One cannot separate the charisma enshrined in the title "man of God" and the person of the founder. This has had the effect of deifying the "man of God".

Deification of the 'Big Man'

There is a tendency to deify the "man of God". Often, this deification derives from the canonical history of the movement. Achunike (2004) has made similar observations in Nigeria that are applicable to "man of God" in Zimbabwe. He points out that in Pentecostal churches, there is deification of founding leaders which translates to their elevation to living saints. The "man of God" is sacralized and occupies the centre stage in all church activities. Kalu (2008) describes the role of the founder and his relationship with the congregation as that of the "big man of a big God". Church activities involve intercessory prayer sessions for the "man of God" and giving to the man of God (popularly known as seeding). ZAOGA has special offering for Guti (founder of church) in the form of the Birthday Gift, apart from other offerings in cash or kind. Giving to the "man of God" is known by different names. In the Family of God Church of Andrew Wutawunashe, it is popularly known as seeding and in the United Family International Church (UFIC), it is known as Altars (Biri 2012).

The principle of seeding has an effect of enlarging the resources of the "man of God" such that he is not only "a big man" spiritually, but also materially. In one of his sermons on 4-06-2013, Emmanuel Makandiwa, the founder of the UFIC (Biri 2012) declared to his congregants; "*Munodya zvamunowana, ini ndinodya zvandinoda*" (You eat what you can afford, but I eat what I want). Uebert Angel of Spirit Embassy, at one service, also declared to Midlands State University Students, "If you are poor you are stupid." It is important to note that these founders depend on their flock (although some run their businesses). Such sermons and declarations have solicited criticism from some people because it appears leaders become arrogant because they are "big" in every respect. Yet followers are mostly responsible for their upkeep both by giving and by marketing "the big man". Apart from the canonical history of the churches, the founders appear to be media personalities. Some churches such as ZAOGA have composed songs that glorify the founders. Car stickers of founders and their spouses are a common phenomenon, as are portraits of the "man of God" in the houses of believers (this is very common with ZAOGA and UFIC and Heartfelt International Ministries (HIM) members). Deification thrives under a personality cult. Below I, therefore, explore and critique the personality cult in order to bring out the status being accorded the "man of God" and the effects of such a status on levels of authority and accountability.

A Personality Cult:
Focus on the "Man of God" and not the God of Man?

The picture of the "big man of a big God" has culminated in a personality cult. All revolves around the man of God. This is evident in ZAOGA testimonies and teachings that frequently refer to Guti. It appears that the man of God sets God on a course and not vice versa. This results in the marginalization of the followers as God is no longer in control of what happens in the church, but the man of God. There is use of mass media and propaganda to create an idealized heroic image of the man of God. This is done, for example, through Ezekiel TV in ZAOGA, the church's television channel, where Guti's past is glorified and he emerges as a hero (Biri 2013). Men and women who advocate uncompromised allegiance surround him and do not allow criticism of the "man of God."

The naming system in Pentecostalism points to other grooves of deifying the "man of God" and creating a personality cult. Hospitals, universities, schools, farms and vehicles have inscriptions of the man of God, in the case of ZAOGA. The personalization enables everything to revolve around the "man of God." There is a lot of indoctrination such that the man of God appears as a super-human being or a demi-god. This view finds affirmation in the declaration made by Oyakhilome on his Love World Television channel. Oyakhilome said; "to speak against the man of God is to bring a curse on yourself and your children. When you hear people speaking against a man of God, move away from there." Believers are discouraged to speak against or to criticise the "man of God." As pointed above, often there is a group of people that surrounds the "man of God" that ensures they protect the image of the man of God and do not tolerate criticism as they have uncompromised allegiance to the man of God. As Adogame (2013) has also observed, the big man inaugurates a "compliance team" that sustains loyalty to leadership. The "man of God" centrally controls doctrines, even in diaspora. This is done through universal literature, liturgy and Bible study in order to maintain a specific identity and worldview. This worldview appears to project the "man of God" and not God of man.

Insights from Machingura (2012) on divine election of leadership are very important in this analysis of the effects of the title 'man of God' on the marginalization of followers. The personality cult becomes authenticated because of the idea of pre-destination. Machingura (2012) points out that with pre-destined leaders, their childhood and persecution are associated with predestined appointment as men of God. While

Machingura makes reference to the leadership of President Robert Mugabe, the observations are applicable to the life of Pentecostal men of God like Ezekiel Guti of ZAOGA. Guti's childhood life, his persecution during the colonial era in AFM (as presented by hagiographer Gayle Erwin (n.d.), miracles and his ascendency to archbishop have been related and associated with a pre-destined leader. The concept of pre-destined leaders means that even if other leaders make great exploits within the movement, they remain marginalized as the theological narratives submerge them and all merit and attention go to the "man of God." This is manifest in the Birthday Gift and celebration associated with birth of many symbolic beginnings in relation to Guti. They are used to remind ZAOGA FIF members of Guti's uprightness and faithfulness in bringing good news to the people. One hears statements like; "*Dai asiri baba Guti akateerera...*" (If it were not for Father Guti who heeded the call...), "*Dai asiri munhu waMwari tingadai tisiri pano takafa muzvivi.*" (If it were not for man of God, we could not have been here/we would have perished in our sins).

Attention is therefore drawn away from Jesus or God to the man of God, thus in a way marginalizing even God himself. One would ask why it is not "if it were not God/Jesus....?" Apart from that, the Birthday Gift to Guti is significant because it underplays and undermines the role that was played by other co-founders of the movement (Maxwell 2006, Biri 2013). An example is on ZAOGA's teaching and practice of Talents. This teaching and practice were initiated by Priscilla Ngoma, but most leaders in ZAOGA attribute it to Guti and claim that God spoke to Guti on this subject when he was studying in America in the early 1970s. Yet Eunor Guti (the wife of Ezekiel Guti) has attributed the Talents to Ngoma and argues that Guti simply perfected them (Biri 2013). This is a distortion of historical events that shows that there are some followers who are determined to elevate and glorify the "man of God" by giving him undue credit.

Sometimes the marginalization of believers through the use of the title "man of God" is not done by the founders themselves but by those around them. Guti, for example, has tried to reject the deification that comes with being called "man of God." He has written a book telling his followers that he is only a servant of Jesus and has encouraged people not to worship him but God. Guti has also humbly admitted that he is a sinner and narrates his Christian journey by pointing to even the mistakes he made as a young believer and pastor. This sharply contradicts

Oyakhilome's claim that a "man of God" does not sin or make mistakes. Guti affirms 2 Chronicles 8:14 that states that David was a "man of God" but he committed sin. Balaam was a man of God, but he became apostate (1 King 13:23-26). These are biblical examples that dispel the claims by Oyakhilome that a "man of God" cannot sin and challenges personality cults that are common in Pentecostalism. In spite of Guti's book and teachings, however, the personality cult still surrounds his ministry as Archbishop of all ZAOGA churches. He overshadows ZAOGA and is left towering above all. In the light of the personality cult, it appears the "man of God" possesses power and authority that can even dictate to God men's will on earth. Again, Oyakhilome's words justify this view when he claims that; "men of God don't just talk, when they speak, God is forced to move!"

With the title "man of God" come many other titles that make the man of God tower above all believers. Thus the "man of God" in ZAOGA carries other multiple titles such as Bishop, Archbishop, Prophet, Professor, Teacher, Servant and Apostle among many others. There is no domain that is not encroachable by the "man of God". It probably also explains why Guti has started Gracious Woman Ministry (Biri 2013). He claims that he saw deficiencies in women who are born again and knows a woman's ego. This writer, as a female researcher, critiques this representation by men that they know women's egos. In the light of all this, the "man of God" is placed at the centre stage and it appears Jesus becomes a footnote in the day to day activities of the church. It also accounts for the reasons why Pentecostalism has been accused of preaching a "cross-less Christianity" (Achunike 2004) and focussing much on "business Christianity" (Gifford 2009). This is where the researcher probes the focus of Pentecostal spirituality; who comes to the fore, the "man of God" or God of man?

The sacralization of the backgrounds of founders raises eyebrows and has led to deification of these leaders. In ZAOGA, Bible studies have shifted from reading the Bible to reading what Guti writes and the use the Bible to authenticate. The impression is that the Bible is secondary to Guti's teachings and experiences. In fact, it is not Bible study in the real sense because Bible study means studying the Bible and not a man's experiences and the use the Bible to point to divine presence. The marketing of founders is also common through regalia. There is an impression that the "man of God" is above the life of suffering and calls his followers to enjoy such a life when they embrace the faith. As Asamoah-

Gyadu (2013) has pointed out, contemporary Pentecostal discourse usually dwells around words to do with victory, power, breakthrough and winning and on other such terms and expressions that deliberately create the impression that through the man of God, the spirit filled Christian becomes almost completely insulated from certain misfortunes that afflict other people. This gives the "man of God" unprecedented authority and power which infringe on accountability. Below, I examine the status of the "man of God" in relation to authority and fiscal accountability.

Authority of the "Man of God"

The authority of the man of God cannot be questioned. This has opened doors of abuse of women because the man of God is respected, cannot be questioned as doing so translates to questioning God. This is captured by Achunike (2001), who, utilizing Nigerian Pentecostalism, critiques the status of living saints that Pentecostal leaders have been accorded. The hero worshiping needs attention. Are they self decreed men of God, are they called or are they "wise men" embarking on business Christianity in the name of God? The emergence of the men of God and developments in Zimbabwe have blurred the division and also complicated the criteria that can be used by ordinary Christians to establish those who have authentic call. This is in spite of the fact that most of these men of God have narratives that claim to authenticate their call (Maxwell 2006, Biri 2012). Using this, they have marginalized believers.

Some examples of marginalization of believers by "Men of God"

Togarasei (2015) has made significant insights on Pentecostalism that give weight to question or probe whether most of Pentecostal leaders are real "men of God." The secularisation, embracing what ever comes their way is a cause for concern. The difference between the church's property and that of the man of God is not clear. In fact, the man of God owns the church unlike in most Protestant and mainline churches. However, Guti (1987) persistently teaches that ZAOGA belongs to God and that he is a mere servant of Jesus. Despite this, it must be noted that those surrounding him create a culture of deification, contrary to the perceptions that Guti has himself. The stage entries of Guti and Makandiwa, comparable to those of state presidents, are initiated by hero worshippers who perpetuate the culture.

The deification of the 'man of God' has led to some developments that need attention. In 2015, Makandiwa of UFIC sold bricks for fifty United States dollars each to members of his church when the ordinary price was 25 cents. The bricks were sold under the pretext that through the purchase of the bricks, members were miraculously 'buying' houses. At another incident at Belvedere Teachers College, a milky drink called Cascade which ordinarily is sold for 50c was sold for five United States dollars again under the pretext that the purchasers were purchasing miracles. Apart from these, UFIC and PHD also sell holy oil and holy water. A very small bottle is sold for five dollars. The critical question is; Is not this robbing the innocent and desperate believers by the "man of God"?

Another area of marginalization of believers by men of God is the promise of marriage. Even though the 2015 statistics on gender in Zimbabwe showed that women are half a million more than men (Zimstats 2015), Makandiwa and Magaya of PHD Ministries call for deliverance sessions so that the single women get their husbands. They defy the physical realities and claim that everything is possible! The impression given is that of manipulating God because the teaching is that, as a believer, "...you can eat whatever you want, dress whatever you want and do whatever you want if you have got faith." In fact, poverty is demonised in many Pentecostal churches. Makandiwa vehemently denies poverty as God's will but declares that "you cannot die in the desert". In the same way, preachers in ZAOGA demonise poverty and consider it as sin against God because "Abraham our father of faith was rich" (Biri 2013). This demonization of poverty must be dissected in two ways. First and foremost, most of these founders do not have sound academic qualifications and come from poor backgrounds. Makandiwa, Guti and Magaya are good examples. The partnering with the men of God in UFIC and PHD has enriched these 'men of God' and now they demonise poverty. Yet, they rely heavily on the pockets of the believers to establish and create wealthy empires. The question of the cross comes to mind. If Jesus suffered, and promised his followers the same, the prosperity messages in Zimbabwe appear to underplay the significance of the cross and its significance. Cases beyond believers such as bareness, HIV & AIDS, cancer and many others are a cause for concern, but they are belittled in the messages of these leaders. Yet, these Pentecostal leaders insist that it is only Pentecostalism that has given Christianity revival and authenticity. The personality cult empowers the "man of

God" and has implications on authority and accountability. Below, I examine the status of the "man of God" in relation to authority and fiscal accountability.

Authority and Accountability: "As the Spirit Leads...!"

The question of authority and accountability brings in the question of democracy in Pentecostalism. Pentecostals declare; "God is not a democrat" (Marshall Fratani (1995), but is there democracy in Pentecostalism? Elsewhere (Biri 2013), I have argued that Pentecostalism is authoritarian and establishes autocratic structures to ensure that the leader has absolute authority which is not challenged. I want to maintain the same argument here by arguing that most Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe do not have structures that encourage accountability or auditing finances. The "man of God" is the 'nodal power point' who dictates when, where and how to use the resources. He dictates because he is led by the Spirit and "where the Spirit wills" is the justification for directing finances where the "man of God" wants. However, even if the money is directed to "where the spirit wills"; there is no accountability in all the processes. Thus, it opens an avenue of abuse of funds by a leader who is above all authority. There are no checks and balances to control decisions by the "man of God" and his "compliance team" in using resources. This raises the question; to whom is the "man of God" accountable: to men, to the church, to himself or to God? It is also important to point out that many Pentecostal denominations have no constitutions by virtue of the belief that it is the "Spirit that leads". Therefore, the Holy Spirit is a Constitution that has to be followed. Others, such as ZAOGA, have a constitution but it does not give room for criticism of the actions of the "man of God." ZAOGA's Archbishop has power to override the decisions made by the executive and makes appointments and decisions that cannot be questioned. At the end, in spite of the constitution, it becomes a one man's show!

Pentecostals advocate accountability and responsibility in Zimbabwe, given widespread corruption in both the public and private sectors. In the light of the government's indigenisation programmes and the need to empower people economically, Pentecostals have found ground to project their entrepreneurship programmes. The indigenisation programmes have failed for quite a long time because they have been marred by corruption and lack of accountability, especially by the top cadres. Biri (2013) has argued that Pentecostal leaders in Zimbabwe

have a weak political theology that does not want to confront corrupt politicians and call for accountability. The reason might be that there is no accountability in most Pentecostal denominations as many of the leaders have lavish lifestyles at the expense of their followers. Leaders implore followers to be responsible. The umbrella body of Pentecostals and Evangelicals, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) is an example. Its inter-denominational fellowships emphasise the ethos of hard work in order to be responsible citizens. They also call people to shun corruption. However, what seems amiss is the emphasis to establish structures that account for funds and other church resources. There is a striking resonance between political leaders and Pentecostal leaders in relation to responsibility and accountability. They both encourage followers to work hard, but it appears followers cry foul because there is no transparency in handling funds designated for specific purposes. Yet some of them boast of the wealth that they get from the believers.

Ukah (2013), citing Pentecostal churches in South Africa that are founded by Nigerians, points out that the founders of denominations are not questioned and are not accountable to anyone. This is applicable to the Zimbabwean context. The researcher advocates the accountability of Pentecostal churches in order to minimise chances of personalization and abuse of church funds, property and misuse of authority. In Zimbabwe, apart from abuse of funds and other resources, some Pentecostal leaders have been accused of abusing girls and women. The media has reported several cases of women that are sexually abused by church leaders because they cannot question the authority of the "man of God". Many women become powerless to resist the charismatic "man of God". It appears the personalization of the church or ministry, as a result of their being "men of God," leads these founders to think that they own their followers such that they cannot be restrained even when they make advances to women. In most cases, what belongs to the "man of God" and that which belongs to the church is not specified. The division is blurred. The naming system causes this. This is abrogation of religious authority and affront because the leader makes mistakes (which show that the "man of God" is not God or superhuman) but often does not allow or tolerate criticism. One genre of Pentecostal scholarship has focused on the wealth and lifestyle of some leaders of the new generation churches. Mbukanma (2004) points out that the quest for earthly riches and temporal well-being is an illicit diversion, a turning from God to oneself. The lavish lifestyle of "the man of God" has not escaped criti-

cism. It emanates from lack of accountability of resources and funds because of unquestioned authority. This unquestioned authority emanates from the possessions that the "man of God" has through the naming system and it gives the impression that he owns the church, and everything associated with the church.

Significance of naming: Bolstering Power and Authority

I argue that a shifting focus from God of man to "man of God" is functional in the politics of inclusion and exclusion. Hollenweger (1972) argues that the greatest weakness in Pentecostalism is that of breaking away and this is because many Pentecostal leaders do not tolerate criticism by virtue of the belief that they have founded therefore, they own the movements. Believers give the impression that outside their "man of God" there is no one else. Songs and testimonies centre not on the work of Jesus on the cross, but "*Zvakatanga nababa* Guti" (It was initiated by Father Guti). Credit goes to Guti, even in diasporan churches. "*Mwari wababa* Guti" (God of Father Guti) is a common phrase of addressing God in ZAOGA. While it is biblical, since Israelites also referred to "God of Abraham", it appears to give the impression that the "man of God" owns God. I argue that the "man of God" might have followers around him that exaggerate his importance to give him fame as part of marketing him, giving the impression that in all requests he cannot be turned down by God.

The writer notes a shift in African Christianity. As pointed out by Kalu (2008), African Christianity is re-inventing the 'big man from indigenous society'. The big man is an achieved person who has performed all the traditional rituals and taken all the titles, fulfilling old age lived with dignity. Van Dijk (1993), writing from the context of Malawi, uses the term *kukhwima* to refer to an empowered person who has *mphamwu* (secure power) and stronghold in the home and village. It was suspected that the *kukhwima* secured a powerful position by using witchcraft and sorcery and by patronising ancestral cults and covenants. But ulike in the traditional set up, in the Pentecostal churches, the big man syndrome rests on divine inspiration. The powerful "man of God" therefore now takes over the local image and idiom of the big man but no longer suspected of any evil as God is believed to have rubbed his anointing upon his servant (as attested by theological narratives that authenticate the divine call and encounters). The "man of God" becomes God's viceroy on earth. Thus, the image and idiom of the "man of God" as a super-

human was derived and translated from the indigenous language as someone chosen and anointed by the gods. The old man, *mutana* among the Shona, is endowed with wisdom. Perhaps implying to be a *mutana*, in 2010, Guti said, "*Ndakafamba zvakanaka*, imitate me, *handina chikwereti nemunhu, handina kubata magaro kana mazamu emukadzi...*" (I have set an example of a morally upright life, follow me, I have no debts, I did not fondle a woman's buttocks or breasts...) (Biri 2013). Guti challenges his followers as he proves to them that he has vast experience and led a morally upright life in tandem with Christian ethics of shunning all forms of evil.

Conclusion

The title "man of God" is biblical. It can be traced from the Old Testament times, through the New Testament and the apostolic age. It has found larger space of deployment within the Pentecostal fraternity in Zimbabwe. However, the title appears to have gained significance that is attached to the authority, power and infallibility of the founder of denominations or ministries. This infallibility has created the spirit of hero worshipping of leaders that has the potential for abuse of authority and unaccountability in terms of resources. All this derives from the elevation of the "man of God" as a 'living saint' who occupies the centre stage of the Christian lives of believers such that one questions the place of God. This chapter has argued that the use of this title, to some extent, marginalizes the followers of the "man of God" and therefore needs to be problematized.

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Clemence Makamure

9 | POWER STRUGGLES AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PRACTICES IN THE AFRICAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF JOHANNE MARANGE

Introduction

Historically, leadership succession practices in the social, political, and religious sectors in Zimbabwe have been and are a problem. In 1965, Ian Smith declared the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) declaring himself the life Prime Minister of the then Rhodesia. He left the throne of his party, Rhodesian Front (RF,) without putting in place any clear succession plan. Robert Gabriel Mugabe of Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) ruled from 1980 to 2017 and left without a succession plan. Morgan Tsvangirai became the president of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 and dominated affairs in his party until his death in February 2018. He did not have a clear succession plan and there was serious contestation for power within his party following his death. This dilemma is not only limited to the political sphere but is also rampant in religious organisations and churches in Zimbabwe. For instance, in most African Independent Churches, leaders come and go without leaving any succession plans in place. It is against this background that this chapter seeks to examine power struggle and leadership succession practices in the African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange (AACJM) and assess the extent to which they generated schisms and wrangles. Document analysis supported by interviews and personal observations are used to glean data for this chapter.

Power struggles and leadership succession disputes have formed an integral part of the life of African Independent Churches (AICs) in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Daneel (1988:267) reiterated that the death of the founder of an Independent church, more than any other occasion, brings conflicting issues to the surface. The history of African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe has revealed that a leadership crisis would always ensue after the death of the principal leader. Before the death of the founder, the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) of

Samuel Mutendi had thirteen schisms between 1929 and 1961, though none succeeded in drawing away large numbers (Daneel 1988:273). After his death in 1976, there was a serious schism. Daneel (1988:273) identified three major schismatic groups which emerged soon after the death of the "man of God". These groups are as follows: the ZCC under the leadership of Reuben Mutendi whose headquarters is at Mandadzaka in Bikita district, the ZCC under the Episcopate of Gierson Matenda with its headquarters at Garare under Chief Nyamhondo in Mwenezi district and the group of Nehemiah Mutendi, which is the main one, comprising the bulk of senior ministers using Mbungo and Defe Dopota as major centres. Similarly, after the death of David Masuka of the Zion Apostolic Church (ZAC), several *Ndaza* Bishops broke away and formed their own churches (Daneel, 1988:267). The Zion Apostolic Faith Mission of Andreas Pedzisai Shoko also sparked a heavy schism after the death of Dorius Shoko as his two sons Jameson and Ezra Pedzisai Shoko fought over church leadership. The wrangles resulted in church leaders appealing to political protection and this caused a lot of commotion in the church. The Zion Apostolic Faith Mission which itself broke away from the Dutch Reformed Church in Masvingo, experienced its first schism in 1948 when Jeremiah Shava broke away to form his own Zion Apostolic Faith Mission in Chief Shindi's area in Chivi district (Mazarire, 2004). After Jeremiah's schism, there were two other consecutive break-aways by Rueben and Ruka Changa in 1949 and 1950 respectively (Ranger, 1970). All in all, African Independent Churches suffer schisms and leadership succession wrangles after the death of the principal leader. Considering this background this chapter seeks to investigate power struggle and leadership succession practices in the African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange (AACJM).

The Historical background of the African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange (AACJM)

The AACJM was born in an environment of political, economic, and social upheaval in 1932. The people who came to settle in Marange area were the victims of the 1932 Land Apportionment Act. The Land Act pushed Africans to less fertile lands and this to some extent gave Africans the mentality of self-reliance and goods production as they sought to supplement their life needs (Ranger, 1985:27). Prime fertile land was reserved for the colonial settlers, whilst less fertile land was reserved for Africans. Forced labour was extended to the mines, the construction of

roads and the railway lines. The pushing of Africans to reserves and infertile lands was a mark of racism on the part of whites. Racism was also seen even in churches and other spheres of life (Ranger, 1985:27-28). The western churches failed to address African problems and this led to the formation of African independent churches which were set to spread the view that African culture is part of the gospel of Christ (Hastings 1996:77). This resulted in the shunning of missionary education by Africans. This is also the period in which the AACJM was born and it received support from Africans, including Chief Marange.

The African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange was founded by Muchabaya Momberume Sithole who was born in 1912 in Marange district near Umtali (Mutare). He was a son of a Mozambican immigrant who married into a chiefly Marange family of Fureni Saita Momberume and Muchanani Marange (Daneel 1971:288). Muchabaya Momberume's father, Fureni Saita, did not have the bride price, so he moved in with the Marange family to work for them in payment of *lobola,* a practice called *kutema ugariri* among the Shona. At the end of Fureni's *kutema ugariri* term, Chief Marange adopted two of Fureni's sons, that is, Tirarame and Muchabaya Momberume as his own children, while Fureni retained Taguta and Dorcas. This was because the customs of the Marange people stated that the first two children born out of marriage between their daughters and foreigners belonged to the in-laws of the foreigner. According to the marriage practices of the time, foreigners who married in the area of Marange were not allowed to take their wives with them (Ruzivo, 2014:16). This explains why Muchabaya Momberume and his church took its name after the Marange chieftaincy.

Muchabaya Momberume experienced visions and near-death illnesses from as early as 6 years of age. In 1932, on the 7th of July while journing from Mutare to his home near Mount Nyengwe, Muchabaya Momberume was struck by a powerful light and he fell unconscious. He heard a voice telling him, "You are John the Baptist, an Apostle. Now go and do my work! Go to every country and preach and convert people! Tell them not to commit adultery, not to steal and not to become angry. Baptise people and keep the Sabbath day" (Hastings 1979:77). Muchabaya Momberume took the name Johanne from John the Baptist and Marange from the tribal name, of the Marange Reserve. His first task was to convert the members of his extended family in the Mafararikwa chiefdom of Marange. Muchabaya Momberume was also able to speak in

tongues and this gave him further ecstatic manifestations of the Spirit, and he founded the AACJM on the basis of these revelations (Anderson 2000:20). He was educated as a Methodist. According to Anderson (2000:23) at the age of 20, he returned from journeys in the bush one day announcing a series of visions and encounters with Jesus Christ, calling him to be a Holy Spirit guided itinerant preacher. On reaching his homestead he stood on an anthill and kept on saying, 'Amen'. He was joined by his father (Fureni Saita Momberume) and his brothers, Tirarame and Taguta Momberume, who came out of their huts singing,

> *Tenzi, taungana muno mumba yenyu,*
>> LORD, we have gathered here in your house[1]
> *Uyanyiwo zvo tapinda, Tenzi, mberi kwenyu;*
>> Come now that we stand, LORD, in front of you
> *Iyo mwoyo yedu inomuchemera,*
>> Our hearts long for you
> *Neyi mweya yedu, Tenzi, inomutarira* (old Methodist hymn)
>> And our souls, LORD, look up to you

According to Clement Momberume's narrations in an interview, the family spent the whole night praying on the day in question. The night of prayer prompted the conversion of Fureni Saita Momberume, Muchabaya's father and was baptised and renamed Zachariah. This echoes the biblical story in which the father of John the Baptist was called Zachariah. Muchabaya's elder brothers, Tirarame and Taguta, were also baptized and renamed Cornelius and Arnold respectively. It is important to note that Taguta retained his old name and was known as Arnold Taguta. Ranger (1985:30) said that the changing of names after conversion and baptism was a system which was brought in Zimbabwe by missionaries who emphasised that upon conversions Africans were to adopt new biblical or European flavoured names. This was a sign of total transformation from the old to the new way of life. Important to note is the view that Johanne Marange's mother Muchanani Marange, the spirit medium of the Marange chieftainship, was never converted to the AACJM (Jules-Rosette, 1987).

Since the first converts to the church were necessarily relatives of Muchabaya, all key church posts were held by close relatives and extended family. Johanne Marange's father and his two brothers formed the 'Consolidating and Advisory Board' at home, during the long spells of Johanne Marange's absence (Jules-Rosette, 1987). Cornelius Momberume

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[1]   The English translation was done by Masiiwa R. Gunda. Thanks a lot! (JK)

tended the sick through prayer and the laying on of hands. Arnold Taguta advised church officials, who came from far away congregations to discuss organisational or other church matters. Fureni Saita Momberume, with a selected body of *vatongi* ('judges'), settled disputes and disciplinary cases concerning adultery, wizardry and other offences among church members. Cornelius Momberume died without having sons to continue his work. His position was therefore 'inherited' by his brother Arnold Taguta, who then held the dual function of 'healer-prophet' (M'Passou, 1994:73). According to Ruzivo (2014:20), Marange's church spread from Zimbabwe to South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For Ruzivo (2014:20) through migration, the church has spread to Europe among the African migrant workers. This implies that Marange developed a well-knit organisation with a greater evangelistic outreach. Ruzivo (2014:21) further reiterated that AACJM quickly spread first among his kith and kin and then in all Southern African states, before becoming the international movement that it is today. The spread from Zimbabwe and Southern African countries was spectacular. With no ecclesiastical centre of unity, the *Pendi* (Pentecost) celebration of the Eucharist, which is normally observed in July to mark the call of Johanne, became an event that united all peripheral centres with their leader (Ruzivo, 2014:21).

The death of Johanne Marange and the subsequent schism

In 1963 the health of Johanne Marange started to deteriorate. According to internal sources, Marange fell sick when he went to Karoi for the Passover feast (*Paseka*) and had to be driven back home, only to die soon after his arrival (Jules-Rosette, 1987). Upon Marange's death the church experienced its first schism. A power struggle ensued between Johanne's blood brother, Arnold Taguta and Simon Mushati, Johanne's maternal cousin. Simon Mushati was second to Johanne Marange and saw it reasonable to succeed him as the High Priest (Hastings 1979:182). Simon Mushati's argument was that he had always been second to Johanne in the hierarchical order of the AACJM, and that the church founder's wishes before his death was that he, Simon Mushati, would take over as the leader of the church and on Passover tours (M'Passou, 1994:74). In Simon's view, it was logical for an elderly senior assistant to the founder to succeed Marange. It was clear that Simon had been the closest confidante of Marange and was supposed to succeed him (Hastings

1979:182). According to Ruzivo (2014:20) after the death of Johanne Marange, blame was cast upon Mushati and Gwati who was the general secretary of the church. They were thought to have bewitched Marange through food poisoning in a bid to take over Johanne's leadership of the church.

As a way to oust Mushati, Arnold Taguta gave all significant positions of the church to Johanne Marange's natural sons using the customary law. This helped to prevent Simon Mushati from consolidating his already powerful position in the AACJM. Soon after the burial of Johanne Marange, relatives assembled at his homestead for *kugadzira* (an after-death ritual) proceedings. The deceased's brother, Arnold Taguta started the proceedings by saying, *'Yafa yabara'* ('the dead person had left descendents),' meaning that Johanne Marange had left children who should take over the AACJM leadership. Arnold Taguta appointed Abero (Abel) Momberume, the eldest son of Marange, as the successor. This did not augur well with Simon Mushati and he broke away and formed his own church (Jules–Rosette, 1979). Abero Momberume received his father's hereditary name and staff, signifying that he was accepting responsibility as the 'first priest' of the AACJM as well as headship of his family. Simon Mushati was further infuriated when Arnold Taguta proceeded to give Johanne Marange's two church staves (*tsvimbo*) to Makebo and Judah Marange, who were Abero's young brothers. For Simon Mushati, the inheritances of the Word (Church) were not supposed to be shared following the African traditional way of inheritance. Arnold Taguta argued that Simon Mushati was a distant relative hence had no share in the private affairs of the Momberume family (Daneel, 1988:213). The power struggle between Arnold and Mushati proved that customary and traditional inheritance laws have a strong say in the church's succession policies. The struggle also shows that the church in African Independent Churches is seen as a family property and its leadership succession practice has to follow the traditional way of inheritance.

While the church leadership was given to Abero Momberume, the biological son of Johanne Marange, Arnold Taguta, Johanne's brother, inherited thirteen out of sixteen wives left by Johanne Marange, in a traditional fashion. The other three wives decided to return to their homes and villages citing age as their barrier to the next marriage. The two Land Rovers that were part of Johanne's estate were given to Abero and Makebo to use in the pastoral work. This move also shows that the African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange goes in line with the tradi-

tional laws of inheriting the wives of a deceased person. All in all, there are striking similarities between the practices of the church with what we find in the African traditional societies.

To further oust Mushati from the church leadership, Arnold Taguta moved the place where the church held its annual Passover from Mt Nyengwe, which was closer to Simon Mushati's home to Mafararikwa, near his own home. This move was to make sure that Mushati would be deprived of any leadership role in the church hence he had to move out and form his own church, the Apostolic Church of St Simon and St Johanne, deriving the name of the church from his own first name and that of Marange. The reason behind was to say that he would lead the church in accordance with how he and Marange led it before Marange's death.

The power struggle between Arnold and Simon Mushati in 1963 marked the first great schism in the AACJM. It is important to note that there were minor schisms and power struggles even during the time of Johanne Marange himself. One of the major breakaways was done by Johanne Marange's deputy, Luke Mataruka who formed the Jekenisheni church, probably a corruption of the term, "Union Jack", for the British flag (Magaracha and Masengwe, 2012:32). The schism which occurred at the death of Johanne Marange was caused by the fact that as a leader he did not choose or appoint his successor in a clear manner. This aspect of lack of clear succession plans has made the African Independent Churches in general and the AACJM in particular to be marginalized particularly by the mainline and Pentecostal churches today. The AACJM is in most cases considered to be a sect or a family business.

The death of Abero Momberume and the 1992 schism

Abero Momberume presided over his last church service on 17 July 1992 at Kasipiti Farm in Macheke near Marondera. In a focus group interview, it was highlighted that at the gathering in July 1992, a prophet saw in a vision that the priest, Abero Momberume, was going to die. Church members, it is said, thought the event was to come after a long period of time but to their surprise the prophecy was fulfilled in the next few days.

According to church sources, Abero Momberume died at 8 o'clock in the evening on 25th of July 1992 (Interview, Luke, 17/01/2014). It is believed that Abero and Noah Taguta, the son of Arnold Taguta, had a meeting, which was also attended by Stephen Momberume who is Abero

Momberume's eldest son. The contents of their discussion were never divulged. Abero Momberume was buried on the 27th of July 1992 in Chinyamukumba Hill alongside his father and founder of the AACJM, Johanne Marange in Bocha. At the funeral, Noah Taguta the son of Arnold Taguta, Marange's brother, is reported to have instructed mourners to regroup at Macheke after two weeks to disburse Abero Momberume's estate. When church members regrouped at Kasipiti Farm as directed by Noah Taguta, the Muchabaya Momberume nephews (*vazukuru*), Elias Taodzenyika Nhise and Henry Kachasu, assisted Noah Taguta in disbursing Abero Momberume's estate (Magaracha & Masengwe, 2012:32). Noah Taguta directed proceedings in his capacity as the eldest surviving son from the Fureni Saita Momberume family, and not as a priest. The process was in line with Shona traditional customs and the AACJM tradition (Magaracha & Masengwe, 2012). Stephen Momberume who is Abero Momberume's eldest son, was given his father's name and staff (*tsvimbo*), while his younger brother James Momberume was made deputy of the family (Magaracha & Masengwe, 2012). This seems to be a synthesis of Shona culture and European influences because in Shona culture people do not talk of "deputies" in families. Stephen Momberume was charged with the responsibility of looking after his father's children, and he also inherited Kasipiti Farm in Macheke, and another farm in Chitomborwizi, and some houses in Harare. At this event, Noah Taguta is reported to have made his famous speech about the disbursement of Abero Momberume's estate. It is at the same gathering that Noah Taguta announced that he was taking over as the AACJM High Priest and that he was geared to complete the business left unfinished by the late Abero Momberume (Clement, interview, 17/01/2014). The speech was not well understood particularly by Abero and Johanne Marange's children who thought that Noah as a nephew was just taking over the High Priest's position as a custodian up to the time the AACJM leadership was bestowed on the rightful heir. Clement reiterated that they never thought that Noah had taken over leadership of the AACJM decisively. The major reason why the Momberume family could not question the moves of Noah Taguta were that the moves were in line with the inheritance procedures in the AACJM, which themselves were following traditional appointment customs for leadership succession (Magaracha & Masengwe, 2012). In the traditional African set up, it is common for a nephew to take the custodian of leadership until the issue of succession has been settled and then he would hand over lead-

ership to the rightful heir. This is the reason why Abero Momberume's sons did not challenge Noah Taguta. Noah Taguta had to make sure that Abero's property which included, among others 22 robes, three Bibles, staves (*tsvimbo*) and date stamps were locked up at Abero Momberume's Waterfalls home until the finalization of the church leadership succession process (Ruhoka, 10/01/2014).

All these moves by Noah Taguta show that the struggle for power, African customary laws, statutory common laws, and church traditions were used to access power and authority in the AACJM. In retrospect, the church is rocked by a struggle for power over the human, material and non-material assets of the church. In November, 1992 Noah Taguta with the aid of Robson Mutungwazi Mudzere went clandestinely to Waterfalls (Abero's house) and took the following: three staves which Abel and Makebo had used, all church regalia, which had been handed down to Abero from Johanne Marange and church date stamps of Johanne Marange and Abero Marange (Magaracha & Masengwe, 2012).

On the 6th of July 1993, at a Passover feast at Kasipiti Farm, Chivandire, a church elder placed his hands-on Noah Taguta's head and installed him as a Priest of the AACJM. Noah Taguta claimed that after the installation, one of Saint Johanne`s staves, which Chivandire had held during the ceremony, actually stood up and spoke identifying itself as *Bhadura*. After being anointed publicly, Noah Taguta declared himself the Priest on 8 July 1993, and served Holy Communion at the Passover festival wearing St Johanne Marange's regalia, a crown, garment and staff in his hand (Magaracha & Masengwe, 2012). This move was interpreted by other church elders as a usurpation of church leadership and that Noah Taguta had reneged on his promise that he would further the work form where Abero had left. Noah Taguta warned the church elders that the issue was going to be discussed between the Momberume family and the Church Elders' Council. Further, to consolidate his power, Noah Taguta changed the *Paseka* location from Macheke to Bocha (Magaracha & Masengwe, 2012:33). This was a calculated move by Noah Taguta since this location is the uniting factor where all members from all over the world congregate annually to receive Holy Communion from the Priest of the AACJM. Bocha is closer to Noah Taguta's home hence by making it the centre of the AACJM he was further strengthening his powers. Such a move displeased the church's Council of Elders and they immediately sought audience with him. At the Church Elders' Council, Noah Taguta reiterated that the move was as a result of his dreams. He

said he had lived up to his words that he would complete the business left behind by the late Priest of the AACJM, Abero Momberume. Thus, Noah Taguta's assumption of church leadership led to a reaction by Johanne's sons and church elders. The coming of Noah Taguta into the leadership scene in the AACJM created succession disputes which are raging on even at the time of writing. Although Noah Taguta is still the High Priest of the AACJM, his leadership is contested by Clement Momberume, the biological son of Abero, who also was eyeing the post. This has sparked a prolonged leadership wrangle in the church which is still raging on. The case has been brought to the attention of the chiefs' courts and even the High Court of Zimbabwe, but all these efforts have been to no avail.

The concept of leadership in African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange (AACJM)

As Daneel (1988:162) noted, leadership is the major key to the understanding of any African Independent church like African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange (AACJM). Leadership in the (AACJM) is adapted to Shona people's traditional patterns of authority. The notion of inherited leadership or formation of a new tribal unit in the event of congregation squabbles features in this church. Natural leadership traits such as good conduct, friendly heart, disciplined behaviour and charisma often outweigh educational qualifications. Rather, in the AACJM the principal leader is the sum and substance of the whole movement. He is the man in whose hands the future of the church lies. He is deified and is believed to have some mystical powers. The principal leader is regarded as the 'saviour.' He is taken as a traditional chief (*ishe*). He is regarded as having direct contact with the supernatural through dreams, visions and speaking in tongues (Daneel, 1988). All in all, leadership in the AACJM resembles that of a chief among the Shona people. The leader is at the head of the trichotomous legal system in the AACJM. He is the senior judge and is assisted by high- ranking members of the judiciary and prophets. The principal leader is also known as the High Priest. He is the soul of the church and everything has to cascade from him to the rest of the adherents. The church is solely in the hands of the principal leader and in most cases the church is taken as his family property. This is the major reason why the issue of inheritance leadership plays a role in the succession of the principal leaders after death. The church is viewed as an extended family property and most office bearers in the

AACJM are relatives or close friends of the principal leader. The principal leader is thought to have supernatural powers, and this helps him to have a total control over the church. At the same, time the attribution of supernatural powers to the principal leader creates a ground for succession problems after his death because those who feared to challenge him would have time to do so. The AACJM has the principle that the principal leader has to be respected and obeyed completely in every aspect of life. He is the law giver who cannot be overruled. He is the one other office bearers fear and he holds ultimate control over the appointment of office bearers. According to Ruhoka (Interview, 2014), it is the ability of the principal leader to heal the sick, exorcise evil spirits, and raise the dead and performing miracles which cause people to flock to him. The principal leader then from this narration is 'the church'. If the principal leader is not there, there is no church.

There are also other leadership offices in the AACJM which include the judiciary, the prophets and the security. The bearers of these leadership offices are chosen by the principal leader and in most cases the bearers would be his close relatives. According to Ruka (Interview, 2014) the AACJM considers the following as basic traits for good leadership.

a) *Moyo munyoro* (a kind heart).
    This implies that a leader should be a sympathetic person who is not easily moved to anger.
b) *Tsika dzakanaka (*good manners*).*
    This points to someone leading an exemplary moral life.
c) *Kubata vanhu (*hospitality*).*
    A good leader should be hospitable, someone who has the ability to influence others, to lead or assert authority.
d) *Kupa murairo (to* give the law*).*
    A good leader is someone who can lay down the church's laws and persuade people to live by it.
e) *Munhu ava nenguva yakareba ari musvondo* (Long period of church membership). This implies that a good leader is a person who has been in the church for a long period of time. This means that a good leader is someone who is well versed with the church's practices and one who has had enough time to demonstrate group loyalty.

An analysis of the above traits of a good leader shows that spiritual depth, spiritual maturity, knowledge of the Bible, academic qualifications, persistent prayers and effective preaching are not that vital in determining a good leader within the AACJM. The AACJM puts emphasis

on the idea that a leader should be a reliable person who can influence and lead others. They consider for leadership a person who is not quarrelsome and one who can instil discipline in the church. This implies that charisma plays an integral role in leadership in the AACJM. The above traits of a good leader are meant to undermine educational qualifications in favour of natural authority leadership talents. In a way, the supposed qualities of a leader in the AACJM are fashioned in such a way that when it comes to leadership in the church, those who are educated can be marginalized in favour of charismatic leaders.

In terms of leadership succession practices, the AACJM believes that the eldest son of the late High Priest from his first wife takes over the throne and is supposed to be ordained at the deceased's memorial service. In the church scenario, the practice has problems in that it does not consider the issue that the first son from the first wife should be a Christian in the first place. Further, the practice seems to promote fighting, witchcraft accusations and even assassination as the potential successors will be trying to enhance their chances of succeeding the leader. This implies that following tradition, leadership can be usurped or acquired by trickery or force and in most cases this has resulted in succession disputes that involve genealogical controversies, that is, questioning the genealogical legitimacy of the persons claiming to be the successors to the principal leader. Thus, while tradition is the most used method in leadership succession in the AACJM, it has its own problems and in most cases, it has led to power struggles, leadership succession disputes and violence within the church. After the death of Johanne Marange, power struggles and leadership succession disputes ensued between Johanne's blood brother, Arnold Taguta and Simon Mushati, Johanne's maternal cousin. As pointed out above, Simon Mushati who had been second to Johanne Marange from the beginning of the church, saw it reasonable to succeed him as the High Priest (Daneel, 1971).

The striking similarities between the AACJM's traditional method of appointing the first son of the deceased leader as the heir has made the church to be marginalized by other church denominations in Zimbabwe.The focus on the first son marginalizes the daughters of the deceased from leadership. Overall, the AACJM has been labelled as a family business and not a church. It is because of this marginalization that most Pentecostal churches call members of the AACJM for repentance, considering them to be non-believers.

Political intervention also seems to play a role in the succession practices of the AACJM. It is interesting to note that in Zimbabwe currently, political affiliation and the role of the ecumenical body, which in this case is the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ), override all other succession practices, traditional or constitutional (Vengeyi, 2011). The AACJM has become the breeding ground of political leaders' supporters. Most politicians attend the gatherings of AACJM so that they will have ample time to solicit for votes in these churches because the churches attract a lot of people (Vengeyi, 2011). As a means of gaining support, in cases of succession wrangles, politicians support leaders who seem to be attracting more followers so as to make sure that the leader and his followers will know who is backing him and therefore award them with votes. Politicians have, therefore, also influenced leadership wrangles in AICs. The involvement of politicians has problems in that it does not look at the religious affiliation of the candidate to succeed the High Priest. Moreso, the practice has problems in that the church will be turned slowly into a political parlour rather than a place of worship. Political affiliation is the method that Noah Taguta is using to consolidate his power in AACJM. This leadership practice has also made the church and its leader to be marginalized as a brood of politicians and in most cases, people do not consider them as true worshippers.

We mentioned above that charisma is the other way of assuming leadership in the AACJM after the death of the principal leader. A charismatic leader is someone who gathers followers through dint of personality and charm, rather than any form of external power or authority (Malunga, 2009:46). In most cases, a charismatic leader pays much attention to the people they are talking to at any one moment, making them feel like they are, for that time, the most important people in the world. Charismatic leaders pay a great deal of attention in scanning and reading their environment and are good at picking up the moods and concerns of both individuals and larger audiences (Malunga, 2009:47). They hone their actions and words to suit the situation. Charismatic leaders use a wide range of methods to manage their image and may engender trust through visible self-sacrifice and taking personal risks in the name of their beliefs. They will show great confidence in their followers. They are very persuasive and make very effective use of body language, as well as verbal language (Du Brin, 2004).

Religious leaders, too, use charisma by focusing strongly on making the group very clear and distinct, separating it from other groups. In doing

so, they create an unchallengeable position for themselves. Charismatic leaders seek to instil both commitment to ideological goals and also devotion to themselves (Daft, 2005). Despite their charm and apparent concern, the charismatic leaders may well be somewhat more concerned with themselves than anyone else and this factors in the concept of marginality to the interest of the whole group. A typical experience with them is that whilst one is talking with them, it is like being bathed in a warm and pleasant glow, in which they are very convincing. Yet afterwards, the sunbeam of their attention is moved elsewhere (Malunga, 2009). This is the practice that Noah Taguta, the current High Priest of AACJM used to attain leadership. Interesting to note is the contention that the moves taken by Noah Taguta to become the High Priest clearly implies the use of charisma. Therefore, African customary laws, statutory common laws, charisma and church traditions are used to access power and authority in the AACJM. Because no clear-cut succession procedures are laid down, each leadership contestant capitalizes on any of the ways.

For Daneel (1971:195), the other succession practice that is used by African independent churches to select leaders is through the casting of votes. This implies that the adherents to some extent, have the liberty to choose their own successor, but the process has to be in line with either the church's tradition or constitution. However, this leadership succession practice is not much used in the AACJM since it is overridden by other practices like tradition, political affiliation and charisma. This implies that the voters and their wishes are suppressed and marginalized in the church.

Appointment by word of mouth by the deceased principal leader, through the deceased's will or words of the prophet seem to be some of the ways through which successors are chosen in the AACJM (Daneel, 1971). This concurs with what Gucheche (Interview, 2014) said. For him, the principal leader can say by word of mouth who his successor would be or can write a will to that effect. This is the claim given by Noah Taguta when he usurped power from Abero's sons. As mentioned above, he claimed that one of Johanne Marange's rods (*tsvimbo*) actually spoke and declared him the High Priest. In the same vein, Clement Momberume, the son of Abero, claims that Abero wrote him a letter advising him to return home from England where he was studying, to come and help run the church since he (Abero) was on the verge of death (Ruhoka, Interview, 2014). All this implies that appointment by

word of mouth will or words of prophecy are also leadership succession practices that are used by leadership aspirants to support their claims in the AACJM. However, this practice marginalizes the biological children of the deceased bishop to inherit, like what happened when Noah Taguta usurped power from Abero's biological children. The appointment of leaders through word of mouth or the decased's will has also made the church to be reduced to a family organisation. Therefore, the lack of proper leadership succession plans has brought many leadership disputes into play since potential successors of the deceased can claim anything to legitimise their ascension to power.

Women and leadership roles in the African Apostolic Church of Johanne Marange

One aspect of leadership and succession in AICs that we need to consider is the place of women. In AACJM, the roles of women are shaped around the idea of nuclear family in traditional Shona societies. Within the Shona structures, women are expected to be under the leadership of their husbands. This implies that decision making even on issues to do with women are done by men. Women are kept in the background on policy making (Hackett, 1995). This concurs with what Akintunde (2005:107) said when discussing African Independent churches in Nigeria. For her, the church is the domain of men and women really do not have much to say. The AACJM does not accept women in any kind of power structures and thus one can be quick to say women are marginalized in this church. The AACJM's attitude towards women has made the church to be marginalized as well. The church has been accused of ill-treating women and in most cases the leadership has been accused of promiscuity. This means that the church at times is not taken to be serious but a hood of infidel people.

The other element on the marginality of women in the AACJM is seen through the concept of polygamy and child marriages. In the AACJM a man can have up to as many wives as he wishes, as many wives are considered important for procreation purposes and the growth of the church. The AACJM gets most of its converts through marriage and childbearing. Mbiti (1992:42) explains polygamy as the state of marriage in which one husband has two or more wives. This concept of polygamy sees women as childbearing machines, as well as sources of entertainment. Women are seen not more than procreation objects and that is

why in the AACJM a man can have as many wives as he likes. Disturbing to note is the fact that some of the women who will be given into marriage will be under childbearing age. When the woman falls pregnant, she is not allowed to go to hospital for pre-natal care. Rather she is attended to by older women of the church who will be working as midwives. This on its own marginalizes women.

Mapuranga (2012:22) said that women in African Independent churches are subjected to patriarchy which relegates them to the lowest rungs on the ladder since they are not allowed greater leadership positions. For her, women are marginalized because they are not accorded the freedom to participate meaningfully in the church. In AACJM, women are not allowed to speak in meetings or to address meetings. Rather, there is a dominant male ideology that has ensured that women continue being abstract as leaders and more visible as subjects in this church. The patriarchal ideology in the AACJM which approves male headship has been influential in placing women at the fringes of the church. The church insists that women are so delicate, frail and should totally dependent upon men. This perception is a major factor that contributes to the positioning of women in the margins of AICs (Moila 2002:16). This is because AICs base their argument on the Bible, that is, in the books of 1 Timothy 2:11–15 and 1 Corinthians 14:34 (Amolo, 2003:144). Mapuranga (2012:23) said that in the Johanne Marange Church, women's participation is curtailed more because of the church's appreciation of Levitical laws. These include, as highlighted by Oduyoye (1995:127), laws which exclude women who have just given birth and those undergoing their monthly flow of blood not to attend even the church services. As such, women are restricted in worship on natural and biological experiences. In the AACJM, women are taught to be subordinate both in the church and at home. Consequently, there is no leadership space for women since they are not considered as participants in the leadership hierarchies as well as preaching.

Supporting that AICs marginalize women, Akintunde (2005:108) said that various churches have contradictory rules on the role of women. For her, owing to the patriarchal nature of African society, women are always put in subordinate positions in matters relating to administration and leadership. Akintunde (2005:99) observes that the Bible is used by the anti-feminists to support women's alleged inferiority, polygamy, levirate marriage, the silence of women, and preference for male children. For

this reason, in the AACJM leadership succession history, women do not feature.

Kasomo (2010:126) said that Africa's traditional society was not fair to women since they were used and handled like personal property of men, exploited, oppressed and degraded. They were treated as "second -class" as portrayed in many African proverbs and sayings. In most of these proverbs, women are referred to as stoves, old cooking pots, large wooden stirring spoons, hoes, cows, merino sheep, fields and fires and even dogs, usually with a derogatory meaning. Basic questions traditional Africans could ask include:

- *Does a woman speak in public?*
- *Is the woman considered a person?*
- *When are you going to make me a baby?*
- *Woman is the devil's tail!* (Kasomo, 2010:126).

In as much as the AACJM was born within the African context, it also adopted the traditional African perception of women. So, even though women dominate the pews in African Instituted Churches in general and the AACJM in particular, they are absent from the power structures of the church, which are male dominated (Mapuranga, 2013:88). A dominant male ideology in the AACJM has ensured that women continue being clients in the churches, just as they were in shrines of traditional society (Mabhunu, 2010:64). Patriarchal ideology in the AACJM has defined women as inferior, thereby perpetuating marginalization and oppression of women.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the discussion above, it can be said that the AACJM makes use of different leadership succession practices which include hereditary leadership, charismatic leadership, appointment by the prophet, appointment by word of mouth or will of the principal leader, political affiliation and self-declaration. All these methods used in the church to select leaders are good breeding grounds for power struggles and succession disputes. In addition, the leadership succession practices used in the AACJM undermine the congregant in selecting the leader of their choice. The chapter has also looked at the marginalization of women in the AACJM leadership structures. It was observed that women in the AACJM are taught to be subordinate both in the church and at home. Consequently, there is no leadership space for women since they are not

considered as participants in the leadership hierarchies as well as preaching. Women in the AACJM are not accorded the freedom to participate meaningfully in the church. They are not supposed to aspire to or hold any hierarchical position such as bishop, deacon, pastor, teacher, preacher or secretary of the church.

In connection with the issue of leadership succession practices, the basic question which can be asked is: How can the problems caused by the leadership succession practices of the AACJM be minimised and what can be done to reduce succession disputes in African Independent Churches in general and AACJM in particular? Relating to this question, this chapter recommends that the AACJM should have clearly laid down succession plans and practices which need to be followed meticulously. Such a move would enable church leaders to assume such values as honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, compassion, empathy, dignity, and respect for others (Malunga, 2009). Values reflect the most basic characteristic of adaptations that guide individuals in deciding into which situations they should enter and what they should do in them. By committing to ethical behaviour, the leaders will model ethical values and characteristics for others which do not marginalize them in any way. One should not expect others to exhibit ethical behaviour if one cannot oneself demonstrate it (Malunga, 2009). Ethical values are critical to the success of an organisation, because they serve to guide that organisation's ethical issues.

Planned succession practices would help to inspire a shared vision for the future in a manner which does not manipulate or marginalize others in the church. To reduce marginalization and the plight of church members, leaders in AACJM should allow outcomes from the group to be more pronounced than individual goals. There is need to allow polyocular vision which allows for multiple viewpoints, and diversity of perspectives. This will help to reduce disputes and infighting within the church and thus creating the spirit of oneness and togetherness.

Applying peaceful means to leadership succession would help leaders to search for opportunities to initiate change through people. Rather than being forced on people, change would come through a process of openness and transparency and decisions to change will come by consensus rather than inheritance or declaration and there should be transparency in the decision-making process (Maruyama, 2004).

The other recommendation is that the church should treat people equally and there should be interconnectedness and interdependency between

men and women. No man or woman is an island, and as such it is important for people in leadership to recognise this aspect. Building relationships with others is a hallmark of good leadership in general, but an absolute necessity for good leadership in church organisations. In building relationships, one builds trust thereby fostering collaboration and reciprocity. By accepting interconnectedness, a leader will also have the desire to empower others. Empowerment of others means strengthening others, allowing them to act on their own initiative and believe in themselves. Such a move would reduce marginalization of other people in the church.

So, the church should understand that collective responsibility is key to church leadership succession practices. Squabbles and schisms can dissipate the church's energy and diminish its ability to unite people. Collective responsibility also applies to the fair distribution of benefits and efforts. When some people are perceived as unjustifiably benefitting more than others from the church's collective efforts, this will lead to resentment and strained relationships, adversely affecting team spirit and church performance.

The other recommendation to the AACJM is that they should be able to plan leadership succession in advance. The AACJM must plan for succession in good time and have a clear and effective system for identifying their successors. The successors must undergo well thought, thorough programmes that will prepare them to take charge of the church when their times come. In line with this, the principal leader must ensure that appointments to leadership positions are conducted with complete transparency and accountability. The process followed to select new leaders must leave the people in the church satisfied. The church must have succession plans well in advance to ensure smooth transitions from one leader to the next. All in all, the AACJM needs to train successors who will lead people to the targeted position.

The AACJM should thrive for teamwork for the benefit of the people when a leader dies and a new leader is to be chosen. Church leadership should not be determined by political leaders, but by the religious people themselves. Greed should not be part of leadership succession system. Whoever has been chosen should be supported for the furtherance of the church.

Lastly, the AACJM should adopt a uniform policy on leadership succession practices. The issue of traditional succession practices should not be accommodated in the church. The church should not be taken as a

family property, for this has potential for destabilising the family and the church at large. The principal leaders should not impose or appoint their successor at the expense of the legitimate one. The AACJM should not have diverse leadership succession methods. There should be uniformity in the way leaders are succeeded.

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Ezra Chitando

10 | ENDING THE POVERTY OF THEOLOGY IN ORDER TO END POVERTY IN AFRICA
Some Reflections with Specific Reference to Theological Education[1]

Background

Poverty in Africa has become endemic. It would appear there is an eerie covenant between poverty and Africa. One blueprint to overcome poverty after another has been developed, but Africa remains in the throes of poverty. Different ideologies and theologies have been experimented with in Africa, with the same net result: Africans continue to wallow in poverty. Whereas other continents have registered remarkable progress in the last century, Africa continues to promise its citizens a better tomorrow. Sadly, this tomorrow appears never to arrive. In this chapter, I argue that ending the poverty of theology may be one strategy for overcoming poverty in Africa. In particular, I argue that transformative theological education focusing on citizen's rights and effective leadership holds a lot of promise. I contend that relevant theological education that empowers believers will go a long way in addressing poverty in Africa. This would be achieved through the insights gained from theological education, the skills of responsible interpretations of the Bible and the emergence of community leaders for social transformation. Poverty may be historical, but we can make it history in Africa. There is no necessary connection between Africa and poverty. African citizens who are equipped with transformative theological education will be vital to the struggle against poverty and other forms of dehumanization, I argue. I

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also insist that Africa urgently requires leaders, not rulers. Leaders are inspired to serve. Rulers are oppressive. Quality theological education must give rise to leaders, I maintain.

Introduction

We can celebrate African independence from slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism, as we must. We can tout the emerging African economies and draw attention to "Africa's time," as we should. We could even show that the number of Africans using mobile phones has increased phenomenally, as we might. Yes, we can even gloat about the decisive shift in Christianity's centre of gravity southwards, as we may. But, unfortunately, all these statistics will not change the harsh reality that Africa remains trapped in poverty. Poverty so thick that one may actually touch it. For all its wealth in natural and human resources, the continent of Africa largely fails to feed its people and to give them hope for a more prosperous future. Here in Freetown, Sierra Leone, child prostitutes sleep in graves, *resurrecting* in the morning to interact with fellow citizens. There in rural Zimbabwe, villagers line up the roadside, picking up grains falling from trucks. Over there in the Central African Republic, internally displaced people crowd a small plate, desperate to get a bite in an effort to hold body and soul together. I could multiply the examples, but this is not an exercise in rating trauma! The faces of poverty in Africa are varied and complex, but deeply disturbing. They deny Africans a chance to lead whole and fulfilling lives.

 In the middle of such distressing scenes, it has been left to the young and articulate Pentecostal Prophetic preachers to prophesy unlimited health, wealth and prosperity. With zeal, creative biblical hermeneutics and some stubbornness, they seek to recharge Africans to refuse to give poverty the last word. "You shall prosper!" they declare in the face of rampaging poverty. "I receive!" proclaim millions of Africans, as they hope to climb out of poverty.

In this chapter, I maintain that one strategy that might be effective in addressing poverty in Africa is transformative theological education that empowers the "whole people of God" to become active citizens who demand accountability from their leaders (community, business, political). Citizens who are aware of their rights will not tolerate the ruthless plunder and sacrifice of Africa (Katongole 2011). They will demand accountability and, like Zimbabwean citizens in July 2016 who rose to

challenge their government, will proclaim, "*hatichada*" (we no longer want) and "*hatichatya*" (we no longer fear). Instead of mobilising around only their rights as citizens, they will recognise that, when properly interpreted, their religions promote abundant life for all. They will mobilise around their rights as citizens, as well as members of particular faiths. This will give their struggles spiritual depth and nourishment in the face of reprisals and viciousness by the state. Quality theological education must enable citizens to press for their rights and work for economic prosperity, without succumbing to superstitious, pie-in-the-sky theologies, even when these are expressed in promises for daily bread.

While Africa's problems do consist of those brought by outsiders and those that we as Africans bring upon ourselves, in this chapter I shall focus on the latter. This is not because I do not think that the problems brought by outsiders are of little or no consequence, but that I am convinced that we are better placed to address the problems that we bring upon ourselves. I do accept that the Global North has been exploitative in its dealing with the Global South. I readily admit that the stories of slavery, colonialism and skewed globalization must be kept alive in order to avoid amnesia and to promote vigilance. However, I contend that we Africans possess the agency to redefine our narrative and to act decisively to address our poverty. We must do a lot more to address those problems that we bring upon ourselves, take responsibility for our actions (and mis-actions) and work for social transformation. Blaming others every time sounds hollow and insincere when we are unwilling to introspect and to be honest with ourselves. We must face up to the causes of poverty that we are responsible for, including poor leadership, corruption, violence, lack of proper planning (and non-implementation of plans), low productivity, misuse of resources, wars, fatalism and others. Theological education in Africa must be central to this task of self-critique and truth telling. I readily admit that it is painful to accept that we too are culpable, even when oppressive external forces compound our situation. Nonetheless, we Africans are no angels when it comes to our problems. Yahweh's declaration, "Your ways and your doings have brought this upon you" (Jeremiah 4:18) applies with equal force to us.

By acknowledging responsibility for the challenges that we face (even as we know that "others" are also guilty), we are better placed to find effective solutions. When we as Africans declare our culpability in the many challenges that confront us, then we would have taken the first and criti-

cal step towards resolving these challenges. While the past is critical and, in many ways, influences the present and the future, we must not get over excited when our political leaders want to detain us in the past. Effective theological education in Africa must reflect on the continent's past but must not restrict us to that past. It is the future that is open to all possibilities. With effective leadership, Africa can scale new heights. By investing in transformative theological education, the continent can put its growth prospects on a firm footing or foundation.

Wanted: Transformative Theological Education in Africa

African scholars have been clear in their calls for relevant and effective theological education, especially in the face of sexual and gender-based violence and HIV. Scholars such as Tinyiko S. Maluleke (2003), Sarojini Nadar (2007), Ezra Chitando (2010) and James Amanze (2009) have called for theological education that reflects African realities. Such education must engage in realistic but creative ways with Africa's "burning issues" (Kalengyo, Amanze & Ayegboyin 2013). Effective theological education answers the pressing needs of African people; as they live in their homes, religious groups, communities and nations. Ineffective theological education provides brilliant answers to questions that nobody is asking. Effective theological education enables people to interpret their situations accurately and prevents them from consuming dangerous ideologies. Sound theological education equips communities of faith to use their resources and not rely on some far-fetched promises of prosperity.

Effective theological education prepares the people to critique abuses of scripture, power and authority. It enables them to speak truth to power. It allows them to expose those who sell the word of God to generate money for themselves. Effective theological education questions exploitative gender relations in society. It assists communities to question political ideologies, as well as to ask politicians why the poor remain poor. Communities that have benefited from sound theological reflection are not gullible. Neither will they ululate when problematic political declarations are made. In Zimbabwe, the joke of the professor and streetwise man who were travelling across a forest in winter has been circulating for some years now.

> In the early hours of the morning, the streetwise man turns to the professor and asks him, as they look at the sky, "Prof, what do you see?" The bombastic professor takes off, "Astronomically speaking, it tells me there

> are millions of galaxies. Chronologically, it appears to be approximately quarter past three in the morning. Theologically, the Lord is all powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day. What about you?" The streetwise man replied, "I can see that someone stole our blanket!"

The professor (possibly of theology!) was majoring in minor things! In addition, calls have been made for African theological education to promote ecumenism at a time when the scramble for more African souls to boost the bank balances of particular denominations is intensifying. Alongside identifying the challenges that African women scholars face when trying to access theological education (Phiri 2009), there have also been calls to address the marginalization of disability from the theological curriculum (Ndlovu 2016). The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) has been leading the cause to transform theological education in Africa to take the reality of disability seriously and to address the gap in a committed way. Ongoing reflections on theological education in Africa imply that this area is not suffering from scholarly neglect. I would like to acknowledge the value of these ongoing reflections to address theological education in contemporary times. However, I would like to propose that we need to take seriously citizenship education in our theological training in its diversity. By this, I would like to recognise both the residential and Theological Education by Extension (TEE) models. A revamped theological curriculum would equip future church leaders with political and economic literacy. In turn, they would collaborate with their communities to address poverty in more holistic and competent ways. Further, religious leaders who are already in the trenches (that is, those who have not succumbed to the trappings that come with power) would utilize their sermons, public statements and pastoral letters to mobilise the people of God to reject poverty and to work for abundant life. I argue that for such a process to become effective, there is need for transformative theological education.

My central argument is that the prevailing theological scene in Africa is dominated by a mystical and fantastical approach to reality. Whereas John S. Mbiti's (1969) declaration that, "Africans are notoriously religious" is definitely correct, there is need to have a religiosity that is liberative. Africa will not eliminate poverty when thousands of people consume high sounding but problematic theological beliefs and practices. When the people of God are made to eat grass, stay in refrigerators, buy gallons of "the blood of Jesus" and other creative but problematic acts by the "men of God," then Africa's poverty will be with us for a long time. I

do not deny that there is some mobilising power in the proclamations of the young Pentecostal preachers (Togarasei 2011), but the approach they employ will not transform Africa in any fundamental way. It is only when the young Pentecostal preachers begin to challenge the structural factors that deepen poverty in Africa, particularly the lack of vision and accountability by the political elite, that they will contribute towards the elimination of poverty in Africa.

Theological education in Africa must invest heavily in equipping students to recognise the importance of African citizens beginning to take charge of their continent's issues. Currently, the political leaders enjoy too much freedom to make wrong and harmful decisions without any fear of consequences. Most African politicians do get away with murder. They concoct and dream up economic strategies that deepen the poverty of their citizens. They co-opt religious elites by giving them space on the gravy train. In some instances, they align with this religion against the other in order to answer Jesus' rhetorical question whether a house divided against itself can stand. Many African leaders do not have an iota of interest in the full liberation of their citizens. Rather, they are happy to "liberate" their national coffers!

Transformative theological education in Africa must focus on equipping the people of God with political literacy. This is the ability to understand political processes, decipher the mindsets of political actors and an appreciation of the calculations of politicians. It is the injunction to pause before ululating after a politician has promised to provide high speed internet computers...to schools that do not exist in the first instance. Thus, political literacy implies the capacity to employ a hermeneutic of suspicion whenever politicians make promises. Relevant theological education in Africa today must equip citizens with the ability to track hypocrisy and call political leaders to account.

Graduates of effective theological education and the communities that they serve must constitute a mass of critical followers. Such followers are qualitatively different from undiscerning followers. Undiscerning followers are quick to deify political actors. They give their leaders a blank cheque. They ululate and dance when politicians take them down the garden path. They are easily excitable. A few promises will get them to coin new titles for the politician. They are quick to lionise politicians, even when the politicians never deliver on their promises.

Empowered citizens will agitate when their futures are threatened by reckless policies and politics. They will become restless when ruling

parties in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola and others claim that because they were at the centre of liberation struggles, they have a divine right to rule. Kwame Bediako (1995) called for the desacralizing power of Christianity in such contexts. A liberating Christianity critiques all human leaders. It does not allow ideologies of the divine right to rule to go unchallenged. Religious leaders must be courageous enough to inform presidents that while they love these presidents, they love their citizens more. Fighting poverty in such instances implies exploding theologies and ideologies that promote poverty, such as the myth that certain individuals or political parties must remain in power till "donkeys grow horns" or till Jesus returns.

Crucially, I must hasten to add that citizens who have been empowered by transformative theological education also demand accountability from their church and community leaders. It is expecting too much to envisage that citizens will challenge well-guarded politicians when they are not willing to challenge abuse of funds by local church and community leaders. Since I am operating with the premise that Africa's poverty is *not* due to lack of resources but due to leaders who have been left to do as they please, I am suggesting that the culture of holding leaders accountable must start at the local level.

Urgently Needed: Responsible Biblical Interpretation in Africa

It would be problematic to suggest that the Bible has authored poverty in Africa. Neither would it be fair to attribute all of Africa's troubles to the Bible. However, it is clear that certain interpretations of the Bible contribute towards sustaining structures that engender poverty. Consequently, I would like to argue that the Bible, the weapon of mass salvation, has sometimes been deployed as a weapon of mass impoverishment. I will cite two examples that need to be challenged in liberative theological education in contemporary Africa.

First, there has been a worrying hesitation to challenge politicians to craft and implement better policies to address poverty in Africa. Now, I am not oblivious to the viciousness of some African states. These states have not hesitated to deploy the same instruments of repression that were used against them during struggles for liberation against their own citizens. They detect "stooges of imperialism" everywhere and have justified their heavy-handed approach to handling dissent by suggesting that they are defending the gains of the revolution. This is so, despite the fact

that they demand and arrogate the right to define what "the revolution is." However, their capacity to dominate has been aided by interpretations of the Bible that reinforce the notion that, "all authority is from God" (Romans 13: 1). Although there are counter narratives in relation to this line of thinking, the dominant paradigm has been to endorse the thread that individuals and political parties do not find themselves in power through political gamesmanship, but by divine accord. In countries such as Nigeria, having a "Christian" president implies, for some Christians, having an upper hand over "those Muslims." Effective theological education would draw attention to class interests, whereby ruling elites, whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Marxist or atheist, tend to hang together. They do not intend to commit class suicide and forgo their "turn to eat." It is worrying to note that many citizens are led to consume the myth of the divine election of leaders or parties and are made to endure poverty. Where they would have questioned the source of their poverty, they are placated by being told that the divinely ordained revolutionary icon will deliver at the appointed time. Transformative theological education in Africa must spend time reflecting on the Bible and politics in Africa (Gunda & Kügler 2012) in order to expose death dealing interpretations of the text.

Responsible biblical interpretation in African contexts must challenge readings that seek to make citizens accept their situations of poverty and seeming powerlessness as normal. Unfortunately, some versions of prosperity preaching insinuate that individuals are responsible for where they find themselves currently. Alternatively, they appeal to ancestral curses or the spirit of poverty (Maxwell 1998) to explain their failure to enjoy abundant life. In these schemes, the incompetence, corruption and downright cruelty of the political elites is glossed over. Unemployment is then attributed to some vicious spirits, when flesh and blood human beings responsible for it are ensconced in their well ventilated offices. It is these flesh and blood human beings who must be questioned.

Citizens who are empowered by responsible interpretations of the Bible will utilize the text for their liberation. They will challenge abuses of power and the pursuit of status symbols at the expense of economic activities that will change the lives of the majority. Too many African politicians do not hesitate to embark on egoistic projects at the expense of the poor. They import the latest luxury vehicles when hospitals are in dire need of life saving medication. Citizens seeking to address poverty

in their communities and countries appropriate the Bible to understand why poverty exists. Through Contextual Bible Study (CBS), for example, they critique passages such as the book of Esther Chapter One where those who wielded political power were engaged in wasteful partying and displays of wealth (Chitando 2013). Through asking difficult questions relating to politics and society, resource management and distribution of wealth, citizens are better equipped to understand contemporary political processes and to challenge those practices that keep them in poverty.

Second, it is criminal to placate the suffering masses by proclaiming a soon-to-arrive Messianic era of prosperity in the sea of poverty in Africa by selectively appropriating biblical texts. In Zimbabwe, at the beginning of every year the young prosperity preachers borrow from the Bible and seek to outdo each other in describing the utopian scenes that the faithful would (supposedly) enjoy in that particular year. This could be in the form of gold falling from heaven or some other fanciful happenings that would transform the material conditions of the faithful for the better. For example, Walter Magaya, one of the leading prophetic figures in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, prompted his followers to break into song and dance when he declared that 2016 would be the year of, "overflow and abundance." The same theme was taken up by Emmanuel Makandiwa, another key player in the prosperity movement in Zimbabwe. For Makandiwa, 2016 would be the year of "the greatest harvest" when God would relieve Zimbabweans of their poverty and suffering (Ncube & Saunyama 2016). An analysis of the key messages of this particular strand of Zimbabwean/African Christianity shows that an optimistic approach to the world is dominant (Chitando, Gunda & Kügler 2013).

Prophetic declarations that borrow from the Bible and seek to energize believers to face the world with hope run the risk of preaching, "peace, peace when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). Transformative theological education for the whole people of God must equip them to have sound analytical skills to read the signs of the times. They would not allow the seductive promises of miracles to distract them from calling their leaders to account. They would be empowered to interpret the Bible in life giving ways and reject simplistic promises of prosperity when the macro-economic fundamentals only allow the corrupt and well-connected to prosper. To endorse the promises of prosperity in such contexts would be simply to baptise corruption and rename it blessing.

To declare that, Jesus Christ "became poor so that by his poverty we could become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9) and apply it uncritically in contexts of poverty in Africa comes very close to deploying religion as the opium of the masses. This has the potential to transform the good news into poison. It is vital for theological educators in Africa to reach out to communities and inculcate responsible interpretations of the Bible. It is envisaged that will act as a catalyst for the emergence of community leaders who will champion the struggle against poverty in Africa.

Required: Community Leaders for Social Transformation

Quality theological education that promotes responsible interpretations of the Bible will contribute towards the emergence of more community leaders who will be at the forefront of the quest to address poverty in Africa. I am fully aware that the theme of leadership in Africa requires a separate study. However, I am convinced that there will be no meaningful progress in the response to Africa's many challenges if there is no deliberate investment in leadership. The failure to tackle poverty in an effective and sustained way in Africa can in part be attributed to poor leadership. Theological education in Africa must address the leadership deficit in order to overcome poverty.

Perhaps one of independent Africa's biggest challenges has been the anticipation of political Messiahs who will arrive on the scene, knock out the bad guys, banish poverty and we will all live happily ever after. In some sense, the popularity of prophetic preachers lies in the way in which they mirror this mythical figure. In reality, however, the onslaught against poverty requires a new approach to leadership. Theological education must foster new models of leadership where power is not centred in one person or institution but is diversified. Such an approach must challenge the patriarchal tendency to monopolise power. Marginalized groups, including women, young people, people with disability and others on the periphery must be given an opportunity to contribute towards social transformation.

The task of theological education in the face of dysfunctional patriarchal systems is to mobilise individuals and groups from the excluded sectors to emerge as leaders with the knowledge, skills and passion to address poverty. Community leaders who are dedicated and principled can serve as the spark plugs for the development of their families, communities and countries. They can build on their communities' resilience and as-

sets to promote tangible prosperity. They tap the skills of women and youth to organise and work for improved livelihoods. They draw on their ethical values to challenge corruption and wastefulness by the elite. Mwamazambi and Kanza (2014:3) argue that:

> Transformational leadership is therefore a kind that is selfless and ethical in intent, in behaviour and in action. A transformational leader uses his or her own skills, qualities and values as well as those of others to positively influence the lives of the followers who, in turn, grow into solid transformational leaders capable of transforming individuals, organisations and communities.

Theological education in Africa must generate leaders in diverse fields. Such leaders must be driven by the desire to serve the people of God. Currently, too many rulers dominate the political field. Too many looters burden the people of God. Too many liars lie in wait for the people of God. Too many selfish individuals posture as leaders. Too many clueless people sit in offices, oblivious of the meaning of leadership. I am aware that I might be demonising the political class, but I am frustrated by the spectacular failure of leadership on this beautiful continent. Theological education in Africa must give birth to a new and refreshing generation of leaders.

Africa cries for God-fearing leaders. Not hypocrites who kneel before bishops in the morning and cut the throats of their opponents at night. Not men (and a few women) who are determined to empty the vaults of their Reserve Banks. Not criminals who sell national assets and pocket the proceeds. Not gangsters who gang up against the will of the citizens. Effective leaders. Promoters of development. Collaborators in ending poverty.

Conclusion

Eliminating (not reducing) poverty in Africa requires seriousness and commitment from strategic actors. In particular, theological institutions in Africa must invest in transformative theological education that seeks to harness Africa's resources for sustainable development. In this chapter I have argued that such transformative theological education must focus on citizen empowerment. It must equip citizens to demand accountability from the leaders at all levels. Propelled by responsible biblical interpretation and passionate community leaders, Africa will have a fighting chance in addressing poverty. Recognising the need for citizens to be their own liberators, theological education must empower citizens

to speak truth to power and to insist on having their rights upheld. Ending the poverty of theology will be a significant step towards ending poverty in Africa.

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PART D | HEALTH

Tarisayi A. Chimuka

11 | EMERGING INTO MARGINALITY: THE EFFECTS OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Introduction

This chapter is an assessment of the role of the Church in curbing politically motivated sexual violence during Zimbabwe's crisis decade which includes the run- up to the 2008 Presidential elections. Several scholars have studied the general negative impact of violence on the Zimbabwean society (Kaulem 2011, Longman 2001, Kameeta 2007 and Sisulu 2009 among others). This chapter focuses specifically on the marginalizing effects of sexual violence on women and on the resultant children. It also examines the Church's interventions in an attempt to stop these rape campaigns. The various rapes occurred allegedly at the victims' homes, militia bases or in the bush (AIDS-Free World 2009:12). Some of the rapes took place in secret houses known only to the assailants (Human Rights Watch 2011). Of note is the fact that the rapes were widespread and distributed in the provinces (AIDS-Free World 2009:12). Victims were mainly members of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, their families and associates (AIDS-Free World 2009:12-13). There is some likelihood of counter activities. The chapter argues that the violence in question constitutes marginalization of the individual victims and their families. It weighed heavily on girls. It also throws the children born as a result of these rapes into dire straits. The chapter also argues that although churches in Zimbabwe were aware that politically motivated sexual violence was occurring, they did virtually nothing to restrain the perpetrators, protect its members, name and shame the perpetrators or confront government over this matter. In addition, the violence in question not only affected the victims individually, it destroyed families and led some children to be born into marginality - depraved and unwanted! Even up to this day, very little is being done to bring the perpetrators to book, punish offenders, redress the affected and bring genuine reconciliation into this polarized society.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the prophetic role of the Church. The second section assesses the effects of the abrogation of duty by the Church such as the marginalization of women and the unborn children produced by politically motivated rapes of girls and women. It examines the destructive effects of the Church's fear to confront government over the violations. This brings to question the moral foundations of Zimbabwe's post-independence state and its democratic posturing. The last section assesses the marginalizing impact of sexually motivated violence on resultant children.

The Prophetic Role of the Church

The Church's role in the Zimbabwean society has always been a chequered story (Chimuka 2008:73). At independence, the Church joined hands with government and all other progressive forces in nation-building. However, we must not forget that during the country's war of liberation the Church was divided between those who directly supported the status quo and those who surreptitiously supported the nationalists (Maenzanise 2008:79). Thus, the Church came from the war a fractured entity but eager to contribute to the making of Zimbabwe. Its relationship with the state was also shaky (Dorman 2002:76).

Nation building then, for most people, meant establishing democratic rule and instituting programmes for development in that political and economic framework. The hope was that government was to establish a democratic framework in which all would work to reconstruct the post-war society. As noted by Bassiouni (1998:iv),

> As an ideal, democracy aims essentially to preserve and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, to achieve social justice, foster the economic and social development of the community, strengthen the cohesion of society and enhance national tranquility, as well as to create a climate that is favourable for international peace. As a form of government, democracy is the best way of achieving these objectives; it is also the only political system that has the capacity for self-correction.

The processes of democracy require that civil society, government, the business world and all other sectors of society partner together and spur the country towards development. In the process, citizens were expected to conduct their affairs in equality, justice and in respect of each other's rights. Such activities were expected to take place in an environment of political freedom and the respect for the law (Bassiouni 1998:v). The expectation was that government would provide the much-needed dem-

ocratic space for national reconstruction and development. Where problems were encountered, civil society would become the sound bell of government.

> Civil society comprises organizations of citizens that come together to pursue interests and purposes for the good of all. They include NGOs, community groups, labor unions, professional associations, faith-based organizations and parts of the media and academia. They operate at all levels from grassroots levels at village and community to national and international levels (Commonwealth Foundation 2000:11).

In the case of Zimbabwe, civil society has not done as much as was expected of it in the area of nation building. A lot of energies were invested in monitoring political developments at the expense of economic development. Zigomo (2012:2) makes this insightful submission:

> Currently, Zimbabwe's civil society sector has not done much to mobilise Zimbabweans for the social and economic reconstruction of the country. There are two main reasons for this; firstly, due to their extensive focus on political advocacy at the expense of economic and social advocacy and secondly, due to the underdeveloped nature of Zimbabwean civil society resulting from years of state repression and the economic crisis that eroded the organisational capacity of civic communities for Zimbabwe's national reconstruction and sustainable development.

It would seem from Zigomo's analysis that civil society in Zimbabwe did not harness all the developmental opportunities presented, choosing to concentrate on political development. Even in the political sphere where the civil groups were operational, they were not very effective. According to the AIDS-free World report, they were literally afraid of a government clampdown on their civil activities (AIDS-Free World 2009:13). Since the Church is part of civil society, it is in this light that scholars like Ruzivo and others cast the Church as having a prophetic voice – that of encouraging government to provide the framework for social transformation, human flourishing and well-being.

> From a Biblical perspective it is clearly demonstrated that Christians have an obligation to proclaim liberty, peace and justice for the good of God's creation. This is primarily because God always takes the side of the victims of injustice (Amos 5:11-12). Our theology, therefore, draws insights from the biblical story of the liberation of Israelites from the Egyptian captivity and the theme of the Promised Land (Ruzivo, 2008:2).

The Church, in its prophetic role, is expected to speak out on political and socio-economic issues (Gibbs 1999:5). Following this logic, it goes without saying that by focusing on the issues above, the Church should be speaking out against all forms of human rights abuses against citi-

zens and to implore government to ensure a conducive environment for all to pursue their happiness and well being (Van Reken 1999:198).

The Church is part of civil society and perhaps the most powerful component, although people often confuse the later with Non-governmental Organizations (Malungu 2006:1). The Church in Malawi, for instance, put up a very brave show by blocking a former president from amending the constitution to enable him to run for a third term (Malungu 2006:2). Interestingly, in Africa when presidents launch assaults on civic groups, it is the Church alone which stands in defence of citizens (Malungu 2006:2).

The Church in Zimbabwe, for instance, had noted since independence the occurrence of human rights abuses, which include the handling by government of the *Gukurahundi* debacle. It broke the silence in 1997 with the publication of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) report on the Matabeleland crisis (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010:203). Hence, one of the Church's responsibilities is to "speak out and work out for a society which protects all its citizens against acts of violence" (Van Reken 1999:200). In pursuance of this general aim, the Church has been engaging in advocacy work (Gibbs 1999:23).

If the Messengers are Afraid,
who then Will Challenge the Kings to do what is right?

During Zimbabwe's troubled years, many women were raped by suspected ZANU PF agents, without any protection against diseases and pregnancies, as punishment for supporting the opposition MDC party (AIDS-Free World 2009:10). This is confounding, given that the government of every country is expected to protect its women as they signify the nation (Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, 2012 online). It is also disturbing to note that the rapes were not war-time i.e. perpetrated by members of one nation on the other with which they are at war; rather they were perpetrated by members of one political party against women of a different political party (Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, 2012 online). The international definition of sexual violence is "any violence, whether physical and/or mental, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality" (Womens' Programme 2011 online). Needless to say, this type of violence is common in war times and in the case of Zimbabwe, is traceable back to the War of Liberation and the Matebeleland disturbances (Womens' Programme 2011

online). During the War of Liberation, the *chimbwidos* (war collaborators, usually young women) supported the struggle in kind. The Women's Programme of the Research and Advocacy Unit refers to this as 'forced concubinage' (Women's Programme 2011 online). According to the Women's Programme report, during Zimbabwe's War of Liberation, these *zvimbwidos* (pl) were tasked to cook, wash and have sex with soldiers and senior militiamen (Women's Programme 2011 online). This phenomenon was resuscitated during the National Youth Service Programme in 2002. Again, as the Women's Programme notes:

> Contrary to the values that were supposed to be instilled in the youths that went to these training centres, trainees committed serious human rights violations against women and girls. Girls were allegedly raped at the training centres, including by officials and their male counterparts for whom they also carried out menial household chores (Women's Programme 2011 online).

Thus, it is not surprising to hear that during the violent election campaigns, women of mainly opposition political parties were taken in as 'war booty' (Women's Programme 2011 online). This gives credence to the hypothesis that the orgy of rapes that took place in 2008 was deliberate. Perhaps these rapes were generally informed by the philosophy of defiling the women of the other belligerent in the conflict (Womens' Programme 2011 online).

> Politically motivated sexual violence against women in Zimbabwe takes many forms. These include extreme violence, gang rape and insertion of objects (bottles and sticks) into the women's private parts. In some of the instances, the rape is committed at the instigation of a military leader or war veteran, showing that it is a strategy to intimidate political opponents. Often used during election periods or periods of national importance, it is quite evident that the rape is used as a psychological weapon in order to humiliate the opposition and undermine their morale (Womens' Programme 2011 online).

There are several reports confirming that sexual violence in the form of rape did take place during Zimbabwe's election periods, in particular the 2002 and 2008 elections at unprecedented levels (AIDS-Free World 2009:12). Presidential elections had groups of war veterans, the youth militia and others establishing bases, to re-educate' the people to vote wisely (Human Rights Watch 2008). It is at these bases that sexual violence and other forms of torture occurred. The bases were in every province, in rural areas, farms and townships such as Mbare in Harare. Since the Government did not explicitly condemn or disband them, one is tempted to think that they were sanctioned or condoned by the state

(Human Rights Watch 2011). Thus, this would constitute state-sponsored violence. What is subtle in this form of violence is that rape has always been a very difficult topic playing along the lines of consent (Dube 2013). In addition, some sources even allege that HIV-infected prisoners were used as part of the terror machine (The Zimbabawean 2015). The allegation also goes that this was a closely guarded secret involving the security sector. The Zimbabwean (2015) goes further to say the idea was to punish opposition supporters for supping with a Western sponsored party. The force of the allegation, if granted, is that the state used gruesome methods of torture against defenceless and unsuspecting citizens simply for exercising their freedom.

The story goes that in some cases, the women were gang raped. What was the reason? Either they were believed by the perpetrators to be members of the opposition parties or any member of their families was suspected of supporting opposition parties (Womens' Programme 2011 online). Hence these rapes were meant to humiliate them or to force them to denounce support for their party of choice. To compound the matter, some of these women were also raped in front of their husbands, children and even parents! (AIDS-Free World 2009:21). Other victims were kept at the bases for periods ranging between two days and two weeks and being raped by the militia or the commanders (AIDS-Free World 2009:23). The AIDS-Free World says the victims ranged from five-years old to grandmothers and pregnant women. Of these women, some reported contracting HIV and others became pregnant. These rapes were carried out after the victims had seen their husbands, children or parents being tortured or killed. Thus, in the end all the victims were humiliated and severely traumatized (AIDS-Free World 2009:21-23).

Unprotected sex has problems of its own, what about being gang raped resulting in pregnancy? What is the identity of the resultant child? In the rural areas where resources are scarce, how is the woman expected to raise this child? Rape has various intense effects on women. It makes the victim afraid of further victimization by the aggressor. It also brings shame, and a sense of futility (Campbell 2008:703).

Civic groups allege that the rapes, especially during the 2002, 2007 and 2008 election periods, were a systematic campaign of violence, which was ignited in 2000 at the entrance into the political fray by the MDC party (RAU& ZADHR 2010). Other researchers, however, contend that this was a practice carried over from the conduct of the war (Womens'

Programme, 2011 online). However, this time around, sexual violence was employed to intimidate, humiliate and punish female members of the opposition political party and even their extended families (AIDS-Free World 2009:21). Besides, these rapes occurred in all provinces, something giving credence to the suspicion of an orchestrated plan to break the spirit of opposition politics. This scenario was a quandary in the sense that the police refused to arrest the perpetrators when reports were made (AIDS-Free World 2009:26). Furthermore, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) tribunal did not appear keen to attend to such cases on the pretext that these were internal affairs and not crimes against humanity (AIDS-Free World 2009:40)

Apparently, an endemic culture of impunity had crept into the country (Chikerema 2014:58). Erasmus Masitera (2011:129-30) has pointed at a number of crimes that have largely gone unpunished. These include; embezzlement of funds, abuse of resources, human rights abuses, persecution and torture of people among others. Perpetrators of political violence, even if known, have gone unpunished. For a very long time this has been allowed to happen (Masitera 2011). Some scholars blame it on the approach taken to conduct the reconciliation exercise (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2003:21-2).

> Impunity has been defined as the impossibility, in law or in fact, of holding perpetrators of human rights violations accountable. De facto impunity takes place when the state fails to prosecute human rights abusers due to lack of capacity or political will. De jure impunity occurs when laws or regulations providing immunity or amnesty extend and strengthen the impact of de facto impunity by limiting or making it impossible to prosecute a perpetrator for human rights abuses. Zimbabwe has suffered from both forms of impunity, which has led to grave human rights violations by allowing past perpetrators to commit future crimes, and it has undermined faith in the government, the security forces, and the criminal justice system (Human Rights Watch, 2011:21).

Even the Church, which used to be a prophetic voice (South Afrocan Church Leaders 2003:2), had gone silent, afraid of being caught in the fire. Yet, the Church's role in times of disturbances cannot be abrogated as noted:

> The church's work on violence cannot be divorced from its work on peace and justice. For decades, the church in Zimbabwe has been engaging both the colonial and the post-colonial state in an attempt to avert violence that has claimed many lives, destroyed valuable property, fuelled hatred and divisions within the nation. Church action and initiatives have to a large extent demonstrated that the mission of the church is not

merely to preach the gospel, but to stand with ordinary people in their hour of need (Church and Civil Society Forum 2012:i).

The Church has, through time, engaged government but this role has been shrouded in ambivalence. On the one hand, government has always maintained pressure and divided the voice of the former. On the other, the Church, although vocal, was afraid of going against the government outright:

 ... although the church may play a critical role in opening up space for debate, the state may still co-opt and weaken churches and other groups in its effort to retain hegemony. Churches and church-NGOs relate ambiguously to both the state and to society – in both colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe – and remain vulnerable to political, economic, and social pressures (Dorman 2002:1-2).

As an institution entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation, the Church has promoted a lot of conflict resolution and peace building work at community level. At national level, the Church and ancillary organizations have been promoting the use of dialogue as a means of transformation and settling differences between political parties. However, given the political polarization, complexity and dynamism of the Zimbabwean political developments especially in the past 10 years, the Church's greatest challenge now is to maintain its unity and remain an honest neutral peace broker (Church and Civil Society Forum , 2012:i).

The Church was expected to support society at large especially during the hour of need – when they were subjected to a systematic campaign of sexual violence. But it did not. Unfortunately, sections of the Church were severely compromised in the sense that they became either agents of abuse or sided with politicians (Church and Civil Society Forum , 2012:13). The Civil Society Forum applauds the efforts of the Church to quell political violence, but is aware of the divisionary problem of the Church organizations:

... Zimbabwe the church is weakened by polarization-the difference between those for regime change and those for the status quo. Quite a sizeable number-if not the majority of Zimbabwe's church leaders –clergy and laity have chosen to give more allegiance to their being either ZANU PF or MDC members before their church roles. Besides this, church unity among the clergy especially at national level is not easy to come by as the infiltration of the church by state agents has made the situation worse. On the other hand, church –civil society collaboration and complementarity has been handicapped by differences in strategy, suspicion and mistrust (Church and Civil Society Forum , 2012:i).

The fact the Church body was divided speaks volumes about its capacity to strongly engage government on matters of fundamental importance as politically motivated sexual abuse of women. The recommendation by the Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF) is that the Church needs to put its house in order first in order to seriously engage government on matters of national importance:

> The church needs to be apolitical, non-partisan and re-strategize so that it gives the violence – challenged Zimbabwe another ray of peace. What the church needs most are not strong men and women, but strong institutions that speak to politicians and political violence without fear or favour. Zimbabwe needs men and women of the cloth who are neither greedy nor in search of political favours but are well able to pay the price of speaking prophetically to the current political leadership on matters of violence (Church and Civil Society Forum , 2012:ii).

Some scholars even contend that the violence found in Zimbabwe is traceable back to the churches through their membership (Machoko 2013). As a matter of fact, the majority of people in Zimbabwe belong to this church or the other. Even the leaders in government belong to one church or the other as their presence is often noted. As the Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF) has observed:

> The mass media is full of stories that illustrate the penetration of violence into the heart of family and social relationships. The violent activities of various groups such as the Mbare-based Chipangano militant group backing Zanu (PF) in Harare and the presence of war-veteran leader Jabulani Sibanda in some provinces such as Masvingo in 2011 and the party violence that rocked the MDC during its 2011 Congress in Bulawayo, all include church members (Church and Civil Society Forum 2012:2).

Some scholars, notably Lloyd Sachikonye (2011), contend that the blanket form of the reconciliation policy of 1980, ensured that perpetrators of violence of the past era remained hidden and enjoyed the protection of this magnanimous policy. They were never exposed, neither were they obliged to apologize. Resultantly, when the next opportunity arose, the same people had the audacity to perpetrate violence. This is evidenced by the Gukurahundi debacle, the spiteful and dangerous speeches, racism and violence in present times.

It is noteworthy that churches have done some bit in trying to stop violence in some cases. However, Church leaders are heavily compromised as they have deliberately avoided doing anything that attracts incarceration and pain for standing against violence, especially that which is state-sponsored. It seems they are ready to be persecuted for evangelism and

not nation building (Church and Civil Society Forum 2012:3). Thus, the Church leaders saved their skin when the people they lead were being tortured, raped and abused! Apparently, they were not willing to act (Sisulu 2009:240):

> Concerned about allegations of having been insufficiently supportive of ZANU-PF during the liberation struggle or being 'pro-western', the churches felt obliged to demonstrate their allegiance to the new government. This seemed especially the case for the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), one of whose member churches, the United Methodist Church, was led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who had become Prime Minister of the short-lived Zimbabwe Rhodesia in June 1979 in a power-sharing agreement with the Smith regime. Although some radical elements of the church had had involvement in the liberation struggle, such as the 1970 Catholic Bishops' denunciation of the racially unequal constitution brought in by the Smith government in 1969, and some Catholic priests' interaction with liberation movement forces, there was no generalized support. Those who spoke out, such as Bishop Donal Lamont (who was charged with support for terrorism), were imprisoned or thrown out of the country. The Zimbabwe Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) formed in 1972, with the support of the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR, now Progressio), published pamphlets exposing the repression of the Rhodesian state. But the Catholic bishops did not provide unqualified support for their own CCJP in the pre-Independence era, in much the same way that they hesitated to confront the state over the Gukurahundi report (Sisulu, 2009:240).

The Church had become increasingly discontented with the conduct of the government. This was manifested beginning 1995, when the ZCC trained election observers. Again, towards the end of the 1990s, meetings culminating in the formation of the NCA were held at ZCC premises, while Africa Synod (Catholic building), accommodated meetings which culminated in the formation of the MDC in 1999 (Sisulu 2009:244). When the NCA championed for formation of a new constitution, government countered this with its own draft constitution and conscripted some church leaders on its side. What is obvious is that the Church was seriously divided in terms of its thinking and action.

The years 2000 and 2008 which bracket the Zimbabwean crisis saw a sharp economic decline and heavy political repression. It is also the period where most of the sexual violence took place. The Church began to find its voice again taking the prophetic role. However, the heads of churches did not participate:

> This was largely, however, not a role undertaken by heads of denominations but by the 'middle level' of pastors, priests and 'para-church' groupings. The journey took time and was subject to inhibiting factors of dif-

fering church histories, fear and/or incorporation into the ZANU-PF pro-
ject, and use of resources on other manifestations of the crisis, such as
responding to the HIV & AIDS pandemic and, from 2000, the ever in-
creasing numbers of people requiring food and humanitarian assistance
(Sisulu 2009:248).

Despite the church's efforts to promote peace and to foster co-existence
of the political warring parties, violence has regrettably become integrat-
ed into Zimbabwe's political culture thus affecting present day politics,
particularly the management of elections (Church and Civil Society
Forum 2012:3). The rape of opposition supporters demonstrated the
inability of the parties to defend their women (Southern African Catholic
Bishops Conference 2012 online). The MDC stands condemned for
letting its supporters or members of their families to be exposed to these
horrendous experiences. How could it allow support base to be ravaged
and decimated defencelessly? ZANU PF is also blameworthy for not
respecting the dignity of the nation's motherhood and general citizenry.
These instances of politically motivated sexual violence demonstrated
the short comings of the Church in speaking against abuse and the need
to prevent the marginalization of the weak and vulnerable members of
society. The rape in question marginalized the individuals, their fami-
lies, their political parties and the religious organizations to which they
belonged.

The Church was afraid of engaging the government during the crisis
years (2000-2008), when the political temperature had soared (Chitando
et al 2014:178). This culminated in serious human rights violations –
lives were lost, women were raped, and others got pregnant as a result.
The situation was desperate and was beyond mere talk. Yet, the church,
together with other civil groups decided to go silent when action was
required. Only a few church leaders in their personal capacities, such as
Pius Ncube, denounced government for perpetuating violence. But he
was stopped prematurely. The fact that the Church at large was cowed
into silence and did not confront government to stop politically motivat-
ed violence is despicable to say the least. As John Makumbe has noted:

> Surprisingly, the majority of church leaders are petrified to say this. They
> fear spending just a couple of hours in a police cell for standing for jus-
> tice and against violence" (Church and Civil Society Forum 2012:4).

The fear exhibited by the Church or church related organizations during
the height of political tensions meant that government no longer had
anyone to rebuke it. The ruling party was allowed a free reign. It is in
this vein that the abuse of women of the opposition party took place –

callous and systematic in order to cow the MDC party into submission. It worked. The MDC withdrew from the presidential race!

The Marginalization of Women and the Unborn Children

The politically motivated sexual abuse of women during the crisis years has taken many dimensions in terms of extent and intensity. Basically, it is psycho-social in nature as much as it is physical. Although some of these effects are momentary; others are long lasting or even lifelong (Motlhlasedi 2012:13). Psychologically, the women are susceptible to stress disorders:

> The female may be ousted from her family because she signifies the failure of her community to ensure her safety. In certain instances, she is blamed for her rape and this leads to feelings of shame and further ostracisation. The husband may separate from her because he failed to protect her and hold himself personally responsible for her ordeal. The husband may fear that she has contracted HIV/AIDS. Women, who have endured sexual violence, often resort to abortion and infanticide from giving birth to the perpetrators' child (Motlhlasedi 2012:13).

We cannot tell for sure what the fate of every sexually abused woman was; however, any of the above are likely scenarios. This is terrible by any standard. If the woman in question survived on communal land, and is ostracized, it means she loses her livelihood. With the ostracism, it follows that she is denied access to economic resources as she will likely be divorced (RAU& ZADHR 2010:13) and as a result she finds it very difficult to fend for herself. In addition, the sexually abused women suffer insurmountable health problems:

> The physical effects of sexual violence are often visible and shocking. They include bleeding, and the tearing of certain parts of the body. Many acts of sexual violence are committed in such a brute-fashion that they bring grave injuries which demand extensive and long-term treatment. Survivors endure internal and external bleeding, excruciating pain, and discharge. And if extreme force was used, a broken pelvis and internal scarring is to be expected (Motlhlasedi 2012:14).

Apart from the problems mentioned above, Sandra Bloom also points to the relational health problems caused by sexual assault on the victim. She underscores the impact of trauma on victims:

> A traumatic experience impacts the entire person. The way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about other people, and the way we make sense of the world are all profoundly altered by traumatic experience. And all of

these factors are rooted in our human evolutionary experience as well as our psychobiological development (Bloom 2003:407).

The women risked contracting STIs, including AIDS. Some reports allege that about 40% of those who were sexually abused as a result of political violence got HIV (Womens' Programme 2011 online). Also, of those who were sexually abused, about 7% fell pregnant. Girls as young as eleven or even under were subjected to politically motivated sexual abuse (AIDS-Free World 2009).

Complex situations emerged from this devastating experience. In some instances, the mother would not love the child conceived from rape. In other instances, the respective families struggle to accept these children in love. Researchers such as Zahra Ismail, point out that children born out of rape, be it of forced pregnancies campaigns or 'ordinary rapes', are stigmatized. She writes:

> This has often led to grave consequences for these children including infanticide, abandonment, trafficking, poverty, statelessness, trauma and confusion around identity (Ismail 2008:5).

In addition, the children born out of these rapes are thrown into extreme marginalization in the sense that they are unwanted by their mothers, by the wider family and are born into poverty (Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference 2012 online). In addition, the resultant children are often called "children of bad memories" (Mitchell 2005 online) or "Devil's children" (Simic 2012:87). These children are indelible psychological and social scars reminding Zimbabweans of the evils that men do. They risk creating mortal enmity between the parties wrestling for power. This predicament is well captured by Charli Carpenter:

> Children born of rape and sexual exploitation constitute one of the most vulnerable sectors of the larger population of war-affected children. In addition to the deprivation, violence and insecurity faced by all children in war zones and post-conflict situations, children born of war may also be deprived of fundamental human rights guaranteed to children such as the right to survival, the right to be protected from stigma and discrimination, and the right to a nationality, family and identity. They may face specific health risks due to the circumstances of their birth, and the psycho-social trauma of their mothers may affect their early childhood development. Moreover, because their identities may be politicized by various state and non-state actors in post-conflict situations, it cannot simply be assumed that decisions regarding their care are being carried out with their best interests in mind (Carpenter 2004:4).

Although the problem of politically motivated sexual rapes in Zimbabwe is localized, the children born of these rapes are still disadvantaged in

terms of their paternal identity since as five or more assailants would have been involved (AIDS-Free World, 2009:20). They remain stigmatized as the families of their mothers and the local communities would consider them as illegitimate and labelled as "children of the enemy" (Carpenter 2004:4). Most of the mothers wish them dead as they are 'like trees without branches' (Jones 2013).

Right now, Zimbabwe is a nation deeply traumatized physically and psychologically by the orgy of political violence of the crisis period and beyond. The result of the rapes amounts to a despicable abuse of women's rights. It also implies driving them into dungeons of shame and humiliation. This situation signifies a petrifying level of marginalization. They were humiliated and traumatized and their spouses, if they were lucky to be alive, rejected them (AIDS-Free World 2009:30-2). Their self worth and dignity as persons was destroyed. Above all the nation has shown its inability to value and respect human rights.

Conclusion

The fact that sexual violence could occur at such a magnitude is unpalatable in an emerging democracy. This seriously puts to question Zimbabwe's quest for developing a democracy. According to the Afrobarometer report, democracy works when citizens demand it and when looked by all as the only game in town. Mattes (2003:192) notes:

> Democracy, above all, is a system of rules and procedures by which leaders, groups and parties compete for power, and in which free and equal people elect representatives to make binding decisions... The list of institutions that define democracy is well known: periodic elections, fixed terms for office holders, independent legislatures and judiciaries, a professional bureaucracy, political parties, and civilian control of the military.

There does not seem to be consensus on the management of democratic space in Zimbabwe. If there was, it was going to be very clear how Zimbabwe manages political competition free from violence or reducing violence to a bare minimum (Clapham 1993:424-5). Why were the perpetrators not brought to book? Why were the victims unable to report all these cases to the police? Why were the police reluctant to prosecute? Why were the Church leaders not willing to come out and help these women? There are so many questions that beg for answers.

The Church failed to play its prophetic role due to fear. For a very long time the Church nurtured a culture of impunity among politicians by

not wanting to name and shame those who abused human rights. The Church's own divisions have incapacitated it resulting in its inability to restrain government. In addition, the fact that some sections of the church wanted to show their support for the government compromised the ability of the Church to develop a common front. Most importantly, if most of the people in Zimbabwe are members of some Church or other, then if they were actively involved in committing acts of sexual violence, then the Church has failed big time.

In the teachings of the Church, if one decides to participate in politics, does one become a different person who loses all the Christian values and then returns to them after elections? Something then is terribly wrong in the churches and what they teach their converts. Now since all this has happened, can the Church rescue her reputation? This remains to be seen, but the damage was done! As things stand, the image of the Church as the voice of the voiceless has been severely tarnished. The Church has been also projected as an agent of marginalization against its own members by not standing up against government in the hour of need. Perhaps the Church can still pick up the pieces and design programmes to help those who have been marginalized by politically motivated sexual violence. Perhaps, the Churches may want to assist those pursuing justice to report their cases without fear of being hunted down or even to assist families raise the children born of these political rapes. Above all, the Church may still put pressure on government to respect human rights and stop the culture of impunity. Finally, the Church may make a commitment to monitor every critical space during elections so that such sexual violences will never happen again.

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Dudzai Chimeri

12 | GENDER-INEQUALITY AND THE CELEBRATION OF SEXUALITY: A QUEST FOR A SOLUTION TO THE HIV & AIDS PANDEMIC

Introduction

Religion is one social institution whose influence pervades all other institutions. Religion provides support for cultural norms and can be a means through which change can be effected, although it can also hinder or block change. Religious teachings on the place of women in society may oppress or liberate women in the context of HIV & AIDS. It is the contention of this chapter, therefore, that if women are not granted their rightful position in decision making on sexual matters, the fight against HIV & AIDS could be a futile exercise. The chapter argues that gender equality is a liberating paradigm that proceeds along a path that includes the acceptance of women equality and avoidance of subordination relationships in sexuality. It acknowledges and seeks to detect religiocultural practices and beliefs, which promote women's sexual vulnerability and to encourage an approach that celebrates human equality in sexuality in the context of HIV & AIDS. In this context of HIV & AIDS, it is no longer a case of sexuality as usual. Hence, this chapter investigates how gender equality can be used as a liberating paradigm in the fight against HIV & AIDS. But to understand what we mean by gender-inequality as a vital factor in the spread of HIV & AIDS, we must first define what we mean by gender. We will also consider the meaning of other key terms in this chapter, such as sexuality.

Definition of Terms

According to the American Heritage College Dictionary (1968:556) gender is a classification of nouns into three classes: Masculine, feminine and neuter. When applied to human beings, it refers to the classification of people according to their sex, that is, male and female. Gender-equity is the recognition and acceptance that men and women are equal in their dignity as human beings and therefore, should be treated equally

and equitably despite their sexual differences. Equity implies the concept of fairness, justice, having the same status and entitled to equal rights.

Sexuality, on the other hand, is the condition of being characterized and distinguished by sex. Instead of our society cultivating this equality in sexual matters, male centered definitions of power have left women marginalized. Men and women may contribute to society in different ways but these contributions are of equal importance and are complementary to each other for the existence, growth and development of society. Therefore, they should be accorded equal recognition. There is a difference between sex roles, that is, roles that can only be performed on the basis of one's sex and gender roles, which are roles that have been constructed by society. Sex characteristics and roles are biologically determined, whereas gender roles are culturally and contextually determined. Gender roles are, therefore, dynamic and thus respond to the socio-economic environment of any given time and society.

Gender equity in human life implies equal access of females and males to rights, resources and provisions that the nation offers. In marriage and sexuality, women are not really looked at as if they are equal to their male counterparts. Men are supposed to be sole heads of families. The relationship is that of domination than complementarity. Our civilization, our customs, and our laws have been made by men and they have taken good care to keep themselves in central and superior positions with regards to sexual matters, which leaves women vulnerable to HIV & AIDS. In this vein, gender-inequality is a vital factor for understanding the spread of HIV & AIDS.

Although individual men are directly responsible for their actions, entire communities are implicated in the development and deployment of roles of male and female individuals. The choices that are available to specific individuals are socially circumscribed. This may be illustrated from the domain of sexuality where boys are taught to take the lead while girls are expected to be passive. These socially defined roles are usually played out with most young men appearing to be more knowledgeable sexually. However, these identities need to be interrogated in the context of HIV & AIDS.

Where Are We Now? Re-thinking Human Sexuality

While there is place for silence in one's suffering, there is also need to speak out as honestly as possible about what one is feeling and thinking,

even if it means questioning the purpose of one's existence. It is the mandate of those who are well to provide a listening ear to those who are suffering and empathize with them. It is no doubt that there is a crisis of what it means to be a man. The symptoms of this crisis are to be seen in the predominant abuse of power by males in our culture. In many cultures in Zimbabwe, men are taught and socialized in believing in force and power over women, but the HIV crisis has brought matters to a head. If men continue to dominate, coerce and to believe that this is what it means to be a man, the battle against HIV & AIDS will come to naught. For in these contexts, women have no right and possibility of control over their choices and bodies. Thus, it is our contention that gender inequality is a vital force in the spread of HIV & AIDS.

It has been argued that people cannot continue in sexuality as if things are normal when the HIV & AIDS epidemic is causing untold suffering and death in our country and continent. With the HIV & AIDS related funerals occurring daily, many learned students are graduating into the grave (Chitando 2010) and orphans increasing our family structures, it has emerged that the relevance of this discourse cannot be postponed any further. However, it is ironic to say that gender is the important variable, for HIV infection is increasing disproportionately among women as African religions accord very little space and respect to women. Instead of men standing together with women in the battle against HIV & AIDS, men have generally been socialized to regard themselves as sexual predators with an insatiable sexual appetite. Society appears to condone male promiscuity, while restricting female sexuality. As a result, some men also resist the use of condoms because of celebrating risk taking as a mark of manhood. In this vein, one can be safe to argue that gender inequality is a vital force for understanding the spread of HIV & AIDS.

According to Musa Dube (2000), the status of women in contemporary African societies has generated a lot of debate. African religions have been found to be a double-edged sword on the position of women; at one time promoting them but at another undermining them. However, on sexual matters, certain religious teachings may continue to make women recipients of HIV & AIDS. The teaching on women's obedience to their husbands, for example, poses a danger if this obedience is taken to mean that she cannot say no to sex even if she knows that her husband has tested HIV positive. Some cultural practices that are sanctioned by religion have increased the vulnerability of African women to HIV infec-

tion. There is also secrecy regarding sexuality in general and women's sexuality in particular. Religio-cultural ideologies make it difficult for people to discuss sexuality openly. Furthermore, some cultural practices are tied to African religious beliefs making it difficult to transform them. However, they will be in favour of men.

This study is informed by the contention that the spread of HIV & AIDS in Zimbabwe has followed some faulty lines of gender-inequity. This is critical in a society where HIV has affected the socially disadvantaged population. It is clear that married women are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. Thus, what it means to be a virtuous woman requires radical interpretation in the light of the number of women infected by their husbands. Patriarchal and religious ideologies have contributed to gender disparities that have led to women exploitation in Africa. According to Chitando (2010), Christianity and Islam have worsened the situation by promoting an image of men as the divinely ordained leaders of their communities. These identities are problematic in contexts of HIV & AIDS. The notion of men as sexual predators has had disastrous consequences in Zimbabwe. Cultural factors have led men to regard themselves as having uncontrollable sexual urges resulting in them having multiple sexual partners.

Gender inequity has had extremely unfortunate consequences for women. While society continues to preach the message of abstinence, faithfulness and condom use, African women are suffocating under oppressive masculinities. Men have largely abused religious and cultural resources to continue engaging in risky sexual behaviour while dangerously exposing their partners to HIV. It is only when women stand their ground and have a say in determining their position in sexual matters that the spread of HIV & AIDS can be minimal. Amongst other factors, religio-cultural factors are responsible for shaping and perpetuating male sexual behavior while patriarchal ideologies justify the ethical conduct made by men. The spread of HIV & AIDS in Southern Africa has followed some fault lines that were already in existence prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. Gender-inequality is a vital factor for understanding the spread of HIV & AIDS.

Research has also shown that women are more likely to be infected than their male counterparts for a number of reasons (Weinreich and Benn, 2004:29). These analysts attribute this to physiological differences and socio- economic factors, but most come down to the ways in which African women and girls are socially subordinate to and economically de-

pendent upon men. Gender-inequality is often buttressed by religious and cultural ideologies. While being male is a biological factor, the process of expressing manhood is informed by social, cultural, and religious factors.

Religio-Cultural Practices Promoting Women's Sexual Vulnerability

Whereas it is acceptable for men to be polygamous in most African societies, women are meant to be faithful to their husbands. An unfaithful husband is loosely condemned in African societies as compared to an unfaithful wife for society says of promiscuous men, "*ndizvo zvinoita varume"* (it is normal with men). It is easy for a man in an African context to divorce his wife and get a replacement, whereas a divorced woman is always viewed with abhorrence and seen as a failure. In a family, a man is free to discuss sexual matters or casual relationship and decide whether or not to use protective devices for safer sex, but women would naturally find it difficult to do so. These reasons and many more explanations describe the probable position of women's sexual vulnerability which also makes them susceptible to HIV & AIDS.

George Tiendrebeogo and Michael Buykx (2004:23) suggest the need to acknowledge the impact of factors such as male domination, polygamy, widow inheritance, early marriage, female genital mutilation, resistance to condom use and the low status of woman which may be based on cultural, social and / or religious influences. Polygamy / polygny and widow inheritance are two practices that have a firm foundation in African religions. Having many children has traditionally been regarded as a sign of blessing from the spiritual realm. Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, the survival of the lineage *(Dzinza)* is taken as a priority. The institutions of polygamy and widow inheritance have been designed to ensure the survival of the lineage.

Salvation in African religions is not futuristic. It is achieved within this life, especially through success in life ventures and abundance. Unfortunately, the reality of HIV & AIDS in some parts of Africa has seen polygamy and widow inheritance increasing women's vulnerability to infection. If a husband is infected with HIV and he does not engage in safe sexual practices like using condoms, all his wives are at risk. Women's low economic status implies that they are often unable to negotiate safer sex. At any rate, most married men do not want to use condoms with their wives. They argue that the payment of *lobola* secured exclusive

sexual rights for them. Gender stereotypes also associate the use of condoms with promiscuity. Some women reject the use of condoms because they do not want to be considered as "loose".

Male dominance that is buttressed by religious ideologies is responsible for violence against women. HIV spreads rapidly in contexts characterized by violence against women. South African theologians, Tinyiko Sam Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar (in Togarasei 2008:215) hold that 'the unholy trinity of religion, culture and gender socialization has formed a covenant of death against women in Africa'. Violence against women in Africa is both physical and verbal. In its physical form, it includes rape and sexual assault. Verbal abuses of women are widespread, especially in urban areas. Some men pass crude remarks, portraying women as carriers of dangerous diseases including HIV. Members of the police force itself do not act against such individuals. At any rate, the police force itself appears to have scant respect for women. In 2004, police in Harare, Zimbabwe launched "clean-up exercise" code named "Operation *mahure bodo*" (Operation *No to Prostitution*). Many single women were arrested for not being accompanied at night. All these examples illustrate the dominance of patriarchy in Africa.

Some chiefs in Africa have revived virginity testing as a method of controlling the spread of HIV. Unfortunately, only girls are subjected to virginity testing. This raises questions regarding gender-equity. Where are the boys in such a programme? Signe Arnfred observes:

> In the present situation "virginity testing" appears to place an absurd and unjustifiable burden of responsibility upon the shoulders of very young women, the custom totally leaves out the responsibility of men and poses no challenge to masculinities, it leaves patriarchy undisturbed (Arnfred 2004:11).

Stigmatization

Stigma is yet another challenge that has emerged with HIV & AIDS. Religious interpretations of the disease have tended to associate it with punishment for sin and immorality on the part of those who are suffering. Perhaps African philosophers have a valid point when they refuse to let religion play a role in formulating ethical principles. Some religious groups and individuals have been responsible for a lot of suffering through their teachings that HIV is a result of loose living.

According to Musa Dube (2000:68), this perspective contributed towards creating a second epidemic, namely, stigma and discrimination of those

living with HIV & AIDS, intensifying the suffering of the infected and affected through social isolation, rejection, fear and hopelessness. Unfortunately, stigmatization has followed gendered patterns where women with HIV & AIDS are more likely to be exposed to stigma than men.

In every African culture there is a code of how working women are coerced to provide sexual service to employers. E. A. Stanko (1985:71) asserts that to be women in most societies is to experience physical and sexual terrorism at the hands of men. Women's experiences of incest, rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence become a source of documenting all women's experiences. She cites that women's endangered vulnerability to intimidating and violent male behavior is due to the social position of male domination rooted in cultural beliefs that have seen men and women as occupying different positions in society. Male domination is regarded as a natural right of men.

Gender-imbalance is also implicated in the stigmatization of women living with HIV/AIDS. There has been a tendency to portray women as carriers of diseases. In Zimbabwe, young women have been portrayed as the source of HIV/AIDS. Men have defined urban public space as their own exclusive domain, and women who transcend these boundaries are often castigated. It is from such perspectives that most women are held responsible for the death of their husbands of HIV & AIDS. Urban spaces in Zimbabwe are choking with oppressive gender-imbalance and most of the blame tends to be heaped on women who are often powerless to protest their innocence.

In his study of unsolicited street remarks directed at women in Harare, sociolinguist Pedzisai Mashiri (cited by Togarasei & Chitando 2008:215) highlights the deeply entrenched gender disparities that are at work in African urban contexts. Young urban females are subjected to verbal and physical abuse by men who regard themselves as demigods (Togarasei & Chitando 2008:215). This pattern is replicated across the region with the authorities paying little attention as they are preoccupied with more manly issues of governance. In their worst form, these masculinities find expression in the rape and abuse of women and children. Some men in institutions (military, police, education, church) have abused their socially more powerful positions to persuade or compel women to engage in sexual activities. It is a tragedy that a region that has the highest rates of HIV infection is also recording a high incidence of rape.

The portrayal of women as objects for male sexual gratification and as carriers of disease is also discernable in popular songs and literature

(Vambe in Chitando 2008). In Zimbabwe, Leonard Zhakata, a popular musician, charged that female genital organs resemble a poisoned well, thereby posing a danger to the whole community. It seems as if it is only the female organ that is meant for public consumption and not the male one. Why is the poison seen as being in the female organ only? Is this not stereotyping? The biological difference between male and female has led to gender discrimination as men claim to have the license to do as they please.

Culturally, gendered perspectives have been found stigmatizing women. This means that women are often the focus of study and maintenance of the virus. Women are more likely to be tested, especially when pregnant. It is a law that one must be tested before delivery and knows one's status. This is not so for men. This brings many women in trouble because they will be blamed for bringing home the disease.

From the above paragraphs, it is clear that gender-inequity plays a vital role in the spread of HIV/AIDS. This gender-imbalance informs and facilitates the tendency by some men to have multiple sexual partners and not to use condoms, limit the participation of men in the provision of care for PLWHA (People living with HIV & AIDS) and contribute to the stigmatization of women. It is therefore clear that there is need for introspection regarding power relations since gender-inequality has worsened the HIV /AIDS pandemic. Since individual men can do much to change these structural injustices, there is need to focus on the empowerment of individuals to undergo radical transformation in relation to their self perception.

Apart from compromising HIV & AIDS prevention and awareness programmes, most men do not participate in providing care to PLWHA. Many wives have nursed their husbands, sons, daughters and relatives often neglecting their own health. The situation of African women in provision of care to PLWHA is a sad one as Farley (2004) points out that:

> In addition to being sexually vulnerable, women consistently bear the greater share of care giving for those who are affected by or infected with HIV. It is women who care for the sick and for the orphans; it is women who must see to the dying. At the same time women in sub Saharan Africa do not have the economic, social and political power that is needed for effective response to HIV & AIDS.

In the era of HIV & AIDS, married women need to be empowered to protect themselves. They should not surrender their lives in order to be deemed good wives (*Vakadzi vakanaka*).

Traditionally, care giving especially of the sick is considered to be a woman's job. HIV & AIDS have increased the burden of care and most women find it difficult to cope with them. Cultural factors have allowed men to have minimum roles in the provision of care to PLWHA. Home based care programmes, which have been implemented throughout the region, are in fact, women-based initiatives. Most men do not spend enough time at home to be in any position to provide quality care for those affected or infected with HIV. Cultural and religious factors allow men to seek entertainment outside the home, leaving women and children to cope with the challenges of providing company to PLWHA and all activities that are seen as the responsibility of women. It is important that new theologies that do not offer women as sacrificial victims be developed.

Where Are We Going from Here? Re-configuring Human Sexuality

Factors such as lack of education and economic dependence have increased the vulnerability of women to HIV & AIDS. These oppressive structures need to be revisited and marriages need to be reconceptualized as partnerships. We ought to bring life to a stand still for males and females to set new standards of power, especially in this HIV & AIDS context, which thrives on violence and distorted notions of male power.

 One of the effects of HIV & AIDS has been to make people fearful of falling in love and distrusting one another. The result is that there has been growing lovelessness in our marriages. Because of the concern about the spread of HIV & AIDS, much focus has been put on sex and condoms and less on love. We believe that love is more important than sex and condoms. It could be that in reactions to HIV & AIDS epidemic we are spending too much time and energy teaching safer sex and less time on love. It is high time that men must interrogate their position of power in order for them to be able to identify the cries of women and children. How can men continue to express love of their wives and children and then proceed to engage in risky sexual behavior in the context of HIV & AIDS? What then is the implication of love? Does love involve acting in ways that endanger one's loved ones? If so, it ceases to be love. *Instead, love is to live in a way that respects and enhances the lives of others.* When one loves someone, he/she seeks to respect and enhance their quality of life. Men who are in love with their wives should therefore engage in safer sexual practices. These include abstinence, faithfulness, using condoms as well as reducing the number of sexual partners and

encounters (Dube, 2000). Since HIV & AIDS are a threat to human lives, men are called upon to adopt responsible attitudes in the face of devastating impacts of HIV & AIDS.

HIV & AIDS bring fear and desperation and people under fear and desperation can easily lose their humanity in an attempt to survive. Men as sexual beings must be helped to enjoy sexuality in rightful relationships. Sexuality is one of the most beautiful aspects of all divine plans for humanity. There is strong explanation of love and sexual feelings between rightful partners. The expression does not provide feeling of guilt, fear or shame. Neither do they cause the bride and the bridegroom to hide their love or their practical consummation of it. By contrast, wrong sexual advances and unions are in one way or the other always accompanied by the feeling of guilty, shame, remorse, self hate and emptiness. He/she has let down him/herself, his/her parents, guardians, children, friends, teachers, rightful spouses and God, whether the sexual advances lead to HIV & AIDS or not. Consequently, such sexual unions are usually accompanied by hiding in the bush, under desks, in classrooms or offices, in lodges, in friends and neighbors' homes and dark corners of gardens or disco halls (Dube, 2000).

Too much injustice has persisted in the name of defending African culture. Why ailing grandmothers should be left to fetch water and firewood while boys enjoy social soccer? Why should men engage in endless political bar talk, while women struggle to feed orphans and PLWHA? It is the cries of this author that gender roles are *not* divinely ordained; they are socially constructed and are often consciously deployed. Consequently, they can be realigned so that both men *and* women have a right to speak shamelessly and explicitly about their feelings of love.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that prohibitive barriers should be crossed to create an engagement, which will release those once marginalized from the marginal status, a complex web of sexual negotiations and interactions, forged by imaginatively redeploying men and women's sexual and gender roles. As gender-inequality regarding sexuality is increasingly becoming less plausible and no longer make sense to many women and some few men, collective and collaborative efforts are an ideal alternative. There is need to create space for women to work in partnership with men in the fight against the HIV & AIDS pandemic. We need a

different conceptualization of sexuality where women are viewed not as inferior, but as worthy colleagues in the quest for a solution to the HIV & AIDS pandemic. Moreover, for men to be receptive to women-equality in sexuality does not entail abandoning or betraying their manhood. It simply entails appropriating insights previously unavailable to them.

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Macloud Sipeyiye & Tenson Muyambo

13 | RITE WRITING OFF RIGHTS?
MALE CHILD CIRCUMCISION IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV & AIDS IN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

Male Circumcision (MC) (also known as Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC)) has been viewed in sub-Saharan Africa as one effective response to the HIV & AIDS pandemic. Male circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin or prepuce of the penis (*Zimbabwe Policy Guideline on Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision, 2014)*. Recent scientific research has indicated that it reduces HIV infection by about 60% and various African governments are taking MC seriously. The chapter investigates the proliferation of male child circumcision (MCC) under the banner *pinda musmart* in Zimbabwe in the context of human rights. The chapter argues that while MCC, where there is parent or legal guardian consent, is a human rights issue, the concept of human rights is a difficult proposition in the African context. MCC ignites debates from all spheres of human life. Decision-makers in Zimbabwe are not speaking with one voice on the issue of MCC. Some advocate its immediate stoppage on the grounds that it violates children's rights. Others opine that catching them young would ensure an HIV & AIDS free generation in the foreseeable future.

Critics of MCC forget that the surgical operation is a health issue foremost and therefore an imperative 'human right'. Let us understand what we mean by child in order to put our discussion in proper context. *Zimbabwe Policy Guidelines on Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision* (2014) adopts the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child's definition of a child as anyone under the age of 18 years while an infant is a person who is one year old or less. According to the *Human Rights Monitor* (2002), a child is any person under the age of 16. However, Mwandayi (2014:27) argues that in the African sense, the definition of a child is a social construct and thus value laden. It is not calculated in terms of chronological age but by what role the child can or does play in society at any given stage. The definition of the child thus becomes situational. We

intend to make it clear that a child, an infant and an adolescent can be collectively called children but for purposes of this chapter an adolescent is a person who is between childhood and adulthood. Young people who are 18 and above are beyond the purview of this chapter for we feel that they can make informed decisions on their own in line with the Legal age of Majority Act (*Human Rights Monitor*, 2002).

Culturally, male circumcision was a *rite de passage per se*. It was a transition from childhood to adulthood where boys were initiated. The transition was an affirmation that one had matured, socially, psychologically, physically and religiously and was ready to take responsibilities in the society. We use the past tense here for the rite is no longer the same. There is a paradigm shift in the way it is understood in the context of HIV & AIDS though there are still communities that still practise it from cultural and religious perspectives. Daimon (2014: 294), writing on the Yao migrant communities, concurs with this view when he submits that the Yao view male circumcision as a platform for religious and cultural expression. It used to be a practice to initiate youth into adulthood, combining the surgical act with teachings about their culture. Critics who challenge MCC do so on the following premises:

- It exposes the child to excessive pain, bleeding and possible infection.
- It subjects the child to torture and degrading action of manipulation of the child's organ without their consent and disregarding their human rights.
- Infants and children are not a risk factor in the spread of HIV, among others.

It is against this backdrop that we argue that, in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, the issue of human rights is a foreign import premised on Euro-centric lens. We proceed by way of outlining the socio-cultural underpinnings of male circumcision, critically reflecting on the interface between MCC and HIV & AIDS, interrogating MCC and human rights discourse and close with a conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter is informed by Afro-centrism or Afro-centricity. Afro-centrism calls for all African phenomena, activities and way of life to be looked at and be given meaning from the standpoint and worldview of

Africans (Gray, 2001:3; Asante 2003 cited in Hudson-Weems, 2007: 29). Asante (1991:172) posits that, "as an intellectual theory, Afro-centricity is the study of the ideas and events from the standpoint of Africans as the key players rather than victims." It is a theory advanced by formerly colonized African people who yearn for an African way of approaching life. The theory acknowledges the existence and weaknesses of a Euro-centric and foreign way of interpreting African realities. It argues that using Western perspectives to understand African realities rarely produces admirable conclusions for Africans. Using Afro-centrism allows for an in-depth analysis of the MCC in the context of HIV & AIDS paying heed, especially to its socio-cultural significance which is the missing link with the modern male circumcision.

Methods of Data Collection

Generally, research of this nature calls for carefully selected methods for data collection since it involves issues to do with people's sexuality. People's views on MCC were collected through purposive sampling that targeted parents and legal guardians who consented on behalf of the children and infants. The study made use of some in-depth individualized interviews with some general members of church organizations such as the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ), Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) and the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFMZ). This was done in order to get individual as well as the church's position and views on MCC.

'Going under the Traditional Knife':
A Socio-Cultural Background to Male Circumcision

Africans, Zimbabweans included, are highly ritualistic in whatever they do. The rituals are done for various reasons and purposes. Sibanda (2013:2) opines that all rituals are rites of passage because they have a transformative role. He further identifies two broad groups of rites of passage which are life-crisis rites that effect changes of state of lives of individuals through stages like birth, initiation, marriage and death and calendrical rites that are held for the entire society such as harvest festivals. Of importance to most African societies are the life-crisis rites that transform a person from one stage to another. Chief among these is male circumcision which is still practised by some minority ethnic groups such as the Shangani and the Lemba peoples in parts of Masvin-

go province, Mberengwa in Midlands province and the Tonga in the north of Zimbabwe.

Sibanda (2013:2), writing on the Shangani, argues that male circumcision is a religious and cultural phenomenon that marks a vital transition in the social life of the Shangani males into adulthood and personhood. What this implies is that a Shangani boy can only be assigned duties with trust when he has undergone the 'traditional knife' (Maposa, 2011). For Sibanda (2013:2) MC among the Shangani is part of the traditional initiation school that transforms boys into men.

Traditionally, MC takes place 'away from the madding crowd' and this seclusion nature of the rite demonstrates its sacredness. For the Shangani people, it takes place at 'initiation camps' held in the bush for several days or weeks (Taruvinga, 2014). These initiation camps act as 'a school in miniature', where values and skills are imparted to the *vukwerha* (novitiates) (Sibanda 2013:4). In the same vein, Stevenson-Hamilton cited in Sparrow (1977:395) states:

> ...everything is kept a secret ...After having been circumcised, each boy is put through various ordeals and trials, with the object of teaching him endurance, he is starved, beaten, exposed naked to the cold nights... At the conclusion of the school, they are told that they are now men, that they have passed the ordeals...

This is a demonstration of the ethos of MC as a school in its own right. Maposa (2011:482) is quite insightful as he argues that the rite of circumcision is significant both to the individual and the community. It is a repository of a traditional scheme of education. According to Gelfand (1977:12) MC imparts some training which is pragmatic for the indigenous people. When the initiates finally re-join society, they are readily accepted for they are now fully members of the circumcising community. They are no longer boys, *inja* (dogs) a term that is normally used to refer to the uncircumcised and an *ingami* that is, an unclean thing (Fulani, 1990). This re-joining and re-integration is usually marked by community celebrations led by chiefs, headmen and traditional healers who perform a number of rituals that affirm the resumption of normal life by the recently circumcised.

Mbiti (1991:115) observes that the rite of circumcision is very important as it acts as a bridge that separates an individual from an earlier stage of passivity and propels him into a stage of productivity. This transition, for Atkinson (1999:112), is significant because it is a repository of the broad scheme of traditional education in which parents plan to impart the

needs of their children and also pass on the traditions and heritage of society.

The foregoing demonstrates that MC is a rite that has been in use from time immemorial. It is deeply set in a religious and socio-cultural milieu. Circumcising communities no longer shy away from the rite as it has assumed a health defensive cocoon in the era of HIV & AIDS. The section below is a critical discussion of the interface between MC and HIV & AIDS. It explores how a religio-cultural rite has become a health-affirming practice in the context of HIV & AIDS.

Male Circumcision and HIV & AIDS: Critical Reflections

Male circumcision has recently assumed a new status in the health sector. Research has indicated that there is a link between MC and HIV & AIDS. Rizvi (2009) has developed a theory that circumcision may be a firewall or magic bullet against the HIV & AIDS pandemic. The theory is premised on fact that men derive protection from HIV infection by 60% when their foreskins are removed. Rizvi (2009:23) reports:

> Advocates of circumcision found more ammunitions recently when it was reported that uncircumcised heterosexual males were more likely to contract HIV/AIDS than their circumcised counterparts. The findings based on studies in Africa, specifically Kenya, Uganda and South Africa, seemed to show that circumcision reduces the chances of heterosexual men contracting HIV/AIDS from women by up to 60 percent. The World Health Organization got behind immediately, and the WHO's HIV/AIDS Department director Dr. Kevin De Cock stated unequivocally that circumcision would give a significant 'additional benefit' to men trying to avoid HIV infection.

The findings made at the three African settings cited above have caused a rush for the traditional rite of circumcision. The Zimbabwean community is increasingly becoming a circumcising society overnight with several media outlets running encouraging advertisements such as: "Get Real and Get Circumcised." This results in 'real men,' just like boys in circumcising communities, getting men's status after 'going under the traditional knife'. Evidently, male circumcision as a rite for cultural and religious purposes has become a health issue. Male circumcision has become a frontier in the 'war' against the HIV & AIDS epidemic despite the vilification it suffered at colonization. However, statistics have shown that the prevalence rate among the circumcised is 14% while that of the intact is 12% (*Zimbabwe Health Demographic Survey,* 2010/2011). The

circumcision status of participants was established during pre-test counselling. However, the country's overall prevalence rate for the same age group declined to 15% from 18%, according to the same survey.

Sibanda (2013:13) makes a clear demonstration that apart from the religio-cultural efficacy of male circumcision, the traditional rite has gone beyond identity issues among the Shangani people. It is not only a mark that separates *inja* (boys) from circumcised men but an 'additive benefit' to the health and well-being of humanity. Though Sibanda does dwell much on the traditional side of the rite he does bring in the debate that MC is one of the mitigating factors against HIV & AIDS. He argues that MC for the Shangani 'has the cultural significance ahead of the therapeutic and hygienic elements' (Sibanda, 2013), thus a rite writing off human rights. It is an identity issue that places no importance on human rights.

Maposa (2011) illustrates the inviolability of the rite among the Shangani people and by extension all circumcising communities. For him *hoko* (male circumcision) is again a mark for identity for the Shangani community. It is a way of 'a vital socio-religious syllabus of existential life for the initiates to develop a wholesome pattern of behaviour through education which enables them to live a stable life in society' (Maposa, 2011:483). These insights have only confined themselves to the socio-cultural realm of MC. The study intends, therefore, to complement such studies by bringing the health and well-being paradigm shift the traditional rite has assumed recently. Dube (2006:132) is of the opinion that governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have realized the menace of HIV & AIDS. They have swiftly taken a proactive role for they have realized that HIV & AIDS 'is not just a medical issue, but a social-justice issue that affects all aspects of life.' Having looked at the socio-cultural dimensions of HIV & AIDS, in the next section we analyze the MCC and human rights debate. The section considers whether or not an African child is accorded rights as with regard to health matters. This is done using Afro-centric lens as opposed to Euro-centrism. The cardinal questions to be answered are: Is the concept of human rights African? To what extent does an African child have rights in determining his or her sexuality? Are those advocating for a stoppage of MCC because of its violation of human rights arguing from an Afro-centric or Euro-centric perspective?

MCC – A Human Rights Dilemma?

Human rights have been defined as basic moral guarantees that people in all countries and cultures allegedly have simply because they are people. Calling these guarantees "rights" suggests that they attach to particular individuals who can invoke them, that they are of high priority, and that compliance with them is mandatory rather than discretionary. Human rights are frequently held to be universal in the sense that all people have and should enjoy them, and to be independent in the sense that they exist and are available as standards of justification and criticism whether or not they are recognized and implemented by the legal system or officials of a country (Nickel, 1992:561-2). The research by WHO (2009) undertaken to find effective interventions in curbing HIV & AIDS has shown that male infant circumcision and young adult circumcision provides considerable amount of protection against contracting HIV. This makes male circumcision important in high risk areas such as sub-Saharan Africa. World Health Organization/United Nations Aids Information Dissemination Services (WHO/UNAIDS) has recommended rapid scale-up of male circumcision in high HIV prevalence countries that include Zimbabwe to maximize intervention effectiveness at a population level. To ensure the sustainability of this protective effect in the long-term, WHO/UNAIDS and UNICEF also recommend that early MCC is implemented in parallel. There are no set age limits for male circumcision as a rite of passage into manhood although the majority of males among the circumcising groups are done to novitiates aged between 12 and 22 years, sometimes after sexual debut.

It is opined by medical experts that infant circumcision and young adult circumcision provide a large degree of protection from contracting the HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. An infant, in addition to earlier definitions, also refers to a school child between the ages of five and seven; a very young child or baby where infancy refers to the state or period of early childhood or babyhood (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*). There is no unanimity on the definition of a young adult. However, the general consensus is that a young adult is a person who has not yet grown up fully but who is too old and mature to be considered a child; a young adult is a teenager. An example of a young adult is a 14-year-old boy or girl (http://www.yourdictionary.com/young+adult).

Nonetheless, infant circumcision is held to be more effective as the procedure is carried out long before the individual becomes sexually active, eliminating the risk associated with sex during the healing period. With

young adults, the strategy may be counterproductive as there are chances that the surgical operation may be done after sexual debut and therefore the person is already exposed to the threat of HIV. Young adults also have high chances of risk of having sex during the healing period. The procedure in infants is also quicker and easier to perform as compared to adult circumcision. The convenience is credited to the availability of various surgical devices that can be used to perform MCC more simply. These devices can also be used by health-care personnel other than doctors, making infant circumcision potentially more accessible than adult male circumcision. Surgical adverse events and post-operative complications tend to be fewer in MCC compared to adult male circumcision. Furthermore, infant circumcision is much cheaper and therefore likely to be a cost-effective HIV prevention intervention (www.ncbi.nlm.nih. gov/pmc/articles/PMC3288096/).

In the contemporary society, infant circumcision in particular, has been met with mixed feelings. There is a popular line of argument that this surgical operation infringes on human rights as it is held to be an affront to the dignity and intactness of the human body. Adult male circumcision, has, however, not attracted strong criticism as it is invariably performed with their consent, except for isolated cases where it can be due to coercion for different reasons. In the case of infant circumcision, the story is different as it brings the question of consent to the fore and therefore is in a head-on collision with the human rights mantra. Infants cannot make informed decisions and are legally incapacitated to do that because they have not come of age for any decision-making. In South Africa, for example, parental consent is obligatory for males under 21 years of age. Generally, fathers would make the ultimate decision regarding infant circumcision although mothers and extended family can have influence. Critics of infant circumcision have voiced concern about deciding for a surgical operation that permanently transforms the appearance of a bodily organ. A Zimbabwean Senator, Mlotshwa, once argued that the "practice infringed on children's right of choice and was tantamount to genital mutilation" (Langa, 2014). For the critics, MCC is not inspired by medical reasons but based on what they hold to be controversial scientific research findings. They (critics) opine that infant boys and girls deserve legal protection against genital cutting culture. The infants are likely to be traumatized by the procedure and to be psychologically affected when they come of age and realize that somebody had to give consent to a life-long artificial mark on their organs. From a gen-

der perspective, male circumcision in general does not reduce women's infection risk. It provides partial protection against female to male transmission and not the other way around, yet men are more likely to infect women for cultural reasons among African social groups.

Furthermore, the surgical operation has a chain effect as it has a propensity of causing absenteeism at school during the healing period (though there has been tremendous improvement with the introduction of the use of the ring); infringing the children's rights to education in the process. Some skeptics of male circumcision in general and infant circumcision specifically, quiz the generosity of the sponsors of the programme who bank-roll a controversial programme ahead of other areas of critical need that include maternity health care. In Zimbabwe, the circumcision programme is funded primarily by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Health Organization (Dube 2014). These voices call for caution in accepting this service since it is donor-driven and the motive of the countries and individuals paying for it are unclear. Senator Mlotshwa says the "future generations will judge us and... history will judge us on why we allowed the circumcision of children to continue" (Dube 2014).

All the criticisms that have been levelled against male circumcision in general and infant circumcision in particular are plausible. However, they need to be viewed in the context of the HIV & AIDS crisis that has shaken the medical fraternity world over in an unprecedented fashion in the history of humankind. That the right to make a choice is denied these infants is unequivocally true, but if the parental consent is done in the interest of saving life, it is noble to err on the side of caution. Some children enter into sexual relations earlier than their parents thought and statistics show that the impact of HIV on the younger generation is enormous. If indeed circumcision provides some partial protection as some research results have shown, conversely future generations and history will judge the current generation on why we did not equip them with circumcision. Article 3 of the UNCRC stresses that the best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for the children (UNICEF 2014). There are a number of decisions that are made on behalf of children, some not even in the context of serious threatening problems like HIV & AIDS.

The levels of anxiety around the HIV & AIDS crisis motivate people to embrace MC and infant circumcision as a 'human right' in the same way as they do with immunization programmes. In Zimbabwe, for example, it is reported that there has been an increased number of infant circumcisions being conducted privately as well as the number of parents requesting MCC, something previously uncommon (NIH 2014). The available statistics that the traditionally non-circumcising countries of the East and Southern African region including Zimbabwe, are the epicentre of the HIV & AIDS pandemic as compared to the circumcising North and West Africa, notwithstanding other factors, may speak volumes about the benefits of the surgical procedure. The statistics are too tempting to ignore.

It is also crucial to explore the ambivalence of infant circumcision in light of the fluid nature of the term 'children' in Africa. There is no specified age range of childhood and is the sole responsibility of the extended family with the guidance of the elderly members of the social group to groom its young ones in the manner they approve and to continue to have influence on decisions binding on their lives even if they are grown-ups. If decisions are made for mature members of the African family unit, then it follows that they are more worried about the safety of the infant circumcision procedure than human rights issue.

The dilemma of the interface of infant circumcision and human rights is exacerbated by cases of young adults running away from the non-consenting parents to go under the knife for protection against HIV. These parents might either be afraid of the potential dangers of the procedure or are just resolute on defending their non-circumcising culture as in the case of a David Mumbita (2014) of Zambia (26) who was disowned by family members for having undergone circumcision. But the man maintains that, "I am sure that even the old man … if he lives long, will be tempted to go for male circumcision!" There are also cases of chiefs who underwent circumcision for the same reasons. One would ask that if young adults and elderly men are realizing the value of circumcision in the age of HIV & AIDS, is it not noble to increase access of this procedure to the infants before they become sexually active? Is leaving infants to become of age to make their own decision in the case of the crisis not a risk that the current generation will ruefully regret? Leaving the youngsters until they are 18 might be akin to saying they should be "left to first contract sexually transmitted diseases and HIV before they are allowed to get circumcision as one of the proven means of re-

ducing the incidences of contracting and transmitting venereal and other ailments associated with sex" (Muwani, 2014). The Legal Age of Majority Act is also strongly contested in the context of the African conception of childhood as shall be discussed below. Crisis situations demand bold decisions to save life! Life is a human right and efforts to prolong it amidst health threats in the mould of HIV should never be considered a breach, but pro-life interventions.

The stress of human rights is on the protection of the individual person against powerful institutions of the state, society, religion and many other institutions. They guarantee freedom of the individual agency from torture, inhuman treatment and discrimination, freedom of opinion and expression, free choice of spouses and so on. Individualism is at the core of the universal declaration of human rights. The notion of human rights has been associated with Western thought, culture, religions and civilizations because of the emphasis on the individual person. The human rights issue is autonomous, but the African is not autonomous. An African person is never regarded as a loose entity to be dealt with strictly individually. Mbiti's (1969:16) popular axiom, *I am because we are, since we are therefore, I am* underscores this potential. One is an individual on the one hand and one expresses the order in which they are born on the other hand. Personhood or humanity is more than a soul and a body as society makes him susceptible to control (Sibanda, 2013: 6). In this respect, it is not easy to talk to an African about human rights.

Infant circumcision is not a human rights threat *per se*, but a pro-life rite. The Africans are a life loving lot, and passionately committed to pursuance of a more purposeful and meaningful life undergirded by health and well-being. Thus, those who look at circumcision from an Afrocentric perspective focus not so much on criticism of circumcision as infringing on human rights in the context of HIV & AIDS, but on the safety of the surgical procedures. If safe circumcision delivers abundant life, then it should be an imperative human right. Ensuring good health is enshrined in the human rights and UNCRC pacts that, ironically, are used to thwart circumcision that is intended to deliver good health in the context of HIV. Namatai (2014), responding to a suggestion to ban infant circumcision, argues that those who do not want their children to be circumcised should refuse "...with their children that's their decision to make but to ban for everyone is a violation of human right to access health care."

Circumcision is not a new thing as it is a cultural practice among some social groups in Zimbabwe and southern Africa. Traditionally, circumcising tribes in Zimbabwe include the Xhosa, Chewa, Venda, Remba and the Shangaan (Sibanda, 2013). These social groups have functioned effectively with the practice for thousands of years. The first four groups are not opposed to MCC but feel that they would prefer the procedure be performed by someone who was themselves circumcised and of the same tribe. The Shangaan older men, the dominant traditionally circumcising population in Zimbabwe, are strongly opposed to MCC not because of infringement on human rights but on the basis that it distorts the essence of circumcision by separating the rite from the comprehensive adolescent initiation rites as well as breaching taboo as women are allowed to nurse the wound (Sibanda, 2013).

Safety-related concerns are a worrisome issue surrounding the circumcision procedure. There are concerns about the possibilities of complications that include excessive bleeding and keloid (an area of irregular fibrous tissue formed at the site of a scar or injury) scarring. Recently in Zimbabwe there was a case in the media of a Murambinda infant who had a botched circumcision in Mutare and had to be rushed to Harare for medical attention (www.voazimbabwe.com/content/zimbabwe-medical-male-circumcision-child-illness-after-procedure/2443675.html, accessed, 10-09-2014).

Furthermore, there are fears surrounding the handling of the foreskin after the procedure and this constitutes an ethical concern. Senator Mlotshwa had this to say, "Most of the doctors who circumcise are not circumcised themselves and where do they put those foreskins?" The issue is not very much on whether circumcision has a bearing on human rights, but rather on the need to maintain the comprehensive nature of the cultural practice, safety and ethical dimension surrounding the handling and disposal of the severed foreskin.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter has argued that the emphasis on human rights in the context of MCC is misplaced. This is so because MCC has become a health-affirming practice in the context of HIV & AIDS. That the right to make choice is denied these infants is unequivocally true, but if the parental consent is done in the interest of saving life, it is noble to take the risk. MCC ceases to be a human rights threat *per se*, but a key factor in miti-

gating HIV & AIDS. However, male circumcision has lost its socio-cultural context where it was a school in miniature for the initiates. That traditional scheme of education which imparted some pragmatic training for the indigenous people is the missing link with the modern male circumcision practice, where the surgical operation has just become a mere cutting of the foreskin. Finally, in light of the above findings, the study suggests the following recommendations.

First, the vitality of male circumcision as a socio-cultural rite must be integrated with the modern circumcision practice for it to remain a meaningful and holistic package. MCC as an enduring health matter must be practised as it ensures a sound health and well-being of communities. Despite a barrage of criticisms, MCC should be considered a life-affirming and proactive intervention strategy against HIV & AIDS. Second, MCC should be administered when school children are on holidays so that those circumcised do not miss classes during the initial stages of healing. Third, there is need for the repackaging of MCC where the 'initiates' (adults) get adequate education as evidence has shown that some become promiscuous after circumcision as they regard MCC as an 'invisible condom'.

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14 | AFRICAN THEOLOGY OF MENTAL ILLNESS: AN ONTOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY FROM THE MARGINS?

Introduction

Worldwide, mental illness is part and parcel of human life and is a condition that denotes an unusual or abnormal behaviour of a person who suffers from serious cognitive disorders. Even during the classical times, writers like William Shakespeare acknowledged that mentally challenged people existed and were part and parcel of the normal society. This is shown by his varied depictions of mentally ill persons in some of his plays such as *Hamlet, King Lear* and *Macbeth*. Western and other countries also celebrate the so-called "April *Fool's* Day" on the 1st of April annually where people are at liberty to talk like mentally challenged people, airing their views. This resonates with the idea that a society without mentally ill people is somewhat incomplete or abnormal. However, from a religious point of view, the Western approach to mental illness seems to place a dichotomy in an individual's life with regards to one's health and well-being. This perception provides the reason why mentally ill people are secluded from mainstream society and condemned to live in various psychiatric institutions. This is different from the traditional religious approach in Africa. The traditional African approach holds that a normal society constitutes both the well-balanced and mentally ill people interacting. These people are interrelated, and they complement each other. In fact, Shona wisdom teaches, "*Une benzi ndeane rake rikadzana unopururudza*" (The parent of a mentally challenged person enjoys his/her dances and when he dances, the parent ululates). In the wake of this observation, this chapter seeks to contextually present the place of mentally ill people in society by drawing attestations from the contemporary Shona society in Zimbabwe. Though mental illness has been in existence since the remote past in Zimbabwe, a look at the post-2000 era shows that mental illness cases are on the increase (www.refworld.org/dfid/b6fe323d.pdf). It has been recorded that about 10% of Zimbabwe's population suffers from some kind of mental instability as a condition. In fact, in 2014, the Director of the Zimbabwe National Association for

Mental Health, Ignatius Murambidzi, claimed that at least one in every four Zimbabweans had a mental health-related illness (*The Patriot,* 2014:33).

Zimbabweans hold several perspectives of mental illness. For instance, in rural communities, Ereketai Chipembere (2014) of Manzvire in Chipinge claimed that mental illness is viewed simply as insanity and that insane people are condemned to live in the margins of society. The implication is that mentally challenged people are regarded as social misfits. This chapter intends to re-configure the place of mentally ill people in society by assessing whether mental illness is always a curse (misfortune that comes as retribution) or there are also virtues (admirable attributes) associated with the condition.

The quandary of mental illness

The quandary of mental illness is associated with the definition of the condition itself. The struggle to come up with a usable characterisation of mental illness has been the priority of researchers and policy makers. However, the condition cannot be defined as something different from physical illness for the brain is a part of the physical body. This dovetails with the African holistic notion of health and well-being among the Shona which denies the separation of the mind from the body. Similarly, to write about mental illness as though it is one condition is an oversimplification of the condition. In the Shona culture, particularly the Ndau of eastern Zimbabwe, people's illnesses are understood to have physical, mental, social, spiritual and supernatural causes. In this way, mental illness encompasses much diversity, from relatively minor forms of emotional distress to often debilitating disorders that substantially interfere with the ability to function over long periods of time. This suggests that cure for mental illness should extend beyond physical and mental symptoms to address the social and spiritual aspects, too. So, using the term mental illness is simply a convenient device; it is not an adequate reflection of the heterogeneity of conditions conceived as coming under the umbrella term (https://www.pearsonhighered.com).

The question that arises is, what constitutes mental illness? In an endeavour to unpack this condition, we shall consider both the Western and Shona perspectives. One Western approach to characterising mental illness is to conceive it as a deviation from the normal reactions or feelings. The difficulty with such an approach is that what is normal or devi-

ant is nothing but socially and culturally defined. For example, it is surprising to see a person who was born and bred in an urban environment, especially in an affluent suburb, exhibiting traditional lifestyles in their behaviour in terms of dressing, eating habits and language. Such an incongruity might indeed suggest mental illness for there is a discord between this person's actions and the expected socio-cultural values of an urban life. But for a person born and bred in the village, traditional lifestyles are normal.

According to Muchinako *et al* (2013:161), the Western understanding of mental illness is defined in the Roget's Thesaurus as "...any of various conditions characterized by impairment of an individual's normal cognitive, emotional or behavioural functioning, and caused by social, psychological, biochemical, genetic or other factors, such as infection or head trauma. Mental illness is also called emotional stress, mental disease and is sometimes called mental disorder." Basing on this understanding of mental illness, it is not surprising that in Zimbabwe there is a centralized system that is more inclined to big hospitals and institutions such as Ngomahuru in Masvingo, Ingutsheni in Bulawayo and Annex Hospital in Harare where mentally ill persons are housed. According to RRT Research Response (2009), many people perceive mental health institutions as the product of white European culture.

From an African perspective, Muchinako *et al* (2013:161) posit that the Shona have an understanding somewhat similar to this Western view on what mental illness is. 'Madness' *(kupenga)* and 'mad person' (*benzi/ mupengo*) are the commonly used definitive terms. They, however, point to the condition of mental illness which is known and understood to affect the brain in such a way that the person will behave in a way that disregards social and cultural norms and values of behaviour. Among the symptoms of mental illness are destructive or powerful physical behaviours. So, the *'benzi'* may display a violent disposition and go on to attack or harm people and objects and sometimes injure himself/ herself in the process. In some cases, the '*benzi*' may be passive and oblivious of any danger he or she might be exposed to or he/ she may pose to others. Thus, a mentally ill person may have typically infantile motives and act on perceptions and states of mind that caricature those of early life (Paul, 1988). These are characterized by loss of self-control, on account of which the patient performs acts that are at variance with his/ her disposition, ideas and desires commensurate with his/ her age.

The above situations presuppose that the existence of mental illness is a tangible or concrete phenomenon, dismissing the possibility that mental illness may simply be the product or expression of alternate truths or different expressions of reality. In other words, one may question whether the behaviour of the individual is abnormal enough to be located outside the realm of normal human functioning and whether the reason behind this is truly 'madness'? This question is ultimately philosophical in essence and ultimately unanswerable in scope, from a strict ontological and metaphysical standpoint. We attempt it by giving a general taxonomy of mental illness below.

General taxonomy of mental illness

A phenomenological synopsis of mental illness points to numerous causes. Knight (1970) believes that the symptoms of mental illness are assorted that the accidental cannot always be distinguished from the essential. Undeniably, the nervous system and the mental functions are so complex. The current chapter deals with the most important forms of mental illness which are most prevalent and those which are clearly distinguished from one another (*www.newadvent.org*).

First, the oldest classification of mental illness is into *melancholia and mania*. Depression is noted to be the overriding frame of mind in melancholia, in mania it is exaltation. Principal features of melancholia are mental distress and impulses to suicide. It includes probably one-half of all the cases of insanity. In mania, the morbidly elated mood may vary from excessive cheerfulness to violent rage. Monomania, which may parade characteristics of both melancholia and mania, is a travesty of the intellective rather than the affective faculty and its chief manifestation is delusion (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10321a.htm*)*.

Second, there is *paranoia,* in which the delusions are systematic and persistent, while the general intellectual processes may remain substantially unimpaired. The above-mentioned forms of insanity are acquired, in the sense that they occur in normally developed brains. The third type is *congenital insanity or feeble-mindedness*. It is divided chiefly, according to its degrees into imbecility, idiocy, and cretinism (www.newadvent .org*)*. The fourth one is *schizophrenia*. According to Loewenthal (2006), approximately 1% of the population worldwide suffers from schizophrenia in their lifetime, with the onset of the illness occurring usually in late adolescence or early adulthood. Schizophrenia is characterized by a

range of symptoms but usually it is commonly associated with severe disruptions to a sufferer's mental functioning. The disturbed behaviour may be associated with delusional thinking and hallucinations.

The fifth type of mental illness is associated with *dissociative disorders,* pointing out that the fundamental feature is a disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity or perception of the environment (Loewenthal, 2006:105). It is easy to identify people with dissociative orders because of their memory loss. The victims can succumb to sudden disturbances which sometimes may also be gradual, transient or chronic. This is said to follow severely stressful events, and the sufferer may be unable to recall the event even though there is no organic basis for the amnesia.

Religious perspectives on mental illness

Two perspectives can be advanced to explain the phenomenon of mental illness. There is the Western perspective which is informed by the power of Western religion and culture. It posits that religion contributes to psychotic breakdown (Wilson, 1997). The argument here is that the mental-biological changes associated with meditative practices may contribute to a pathway which leads to the onset of mania. Yorston (2001) supports this insight when he reached a similar conclusion where he claimed that religion can be a precipitating factor in some affective mental disorders. Loewenthal (2006:67) agreed with this observation recognising that women are more likely to suffer from depression than men. This suggests that gender differences in the prevalence of depression might be the result of culturally and religiously specific factors. This can be realized in women's roles as wives, mothers and carers. He further suggests that the heavy burdens of care may make women more vulnerable to depression. It can be argued that depression exists in all cultures and societies and sometimes it includes physical features such as fatigue, weight loss and sleeplessness. However, a closer look at depression points to the idea that men are not immune but are only reluctant to disclose depressive symptoms, either because this may put employment at risk or because they may be seen as a sign of weakness. In addition, women have also been found to rate higher on religiosity than men (Brown, 1987; Francis, 1993; Paloutzian, 1996; Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997). This is a widely confirmed insight among Christians where women are more religiously active than men.

Moreover, studies have shown that more women than men get attacked by anxiety which contributes to mental disorders. Anxiety itself has been reported as having rather mixed relations with religiosity. The higher neuroticism of religious people has been shown to be an artefact of gender: women are higher on neuroticism than are men, and are also higher on religiosity (Francis, 1993). Anxiety is a burden on the mind. The more frightened a woman gets, the more her mind deteriorates. In being so fearful, the woman may get the work wrong and her mind may deteriorate. As a result, she might become 'crazy' (Gilbert *et al.*, 2004: 123).

The African (Shona) perspective of mental illness

There is an indigenous African perspective of mental illness that conceives a close interconnectedness between humanity and nature. From a cosmological belief, the Shona are conscious that *kana mwedzi wave mutete* (when the moon is falling), the social behaviour of certain people change. In the Shona worldview, religion and spirituality constitute key elements of mental health practices. Cure extends beyond physical symptoms to address social aspects, too (Machinga, 2011:1). As informed by culture, mental illness can be caused by the angry ancestral spirits and *ngozi* (avenging spirit). In the Shona society, it is believed that n*gozi* has made some people to experience mental challenges. Many of our informants also pointed out that witchcraft practices cause mental illness among people.

There is also mental illness that is common to people in business ventures. It is often believed that several African businesspeople are involved in the use of *juju* or *mutombo* (indigenous concoctions) to boost their business prospects. Benjamin Muyambo (2014) of Tuzuka Village in Chipinge confirmed that the misuse of *mutombo* often results in the entrepreneur's relatives, especially innocent children and wives, becoming mentally challenged. Most respondents concurred that some of the indigenous businesspeople had at least a mentally ill person in their families. This shows that the phenomenon of mental illness is acceptable by some individuals within the indigenous business community among the Shona people in Zimbabwe. Shepard Masendeke (2014) of Mutiusinazita Business Centre in Buhera pointed out that some local businesspeople were comfortable with having a mentally ill person in their homes, as long as they got high financial returns from business ventures.

From the interviews carried out, we gathered that the use of goblins *(zvikwambo)* by indigenous people also contributed to mental illness. In a witch hunt exercise that was carried out by a group of traditional healers called Gaulani and another one by the name Tsikamutanda in Buhera and Chipinge districts of Manicaland province respectively, it was noted that there were some mentally ill people whose relatives owned goblins for various wealth-making related ventures. Charles Marashe (2014) confirmed that mental illness was understood to be boosting the business ventures of goblins owners. Thus, mentally ill persons are made to perform certain rituals with the goblins to ensure that the goblins are always satisfied and live to their purposes.

Shona hermeneutics of mental illness: virtue or vice

The indigenous Shona people uphold a dual perspective on conception of mental illness. Mental illness is perceived as both a curse and a virtue. It is common to hear people using *benzi* in the following labels; one is 'psychopathic', one is 'crazy', and one is 'lunatic'. Such terms evoke negative feelings of danger and unpredictability, which ultimately lead to more stigma and increase social distance between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal'. Some terms hint at criminality or violence, even though the vast majority of people who experience a mental disorder are not dangerous, and so this association has been overemphasized (Foucault 2006). This hostile attitude promotes social withdrawal for the mentally ill. Labelling has a detrimental social effect, and this is why those with mental challenges resort to isolationism.

In the course of this study we observed that mentally ill people are an outer limit and there are several people who maintained that because of their mental state, mentally ill people are not worthy to be appreciated and should not be recognised. This has an effect of relegating mentally ill people to nothingness. Often in their assessment of the mentally ill, the Shona people say *"hapachina munhu paya, openga"* ("there is no person there, s/he is mentally ill"). This suggests that, in the Shona people's assessment, mental illness is equivalent to cessation of human life. No matter how important an individual has been to the society, when one is dead, that importance ceases. By the same token, we discovered that the sane people disassociated themselves from the mentally ill because the latter people are no longer useful beings, but just "nothing".

In the same vein, Foucault (2006) feels that mental illness is a way of expressing and locating concerns about the darker side of life and fear about the end of the world. Several times, mental illness is linked to humans and their "weaknesses". It is common to regard all human scandals as "madness" because mental illness reveals some deficiency of manners. Furthermore, according to Foucault (2006:128), "modern man no longer communicates with the 'mad' man. There is no common language, or rather it no longer exists...". Thus, a person who is not mannered is cursed. It is a truism that 'manners make a person'. Some mentally ill people are accused of lacking a sense of beauty. They are scruffy and do not dress properly. Their hair may not be maintained. Sometimes mucus is left running down from the nose to the disgust of many. Thus, those associated with such behaviour are considered mentally ill.

The Shona world is characterized by aesthetic values. From the past, it was noted that women applied make ups on their faces in what the Shona called *zvibhaina* or *zvitopora*. Women also wore ornaments and applied decorations on their traditional skin clothes (*nhembe*). They also decorated their huts with traditional paints of different colours. The same was the case with their utensils like clay pots, which were cutely decorated. Against this backdrop, beauty is a thread which runs in every Shona person's veins. Thus, anyone whose character and behaviour does not conform to the recommended values is then understood as mentally challenged. Therefore, instead of viewing their actions as vices, they are rather weaknesses.

Besides the negative view of mental illness, there is also a front to develop more effective ways of fostering positive mental health in all persons, to stimulate their growth and to help them release their unique potentialities for creative living and relating. Thus, the mental health revolution is good news both for the hundreds of thousands who are acutely burdened, and the millions who live half-lives (or less) of quiet or not-so-quiet desperation. Even the most mature persons among us have ample room to grow; therefore, the positive thrust of the mental health revolution should eventually benefit all persons in our society (Muchinako *et al,* 2013). The challenges faced by people who take care of the mentally challenged are surmountable, which boost their confidence to handle the situation. Regardless of one's disability, Africans love and care for each other, thus the situation itself teaches care givers to push through serious discomfort – physical, emotional or mental – and a lot attest that

they find satisfaction when they execute perfectly their duties if it is beneficial to do so. The indigenous Shona people value life and its sacredness more than anything else. This explains why the indigenous people are so much against medical practices such as abortion and euthanasia. In ordinary language, often, when people utter the words such as "*unopenga*" (you are mad), the person who has been described as *unopenga* does not protest. Some remain indifferent or even laugh out at the exclamation. This is because mental illness is not supposed to nullify one's humanity. Mental illness is then seen as a virtue.

Kupenga (mental illness) may constitute the spirit of genius in human activities. First, we interrogate the assertion, *"ane manjere mupengo"* (s/he is extraordinarily brilliant*)*. According to Aristotle as cited by Hershman and Lieb (1988:8), great ability is associated with depression... "all extraordinary men (sic) distinguished in philosophy, politics, poetry and arts are evidently melancholic." It is imperative to point that melancholy is an attribute of mental illness. In the Shona society, it is evident that the melancholic are any of the following: sad, depressed, down, cheerful. Socrates and Plato stated that ingenuity, among poets at least, was inseparable from 'madness'. Socrates further said that the poet has "no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses" and Plato claimed that the poetry of sane men "is beaten all hollow by the poetry of madmen" (Hershman & Lieb 1988:8).

The above philosophical observations are not limited to the classical and occidental world. They are equally relevant to the Shona worldview as well. The Shona describe high intelligence or the genius as having *manjere mupengo* (incredible intelligence), thus attributing great intellectual ability to 'madness' or insanity. In this way, mental illness could be conceptualized as a virtue.

It must also be noted that there are a lot of distinguished persons who ply various trades as great artists, sportsmen, writers, statesmen, philosophers and scientists. But, maybe the most important aspect to mention here is that these great persons excel when they are not in their normal moods. Some use alcohol or drugs of some kind, and even hunger, thirst or illness to silence reason, paralyze conscience and break down familiar patterns of thought in the search of inspiration. This is the reason why the novelist George Sand proclaimed, "between ingenuity and madness there is often not the thickness of a hair" (Hershman & Lieb 1988:8). Therefore, the crux of the matter is that, people acknowledge that they need their mental faculties to be disturbed to perform extraordinarily.

Second, we explore the description *kusimba sebenzi* (as fit as a mentally ill person). While some mentally ill people may drift around villages or towns and cities scavenging for food in waste bins, their health has notably been unaffected and some even grow fat under these unbearable conditions. So, when one is described as *akasimba sebenzi* (he/she is as fit as a mentally ill person), it means that one has exceptional health and can resist common infirmities such as colds and other contagions. This portrays having a mental illness as a virtue because it portrays someone as incredibly healthy. Third, the narrative *mupengo pakushanda* (is 'mad' when it comes to work) exemplifies the portrayal of mentally ill people as having incomparable energy and power which the sane people might lack. It is believed that when it comes to labour-intensive tasks, only 'mad' people work very hard and tirelessly to complete them. Thus, mental illness is here perceived in positive terms in society because *mupengo pakushanda* is a praise expression for unbelievable energy and strength.

The phrase, *anopenga nekumuda/ nerudo (*he/ she is 'mad' with love) is our fourth consideration of mental illness as a virtue. This is a very positive attitude which indicates a different way of expressing one's love to a partner that transcends the usual ways. Such persons do the unbelievable, the unusual, all in the name of love. Their behaviour is, therefore, described as 'madness' because it would have gone beyond the 'normal' conduct or expression for companionship. Lastly, is the expression, '*Doro racho raipenga kunaka*' (the beer was 'mad' in taste). Although this expression refers to beer, it can be made on any kind of food or drink that tastes exceptionally good or delicious. The expression informs the listener that the beer (food/ drink) did not only taste very nice, but it was brewed or prepared in an extraordinary manner that surpasses the ordinary experience of goodness.

 It can be assumed that, since the term 'madness' *(kupenga)* is often consciously used in Shona ordinary dialogue, it implies that at one moment or another everyone behaves in an 'abnormal' way which is equivalent to mental illness. Therefore, in the Shona society the bottom-line notion is that m*unhu wese anopenga asi chinosiyana ndepekupengera nenguva dzekupenga* (everyone is a 'mad' person but what is different is where and when one is 'mad'). This is aptly put across by Muchinako *et al* (2013:162) who maintain that the Shona society views mental illness as occurring on a continuum. This presupposes that every person suffers some degree of mental illness at some point in life, with most peo-

ple experiencing it at socially acceptable levels. It is only when mental illness becomes excessive, violent and unmanageable that it becomes a cause for concern.

Conclusion

The study shows that the traditional Shona viewed mental illness as both a vice and a virtue. This view of mental illness that makes everyone potentially mentally ill, helps is addressing the marginalization of the mentally ill. It can be noted that the African approach to mental illness is directed towards fulfilment and tolerance in the context of a people's culture and situation. It is through understanding and appreciating the traditional Shona people's worldview of mental illness that one can comprehend the thinking behind the Shona traditional healing practices (Machinga, 2011). Within this quest, there is the need for society to be integrative and inclusive in its perceptions of the quality of human mental status. Diseases or sicknesses are viewed not only as physical or psychological, but also as religious issues. Thus, religious beliefs and values play a significant role in treatment procedures (Machinga, 2011). This approach to mental illness constitutes a new ethos of indigenous spirituality in contemporary Africa. The final remark is essential: we submit that this study basically focuses on the Shona people in Buhera and Chipinge districts in Zimbabwe. Further and comprehensive studies on mental health problems and management could be done in the other parts of Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole.

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PART E | OTHER THEMES

Lovemore Ndlovu

15 | Pentecostal Responses to Gender and Social Inequality:
The Case of Celebration Church in Zimbabwe

Introduction

During the last two decades, Zimbabwe has seen the proliferation of various fissiparous movements within the ambit of Pentecostal churches. There has been an exponential rise in Pentecostal churches, particularly during the period of economic and political decline of the last ten years. Barrett, Kurian and Johnson (2001:821) estimate that in Zimbabwe, Christians comprised 67% of the population as at year 2000. It is also estimated that 50% of the Christians in Zimbabwe belong to Pentecostal churches (Barrett *et al* 2001:821).

Pentecostalism has been described by commentators such as Cox (1995:xvii), as one particular dramatic example of a wider religious revival. Martin (2011:63) describes Pentecostalism as the most dramatic instance of a successful transnational and voluntary form of Christianity, a major wave for the future. In Africa, Pentecostalism has challenged the local environment, creating raptures and discontinuities in society. In this study, focus is on how Pentecostalism acts as an avenue for upward social mobility for women. The focus is on attempting to explicate or unravel the role of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwean society, particularly in addressing social inequalities. The Celebration Church (CC), a Pentecostal church, is used as a case study. Ranger (1986:1), a historian, sees religion as a powerful force in society, especially for the powerless, in altering their situation and reversing their status in both symbolic and social terms. Gifford (1998:26) advocates that religion influences perception, worldviews and conceptual tools to understand reality. He explains as follows:

> A religion provides definitions, principles of judgment and criteria of perception. It offers a reading of the world, of history, of society, of time, of space, of power, of authority, of justice and of ultimate truth. Religion limits or increases the conceptual tools available, restricts or enlarges emotional responses, or channels them, and withdraws certain issues from inquiry. It inculcates a particular way of perceiving, experiencing and responding to reality. Religion can legitimise new aspirations, new forms of organisation, new relations and a new social order. Every reli-

gion involves struggles to conquer, monopolise or transform the symbol-ic structures which order reality (Gifford 1998:26).

CC, a movement that was born in post-independence Zimbabwe, is influential in dealing with social inequalities. Tom and Bonnie De-uschle, Americans who migrated into Zimbabwe in 1979, are the found-ers of the CC. The two were confronted by the oppressive colonial sys-tem which discriminated against the Africans. The new political climate after independence provided them with fertile ground for the emergence of a transnational religious movement. The new political climate, accord-ing to Maxwell (2006:109), had profound effects on Zimbabwean Chris-tianity as it allowed greater movement of people, ideas, and resources, enabling Zimbabwean Christians to engage fully in a rapidly globalizing born-again movement. In light of the foregoing remarks, this study sought to examine the role of Pentecostalism in addressing social ine-qualities, especially gender inequalities.

Background to Pentecostalism

There are three notable waves in the history of Pentecostalism. The first wave of Pentecostalism is known as the old Pentecostalism or classical Pentecostalism associated with the 1901 and 1906 baptism of the spirit at Topeka, Kansas and at Azusa Street in Los Angeles respectively. Clas-sical Pentecostals argue, among others, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit will be initially evidenced by the speaking of tongues, hence, speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of baptism. The sec-ond wave of Pentecostalism is the charismatic renewal movement that began in the 1960s. The charismatics accepted the continuation of the gifts of the spirit; however, they refuted the classical Pentecostal teach-ing that speaking in tongues was the initial, physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The third wave of Pentecostalism, also known as the signs and wonders movement, does not believe the idea that speaking in tongues is the initial, physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit or that Christians who are baptised in the Holy Spirit shall speak in tongues. This study, focused on the third wave of Pente-costalism examining how this movement, associated with the signs and wonders, has addressed the question of gender and social inequality.

Maxwell (2006) identifies what he calls four distinct streams that charac-terise the Pentecostal experience which is closely linked to the three waves of Pentecostalism we discussed above. The first stream was rooted in the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century and emphasised

heart felt salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. According to Maxwell (2006:18-19):

> Late-nineteenth-century evangelicals perpetuated 'the ideology and expe-rience of new birth', making it 'non-negotiable marker' of the Christian faith. This emphasis on salvation grew stronger in the twentieth century, with those who experienced personal transformation calling themselves 'Born-again Christians'.

The second ideological stream, according to Maxwell, was the second blessing, a definable life-transforming experience after conversion mark-ing an ongoing process focusing the believer's life completely on service to Christ and leading to baptism in the Holy Ghost (Maxwell 2006). The third and fourth streams focused on divine healing and anticipation of the Lord's imminent return. The four streams show the development of Pentecostalism from the Great Awakening to the current stream where emphasis is now largely on divine healing and anticipation of the Lord's return. CC would be classified in the third wave of Pentecostalism and the second ideological stream of Maxwell (2006). A brief history of CC and its theology will help our analysis of its role in addressing gender inequalities in Zimbabwe.

Celebration Church: brief history and theology

The CC was formed in year 2000 by Pastor Tom Deuschle and his wife Bonnie. It is a modern-day Pentecostal movement with its headquarters in Harare, Zimbabwe. Tom Deuschle, co-founder of the CC was born in 1954 in Denver, Colorado in the United States of America. He was nur-tured in the Catholic Church from a tender age and was expected to become a priest within the Catholic Church. It was during a Catholic charismatic Bible study that Tom Deuschle received his commission to travel to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) (Deuschle 2009:2).

CC's theology and organisation is influenced by Rhema Bible Church of America. The organisation of CC is thus modelled along the Kenneth Hagin-led Rhema Bible Church. Following Rhema Bible Church of America, CC is a multi-racial church with special ministries dedicated to women, men, children, youths, couples, etc. in order to meet the needs of the entire family. Upon his arrival in Zimbabwe, Tom Deuschle maintained very close links with Rhema South Africa and Rhema Tulsa. Ray MacCauley of Rhema South Africa gave the now CC leaders their first commission to start a church in Zimbabwe, which they initially founded as Rhema Bible Church in their house in April 1982 in Harare.

Despite having arrived in Zimbabwe in 1979, it was only on 6 June 1982 that Tom Deuschle started a meaningful religious movement of 52 believers in Mount Pleasant, Harare (Deuschle 2009:37). Ray MacCauley offered them the name Rhema to use for the Harare church that was at its infancy. However, 14 years later, in April 1996, Tom Deuschle's church was subjected to name change from Rhema Bible Church to Hear the Word Church. In 2000, the church was further subjected to another name change to Celebration Church, the current name of the church. Theologically, the church still bears close resemblance with the Kenneth Hagin-led Rhema Bible Church of America. The church operates within a specific cultural context that needs to be considered when one looks at how the church addresses issues of gender inequality. We address this context below.

Sexuality and patriarchy in Shona/ Ndebele societies in Zimbabwe

In order to situate Pentecostal responses to gender and social inequality in Africa, it is essential to understand the context in which girls or women are brought up and the dilemmas that they confront in African society. Pentecostalism is viewed by many women at CC as liberating them from traditional gender stereotypes and offering a solution to the many problems that they face. Most of the problems emanate from their background in African indigenous religion. The Shona and Ndebele traditional societies are patriarchal in character. Asante (2004:1) defines patriarchy as, "an authoritative male system that is both oppressive and discriminatory." It is oppressive in social, political, economic and cultural environments. It is discriminatory in its control of access to power, management of resources and benefits and manipulation of public and private power structures. Kambarami (2006), who carried out her fieldwork among the Shona in Zimbabwe, advocates that the family is a brewery for patriarchal practices because it socializes the young to accept sexually differentiated roles. She elaborates as follows:

> In the Shona culture, from a tender age, the socialization process differentiates the girl from the boy child. Shona males are socialized to view themselves as bread winners and heads of households whilst females are taught to be obedient and submissive housekeepers. The cause of such differentiation and discrimination is that society views women as sexual beings and not as human beings (Kambarami 2006:3).

As girl children grow up in the Shona and Ndebele society, they are treated as inferior compared to boys. Their gendered roles in the home

are considered inferior compared to the more demanding tasks that are given to boys. In some instances, girls are not even educated as they are told that there is no need to be educates since they will be married and looked after by their husbands. Girls are further downgraded and treated as sex objects and subjected to manipulation and abuse. In some instances, infants are offered as spiritual wives to avenge malicious spirits or as ransom to avenging spirits, worsening their social status as they will find it difficult to get married and lead normal lives. In light of this, we can then look at how Pentecostals like CC are addressing such gender inequalities. But before doing so, a word on the methodology used to collect data for this chapter.

Methodology

The findings of the study are based on three years of ethnographic field research in Harare. Riemer (2008:204) defines ethnography as, "…essentially the study of a particular cultural group or phenomena." Field work is a fundamental part of ethnography and it entails documenting people's beliefs and practices from the people's own experiences. According to LeCompte, Preissle and Tesch (1993:39),

> Ethnography always is descriptive; it also involves the study of an interplay among empirical variables as they occur naturally, rather than as they may be manipulated or arranged in advance by an investigator. The naturalistic setting both facilitates on-the-spot and holistic analysis of causes and processes and precludes precise control of so-called extraneous factors.

In employing the ethnographic approach, the researcher used observation, among other ethnographic techniques, particularly participant observation to gather data. Observation was pertinent in capturing what happens at CC services. Besides observation, the researcher used interviews and questionnaires to collect data relating to how CC views women in leadership, its views on the role of women in the church and how the church addresses the subject of gender and social inequality.

During the research period, the researcher conducted problem-centred interviews with the key-role players amongst CC believers such as pastors and deacons. Some individuals such as the senior pastors were interviewed several times in follow up meetings. Regarding organisational characteristics, the sample comprised believers largely drawn from the Harare churches. The researcher conducted participation observation in sermons, conferences, healing sessions and other church gatherings

such as overnight prayer sessions. Most of these activities took place in Harare, Gweru and Bulawayo.

The process of data analysis was guided by the principle of triangulation as this seemed the most promising with a view toward uncovering the contradictory aspects of the CC. To this end, data analysis was guided by differentiations of what is said and what is done, i.e. the subjective and latent meanings of the study. Data analysis involved the following steps. First, the researcher assembled the data (archived information, interview data) necessary to understand the dynamics of the CC. Secondly, the data was analysed and interpreted in light of content analysis and grounded theory, generating themes through "identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data" (Patton 1990:381) and then employed "content comparison" where "all pieces of data were compared with other data" (Morse 1995:27-28). Grounded theory is a method in which the theory is developed from the data, rather than the other way around (Basit 2003:144). Thirdly, the researcher was concerned with the interpretation of the connections between both layers of data, looking at how each set enabled and was constrained by the other. The researcher was less interested in the CC as modern-day Pentecostal movement, but focus was on how CC women members negotiated issues to do with gender and social inequality.

Findings

85% of the participants in this study noted that the major attraction of the church appears to be the message of success. The message of success plays a major role to women who are downtrodden and oppressed in a male dominated society. The vision of the Church is "building people building dreams." The Church mentors women in business projects, leadership and entrepreneurship. Poverty is interpreted as a "curse" and women are delivered from the "curse" of poverty among other spiritual hindrances to achieve success. The study found that women at CC realize their purpose in life and exploit opportunities available to them to the fullest. The testimony of Mwaitireni Jessica Chapfiwa, a former leader of CC children's ministry, explains the transformation that most women at CC go through as they are delivered from a patriarchal based system embedded in the Africa society. She explains:

> Even though I was privileged to grow up in a Christian family, I lived in the rural community that gave preference to boys over girls, so I grew up thinking my place was behind the scenes, not to be seen or heard. When

I came to Celebration Church, that was my thinking. I had such a low self-esteem, although no one would imagine it because I used to put on a face to cover-up. Through many of Pastor Tom's sermons at church and through lectures at the Bible school, which I attended for four years, I learned to discover my purpose in life. One lecture that Pastor Tom gave at the Bible school particularly impacted me. It was called, "Breaking the Bonds of Iniquity", and it helped me to reflect on my own bonds of iniquity. The Holy Spirit showed me areas where I needed deliverance, beginning with the low self-esteem that I had due to the spirit of rejection. I went through personal deliverance spiritually, not only through that teaching but many others that Pastor Tom and Pastor Bonnie taught at Bible school, ladies fellowship, and church, and also through guests from abroad such as Dr John Stanko who made me realize my true purpose in life (Deuschle 2009:111).

Mwaitireni Jessica Chapfiwa's testimony shows the raptures and discontinuities with the past life as she was delivered from low self-esteem that was due to an oppressive and patriarchal based system that downgraded the girl child and gave honour and praise to the boys. She explains how she was rejected as a child because of being a girl and later transformed by the CC as she was delivered from the spirit of rejection.

80% of the participants also revealed the problem of rejection by their families in favour of the males in the family. The women claimed that they were not being appreciated and were despised in the context of gendered responsibilities in the family where their role was perceived to revolve around the kitchen and in raising children. During women meetings in the church, they were taught and mentored to become leaders in society and to take responsibility of their families rather than depend on their husbands. One of the participants, Linda Jaya, explained the power of CC in preparing women for leadership roles: "CC gives me the confidence to stand out as a woman and follow my instincts in order to become that which God purposed in my life" (Jaya, Testimony 2016).

To the downtrodden women despised by society, CC becomes a place of refuge as the pastors would accept them and register them for a deliverance course and treat them as normal human beings equal to men. Some of the participants that were interviewed were previously offered as spiritual wives to avenging spirits and told by prophets and healers that they would not be able to marry in their lives. However, when they came to CC, they were enrolled for a deliverance course and their "curses" removed. Tendai Nyamuzuwe gave a testimony about her failure to secure employment for more than ten years, but when she joined CC after the deliverance course, she was able to work and complement in-

come in her family. During the study, several women highlighted the role that CC played in their lives especially in developing them as leaders. Three women, Sihle, Joyful and Miranda, were promoted to leadership positions after prayer and deliverance sessions. Appointment to leadership was seen as a blessing and a result of obedience and serving God at CC.

Women saw the CC as offering them opportunities to serve the Lord despite past condemnation. The testimony of Mwaitireni Jessica Chapfiwa confirms this:

> One day as Pastor Tom was teaching on leadership at Bible school, he quoted from Isaiah 6:8 (NIV). "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'". Then Pastor Tom asked us, "Who feels called by the Lord?" I was among those who raised their hands. The Holy Spirit had delivered me from a spirit of rejection, and I was now ready to "go" for the Lord (Deuschle 2009:112).

The study found out that CC has transformed many women into high performers and leaders through its mentoring programmes. Women are constantly trained and mentored to become leaders of the church and the society at large. Mwaitireni Jessica Chapfiwa's example represents the testimony of many women at CC that have been transformed. Chapfiwa attained a degree in Biblical Studies from Celebration Ministries Bible School and other leadership certificates. It is evident in the study that CC empowers women to achieve their dreams and visions. Pentecostalism thus empowered women by liberating them from what they call the "bonds of iniquity".

The findings of this study indicate that CC promotes egalitarianism when it comes to the status of women in the church. Egalitarianism maintains that gender differences are non-essential, and women may embrace roles traditionally held by men both in the family and in the church (Colaner and Giles 2008). Women are treated the same as men and are given leadership roles such as deacons and pastors. Women are also given opportunities to lead certain aspects of the ministry. Tom Deuschle's wife, Pastor Bonnie, plays a critical role in the ministry and is considered at par with her husband. More than 70% of the women interviewed agreed that CC plays a vital role in their lives in helping them to make an impact in their society. They referred to the "salt and light" programme where women are trained to act as cell leaders in evangelism and ministry work. Women thus become active in ministry and in transforming communities where they serve. It was noted that 80% of

the respondents saw leadership as having a spiritual role as it was seen and interpreted as a blessing.

Discussion and Analysis

Research on gender and African Pentecostalism has focused on the shifting roles of women and how women negotiate gender roles in Pentecostal churches (Adams 2007, Ingersoll 2003). Perry (2013) discusses the persistence and transformation of complementarianism as ideology in evangelical families as well as what she calls "progressive traditionalism or soft patriarchy". In African Pentecostalism, there are predominantly three gender ideologies that have emerged – patriarchy, complementarianism and egalitarianism. Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) led by Ezekiel Guti advances complementarianism. Maxwell (2006:156) notes that, "Guti's model of male headship required a benign patriarchy." Men had to take responsibility in looking after the family. Guti seems to promote the ideology of complementarianism. Complementarianism refers to:

> the ideological perspective that there are divinely instituted, essential differences between men and women regarding their capacities, dispositions, and inclinations. Based on this view, it is understood that God has instituted separate and "complementary" roles for men and women, with men being appointed heads of both the church and the family. Conversely, women are enjoined to embrace submissive, helper roles and are precluded from church leadership or teaching men (Perry 2013:396).

Complementarianism as an ideology stands opposed to egalitarianism that is promoted at CC. The CC promotes egalitarianism and according to Martin (2005:146), "Pentecostalism is very much the trade union of the women aimed at a different and more beneficent regime within the home." Further, Pentecostalism also breaks with the rural past in Zimbabwe where women are downgraded and rejected as inferior beings. Martin (2011:75) confirms the appeal of Pentecostalism to women, "the space it creates for mutuality within the home in spite of patriarchal characteristics, or the scope it offers for female spirituality and, within limits, for female leadership."

The study noted that the CC offered women opportunities for upward social mobility particularly when they became leaders of various congregations. This empowered women and gave them equal status with men. Maxwell (2006:209) agrees that "contemporary Pentecostalism is a highly successful popular religion: a set of ideas and practices that address

adherents' existential concerns for wholeness, purity, meaning and empowerment." Women at CC thus develop a sense of belonging, wholeness and identity as they are recognised and given equal status as men.

In corroborating the findings of this study, Frahman-Arp (2014:4) argues that amongst Pentecostal believers, "workplace is a highly spiritualized space in which evangelism is possible – and while all members do not always believe that their work is their vocation, they believe that they should evangelise in the work place." Besides viewing opportunities for employment as blessings, believers believe that they can promote the call to minister the word of God in their workplaces and advance the work of the Kingdom. The mentoring and training of women in leadership is seen as a critical part of women empowerment. Frahman-Arp (2014:4) comments thus regarding the training of women in churches, "Pentecostalism offers intensive social and cultural skills together with many prayer meetings aimed at helping members negotiate the world of work." It was noted at Celebration Church that there was a deliberate focus on training women on entrepreneurship and eminent entrepreneurs were invited to motivate and train women in various trades. The influence of religion in the public space, choices for employment and decision was evident. Sigalow, Michelle and Meredith (1987) support the above views and highlight the important role religion plays in the decision-making process of individuals and in helping them towards upward social mobility. Mapuranga (2018) highlights how Pentecostalism has empowered women in Harare to become successful entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

This study has noted the impact Pentecostalism has on the identity and consciousness of women. Martin (2005:151) highlights the impact of Pentecostalism on consciousness and social organisation as follows:

> Millions of people from rural China to the Andes and Zimbabwe have been on the move, above all to the mega-city and, to this or that degree, breaking with their embedded links and their ancient continuities and local hierarchies. For these, Pentecostalism provided an internal compass and portable identity, a protected environment for revisions of consciousness and social organisation, including the nuclear family.

This study has revealed the role of Pentecostalism in bringing about social and ideological changes in the area of gender in Zimbabwe. The focus of the CC is on "breaking with the past", a past that is characterised by curses and bondages emanating from African religion. The con-

verts are brought into a mega-city church that deploys notions of egalitarianism and newness before God. The study noted that some of the women who joined CC were coming from situations of bondage and suffering and the pastors at CC gave them a new identity, meaning and wholeness as they were integrated into the Church. CC, consequently, allows women to negotiate gender issues as they focus on their upward social mobility. It is evident in the study that Pentecostalism can be used by women as an avenue towards upward social mobility in a society that is inundated by patriarchal-based systems. The concern about women emancipation is strong at the CC as the pastors put in place deliverance courses such as the "walk free deliverance course" in order to deal specifically with women's oppression and bonds of iniquity. The study concludes that Zimbabwean society is generally patriarchal, and the CC provides women with a platform to fight social and gender inequalities.

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Canisius Mwandayi

16 | POLARITY AND THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY: INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND THE PROBLEM OF THE POLARISATION OF AFRICAN CHRISTIANS

Introduction

"The sons and daughters of Africa love life. It is precisely this love of life that leads them to give such great importance to the veneration of their ancestors [...],"so once remarked the late leader of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II. The words of John Paul sum up what lies at the heart of the African philosophy of life, a kind of philosophy which many feel at pain to be made to leave behind and embrace what they are made to believe is a 'civilised' religion, Christianity. With particular focus on the Catholic Church, this chapter examines the polarization that is suffered by many African Christians and tries to salvage the situation by calling for inter-religious dialogue between adherents of Christianity and those of African traditional religion. The end in view is to try and resolve the problem of the past and present onslaught of Christianity on African Traditional Religion.

The African dilemma

Since the advent of Christianity in Africa, African converts have been made to believe that their religious and cultural traditions were nothing other than the products of the Evil One, hence had to be discarded as a matter of urgency. In the eyes of those who first brought Christianity to Africa, there was totally nothing to be admired in the lives of Africans whom they believed dwelt in a state of barbarism. Instead of them admiring and praising African customs and ways of life, they rather saw Africans as 'savages' to be civilised, 'cursed sons of Ham' to be saved, 'big children' to be educated, for in their eyes, there existed no African culture, only tribal customs, no religion save foolish superstitions and devilish cults. Newcomers to the mission field south of the Zambezi, as noted by J. Baur, were informed, "here we do not shake hands with Africans" (Baur, 2001, 422). Africans were thus torn apart between the world

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of Christian beliefs and their world of African traditional values and beliefs. Since those early days up to this present time, African Christians suffer from this 'split-personality syndrome'. More like their brothers and sisters living beyond the borders of the African continent, they suffer from:

> [...] a double tendency that makes them live their Christian life in two parallel lines that hold them between their fidelity to Christ and their fear of *vadzimu* (ancestral spirits). This polarity becomes a confusing and disturbing factor in their Christian behaviour. It creates a painful tension in their conscience. And this tension, so devastating to their Christian faith [...] must at all costs be resolved (Mavhudzi cited in J. Elsener and F. Kollbrunner, 2001, 45-46).

Since their reception of Christianity, however, Africans have always been seeking to live their faith within the context of their own cultures. Condemnation of what they held as treasure was the only thing hampering them. The desire to live the Christian faith within their own context soon saw a re-awakening kind of spirit sweeping across Africa. It was more of a fight for self- identity and recognition as African Christians (Baur, 2001, 425). This was, in other words, an emerging of African Christian consciousness. By the 1950s, this self-assertion was becoming too powerful to resist. Those who had been fortunate enough to pass through the mission schools began coming together and forming some organisations. One example of such lay organisations in Zimbabwe was that of the Catholic African Association (CAA) which was formed in 1934 under the leadership of Ambrose Majongwe. The initial idea of forming an association for the laity, as noted by Gundani (2001) had actually been started by Fr Bernard Huss of Marianhill in Natal (1934).

After its formation, CAA was later changed to the Catholic Association (CA) to express its non-racial character. In 1971 it was registered as a welfare organisation under the Welfare Organisation Act (1966). Despite its new non-racial face, a few of the whites who had been registered with it soon left, leaving it predominantly a black association. The formation of the Roman Catholic Council for the Laity in 1968 and the Diocesan Councils for the Laity in the early 70s, however, saw CA being eventually superseded at national, diocesan and parish levels. It was actually in the annual general meetings of this organisation that different questions were raised and discussed at length. Thus indeed, for the first time, Black Catholics had found an opportunity to express their views and aspirations to each other and to the white hierarchy in the public forum. Inspiring CA in the first place was the greater cultural freedom that the

Church allowed on the eve of Vatican II and the period after this Council (Abbot, 1996, 151-152).

While the battle to express their own views freely about their own culture and religion had begun, that battle was far from being over. Since those early days, the damage that missionary catechesis has effected upon Africans was so huge to be reversed in a short time. Due to such a polarisation it is not easy for Africans to de-entangle themselves from the tentacles of a Christianity that has been brought to them under the garb of Western culture. Making matters worse is that some fellow African Christians have become champions also in tearing down their traditional customs. It is from this context that I make the proposal that it is only through a process of inter-religious dialogue that we can possibly see a solution to the great polarisation of African Christians.

Dialogue – a step towards resolving the dilemma

Inter-religious dialogue surely sounds a novel phenomenon of the modern world. We could not conceive of it, let alone do it in the past if one brings into memory the historic crusades of the medieval period. Dialogue thus understood in the religious sphere means a formal process in which authoritative members of at least two religious communities come together for an extended and serious discussion of the beliefs and practices that separate the communities. It is, in other words, witnessing to one's deepest convictions and listening to those of one's neighbours. A more formal definition of inter-religious dialogue was given by John Taylor, a former missionary and Anglican bishop of Winchester. Taylor defined it as "[...] a sustained conversation between parties who are not saying the same thing and who recognise and respect contradictions and mutual exclusions between their various ways of thinking" (Taylor cited in Baker, 2008). Arguing along almost similar lines, Panikkar defines religious dialogue as 'the exchange of views and insights by means of concepts expressed in words that are based on previous agreement concerning the common, which the dialogue thereafter tries to widen and deepen, so as to pinpoint divergences, similarities, complementarities, and criticisms, as well as to find the loci where mutual influence or fecundation may take place' (Panikkar cited in Adamo, 2011).

Church dialogue with African Traditional Religion

The African Synodal spirit within which this chapter is framed notes the necessity of dialogue with ATR adherents basing it on various solid grounds. In the first place, the Synod observes that as with all men and women of good will, irrespective of the religious faith to which they belong, the Church must dialogue with adherents of ATR since,

> the Living God, Creator of heaven and earth and Lord of all history is the Father of the one great human family to which we all belong. As such, he wants us to bear witness to him through our respect for the values and religious traditions of each person, work together with them for human progress and development at all levels. Far from wishing to be the one in whose name a person would kill other people, he requires believers to join together in the service of life in justice and peace (John Paul II, 2000).

Secondly, in view of the foregoing remark, the Synod was quick to note that it was now high time to give attention to ATR. It regretted that ATR had not been given the recognition it deserves as a valid partner in dialogue nor the attention it should receive on a pastoral level. On a sad note, however, it has been seen as a deposit for prospective converts. Echoing almost the same sentiments with the African Synod, Ezra Chitando notes that the preoccupation with the 'sacred text' has tended to push religions that do not privilege the written word to the periphery and he singles out ATR in particular, arguing that it does not feature prominently in inter-religious dialogue as propounded by eminent theologians (Chitando, 2004: 3). The end result of this, as he notes, "has been to write off ATRs from the process of conversation and to relegate the religion of millions to mere footnotes."

The third reason why the Synod advocated a serious dialogue with ATR adherents is because ATR is still very strong and widely practised in many places. In its January 1998 report, the Association of Members of Episcopal Conference in East Africa (AMECEA) noted, for example, that over 23 million people are still adherents of ATR in its area. In the Republic of Benin, about 64% of the population were still adherents of ATR while about 12.6 million in Nigeria and about 29.1% of Ghanaians were still followers of ATR (Ikenga-Metuh, 2012). The picture reflected in these numbers and percentages simply shows that in the majority of African countries, ATR is still the all-pervasive determinant of the life and culture of these peoples. It is actually part and parcel of the cultural heritage and it determines the spontaneous and subconscious reactions of these people and their interpretation of reality. The Synod was able to

note also that some African intellectuals are actually returning to this religion and are reorganising according to modern principles. These bare facts made the Synod to conclude that the Church cannot afford to marginalize these followers hence making dialogue with ATR an urgent necessity.

Another push factor to dialogue with ATR is the understanding that such an exercise can reveal many of the values which are common to both Christianity and ATR which can serve as a *preparatio Evangelica* 'preparation of the gospel' or as stepping stones for introducing African adherents of ATR into full acceptance of the Christian faith. These values will in the long run prove a great asset when it comes to inculturation.

Obstacles to dialogue with African Traditional Religion

Probably the greatest hindrance to dialogue with ATR is Christianity's hegemonic tendencies. Christian adherents thought and still think that they alone have an exclusive access to God and all other religions are simply wasting their time unless they convert to the true faith, which is Christianity. Christians tend to hinge their conviction on the words of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ who said: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). On a related issue, Jesus is known also to have once said: "All who came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:8-9). When read from a canonical point of view, these "I am" statements of Jesus point out for us the exclusive nature of salvation. Jesus here argues that He is "the door," not "a door." He is the 'only door' by which people may enter and be saved (John 10:9). What this implies is that He is the only means of receiving eternal life (John 3:16) and there is no other way. This is tantamount to saying all other religions are empty pursuits.

Due to Jesus' insinuating words that salvation cannot be found anywhere else except through him, Christians found ground to erect a wall of prejudice between them and those they define as the 'other,' adherents of ATR included. With the coming of Christianity, we find that missionary catechesis has for the most part taught African converts to hold ATR in disdain and its adherents in great contempt. Using Zimbabwe as a case study, Chavunduka (2001) observes that in the attempt to

build churches in Zimbabwe, early missionaries saw it best to "destroy not only the childish African religion, but their culture as well, and transplant a Christian faith with all its European cultural background, imagery and orientation." Early journals on Africans and their religion were fraught with derogatory terms. As observed by Mercado (2004, 2005), they were labelled 'pagans', 'heathens', 'idolatrous', 'polytheists', 'barbarians', 'superstitious', 'fetishists', 'primitive.' Adamo (2011) adds that to some Christians, African Indigenous Religions are synonymous to misery and superstitions. Missionary catechesis has done nothing better except to reinforce these derogatory terms in a much more practical way. This is evidenced by the way ATR devotees were chucked out from Christian villages. Such a disdain of ATR should hardly be conceived as a thing of the past only for it exists even to this day. As noted by the African Synod,

> Christian Catechesis in Africa still sustains its polemics that it is stupid to be an adherent of ATR, which it sees as the citadel of Satan, and its ministers disdainfully called Juju priests, fetish priests, witchdoctors, as agents of the devil (Ikenga-Metuh, 2012).

Due to the close association between Christianity and European culture, Christianity in Africa has also assumed a superiority complex resulting in the labelling of ATR as primitive and not progressive. Summarizing the general attitude of Christian churches in sub-Saharan Africa, Shorter (1991) had this to say:

> The churches in Sub-Sahara Africa could afford to ignore Islam, as long as Muslims were backward ... Christians could also afford to antagonize the adherents of ATRs. It was felt that they had no future within or outside the Church, and a relentless war of annihilation was fought against them. Dialogue with ATRs appeared laughable under this circumstance (Shorter cited in Adamo, 2011).

Thus, there is need to treat adherents of ATR with respect and esteem if significant progress in dialogue is to be achieved.

Yet another obstacle that lies in the path of dialogue is the argument that dialoguing with ATR which the Church has since vehemently condemned would look like it was now endorsing it. In addition to that, it is often argued that it is not easy to listen to others with respect, charity and patience without running the risk of watering down one's faith (Ikenga-Metuh, 2000). While indeed one has to admit that it is a risky business in engaging a dialogue, it is such an important step without which the Church cannot accomplish her mission. The Church has a mandate to proclaim Christ to all creation (Mk 16:16). If dialogue is to be

among equals and each being capable of defining himself/herself, there would not be any danger of the dialoguing partners risking their faith. The only possible risk is when one of the partners in dialogue is less informed of his/her faith position. When engaging a dialogue with an ATR adherent, a Christian must always be true to the name, bearing the obligation to witness Christ.

Equally propping up as an obstacle to dialogue with ATR is the mistaken notion that ATR is almost dying out hence no reason to dialogue. Due to modernity, youngsters are seen as abandoning ATR in huge numbers, hence its demise is seen as a matter of time. Though such an observation may appear true, it is altogether not true that ATR is fast dying out. As argued already, ATR is still very strong and widely practised in many places on the African continent. It is equally not a far-fetched possibility that even in the Diaspora where some Africans are scattered, ATR is still being practised even though they are in the heartland of the so-called civilisation. Ignorance about the exact nature of ATR is what is often leading some to think that the traditional religion is dying out.

A rather denigrating obstacle to dialogue with ATR is the mentality in some that it is not easy to find competent people to dialogue with since most leaders of ATR are illiterate. While this may sound true if one maintains a minimalist understanding of what dialogue is all about, the reality, however, is that dialogue cannot be limited to an abstract theological exercise requiring literacy and systematic reasoning. Dialogue encompasses also spiritual sharing, active collaboration in life situations and more especially, the sharing of life's experiences. This finds echo also in call for dialogue among cultures and civilisations, adopted by the *International Symposium on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations Sana'a*, 11 February 2004, which points out that "dialogue among cultures and civilisations is a necessity in the contemporary world in order to overcome obstacles, prejudices and re-emerging ignorances and to understand and learn from and about others and their experiences." The African Synod made equally a good observation when it noted that,

> Christian missionaries and local pastors have been dialoguing with leaders of ATR communities, chiefs, priests, clan heads, prophets and diviners over matters which touch on traditional religious beliefs like converting former shrine sites into Christian mission sites, on aspects of traditional festivals, initiation rites and different types of taboos with varying degrees of success. Through dialogue, they have in some places prayed and taken joint action to broker peace, organise the education and medical services for the community (Ikenga-Metuh, 2012).

The reality thus, is such that the same community with which one discusses other matters would also be partners in dialogue over traditional beliefs. One needs to bear in mind also that so many things in Africa have since changed, including the rate of literacy. Many adherents of ATR are now educated men and women who, if engaged in dialogue, can actually speak on behalf of their genuine ATR community of believers.

Types of dialogue in view of African Traditional Religion

Looking more closely at the recommendations of the African Synod one notes that as a special activity, dialogue can actually be expressed in two main ways: the dialogue of life and deeds and the dialogue of specialists.

Dialogue of Life and Deeds

As noted above, dialogue is not limited to abstract theological discussions and debates of experts. Ordinary adherents of different religions can actually engage in very useful sharing of experiences and collaborations in life. The Synod suggests that in view of the situation in which the Church finds herself in Africa, this type of dialogue is particularly important and necessary because the Church in Africa is only 13% of the total population and members of the Church are literally surrounded by others among whom they must live, witness to and work for the kingdom of God (Ikenga-Metuh, 2012).

In most African States, it is an undeniable fact that religious pluralism cuts across national, tribal and at times even family ties. Be it in rural areas or in the same block of flats in town, people of different faiths live together, and they actually meet at family meetings, funerals, weddings and some even work together in the same offices, factories and so on. In situations such as these, the necessity of dialogue sort of imposes itself on the people. Such a kind of dialogue is sometimes characterised by some scholars as *dialogue ad extra* meaning 'ordinary inter-religious relations.' Paul F. Knitter, for example, defines *dialogue ad extra* as "the interaction of mutual presence [...] speaking and listening [...] witnessing the commitments, the values, and the rituals of others" (Knitter, 2012). In this kind of dialogue, believers live out what their religions would have taught them about good neighbourliness, about honesty, dedication to duty, service to neighbour, duties in the family, community development and so on.

One big danger, however, is that such a dialogue may result in conflict and discord if it is not carried out in a genuine spirit of dialogue by all concerned parties. Equally posing as a danger to such a dialogue by convenience is the possibility of people reaching compromises that go against their faith though at times without intending to do so. More often than not, one finds members who are not well instructed or committed to their faiths and these become so vulnerable. While their immediate aim of coming up with workable compromises for coexistence and cooperation would be positive, some often end up losing their faith.

One can also talk of *dialogue ad intra* or in other words, a dialogue of worldviews. Such a form of dialogue usually takes place within an individual who, although s/he has inherited much from ATR, now belongs to another religion and wants to integrate the values from the two religions. To illustrate a bit on this kind of dialogue, it is often the case that when a Christian believer runs into trouble, he/she first consults his/her priest or pastor. When the pastor, however, proves to be of no help either because he is too intellectualistic or simply because he has no time to listen to pagan stories, the next step that person takes, because he/she has no choice, is to seek help from ATR. When everything is well again, he/she returns to Church. Such a shuttle between Christianity and ATR as observed by Chidi Denis Isizoh is a form of internal dialogue which is going on in some converts to Christianity. It is basically non-verbal, and its primary goal is to integrate the two worldviews so as to give the African Christian an integrated religious personality (Isizoh, 2011). As one can see, it sometimes takes the form of inculturation of some religious values.

Dialogue of Specialists

On the second level of dialogue we have that of specialists and experts. The African Synod made it a point that dialogue with ATR should not be left to chance or mere interest, rather adequate and effective structures and programmes should be designed to promote it in a systematic way. The African Synod further recommended that such projects of dialogue should involve research and publication by experts assigned to the task and that Higher Catholic Theological Institutes like Universities and Seminaries should actually continue to do research in dialogue with ATR and inculturation and make proposals to the bishops. It does not take effort to note that it is on this second level of dialogue that this chapter is to be situated. The opinion, however, of the ordinary adher-

ents of ATR need to be tapped also since wisdom is not the preserve of the educated only.

Looking back, however, into the history of the Church in Africa, one can be able to notice that this second level of dialogue has actually been a black spot on the page of this history. Quite a number of individuals who, in the past, have organised or shared religious experiences with adherents of ATR were labelled backsliders or syncretists, hence ended up being summoned to Rome for inquisition and at times being ex-communicated. While such has been the case, accredited Church authorities have up to now not worked out how Christians could take part in some rites which may involve Christians and ATR adherents. Many thorny issues remain unaddressed or have been given a veneer kind of touch. We have such issues like: How could a Christian who becomes the chief or head of the family perform traditional cultural duties attached to his/her office? How could a Christian be conferred with a well merited traditional title? Or as the case with one of the burning issues in Zimbabwean Catholicism: How can the Shona/Ndebele Christians honour their dead and remain feeling at home both in their traditional practises and in the Church?

Dialogue at this level, as recommended also by the African Synod, involves entering into dialogue with the ATR community at the highest levels to work out a formula of rites that would respect the religious beliefs of both parties. Millions of African Christians today want their hierarchy which is now almost completely African, to have that pastoral zeal so that they can give them that much required leadership. Following the example of Pope John Paul II, African Church leaders should gather courage to dialogue with leaders of ATR, not only to promote social and cultural values but also to share common religious experiences like prayer. How revolutionary yet remarkably sound the words of Ikenga-Metuh when he says,

> Church leaders should work out modalities that would permit Catholics to participate in some traditional cultural activities which may have religious overtones like title-taking, the cultural roles of the chief and family heads, initiation rites, some traditional marriage rites, oath and covenant making and some traditional festivals. Failure to participate in these traditional activities that cut across the religious affiliation of Africans leaves the Christians marginalized in their various communities (Ikenga-Metuh, 2000).

Conclusion

To round off the discussion, a polarised state is one of those most less desired situations a person would want to experience. This has been and continues to be the state in which most African Christians find themselves. This chapter has noted that something needs to be done to help the situation and that has been the rationale for advocating inter-religious dialogue which runs through the lines of this chapter. Unless leaders from the Christian community are prepared to bury their pride and meet their fellow brothers and sisters from the African Traditional Religion, then there cannot be any end to the current onslaught of Christianity on traditional religion. Living in a pluralistic world, there is need on the part of the Christian community to keep in touch with the winds of change and leave behind the age-old negative perception of other religious traditions.

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Vengesai Chimininge

17 | UTILIZING AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS FOR THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

African traditional religious beliefs and practices were attacked by the early 19th century missionaries as evil and detrimental to the spiritual life of Christians (Amanze, 1998:1). Early Western scholars lambasted and demonized African traditions arguing that such practices are archaic, primitive, and backward, as well as barriers to development. Kibicho (1981) lamented that such distortions and misinterpretations emanated from either cultural or racist views. For Platvoet (1989) most of the reports on ATR(s) were not based on systematic studies on the beliefs and practices of the Africans. Contrary to the views of the early 19th century missionaries, Reverend W.C. Willoughby cited by Amanze (1998:2) rightly observed that "Bantu life is essentially religious and that the relation of the individual to family, the clan, the tribe and indeed all other aspects of his life good or bad are grounded in bantu religion." In the 1960s, this point was made more forcibly by Mbiti (1969:1) when he argued that "... in Africa, religion integrates all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy to isolate it."

It is in light of such kind of observations from people like Reverend W.C. Willoughby and J.S. Mbiti and others that the author of this chapter is of the view that campaigners of children's rights should utilize African centred approaches in protecting children from different forms of abuse rather than attacking African belief systems and practices. It is in light of this background that this chapter is going to show that there are certain African traditional beliefs and practices that are important to the development of Africa and therefore should not be discarded at the instigation of people of other traditions. We begin this chapter by giving a situational analysis of the plight of children in Zimbabwe. This will be followed by a brief explanation of key terms such as children and African traditional religion. Lastly, the chapter will show how the people of Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole can utilize African traditions for the protection of children against different forms of abuses.

The Plight of Children in Zimbabwe: Background Information

The rights and welfare of children is a current concern in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole. Indeed, children belong to some of the marginalized groups. According to Gecaga (2007), the majority of children in the world are entrapped in various dangers ranging from child labour, sexual abuse, being child soldiers, neglect and abandonment. The ILO 2003 report indicated that Africa has the highest number of child labourers in the world which is about 80 million or 41% (UN 1998). There were some 264 million children aged 5 to 17 in economic activity in the world in 2012 (16.7 per cent). This is 42 million fewer than in 2008. Boys continue to be more exposed to employment than girls (18.1 percent against 15.2 per cent) (Global Labour Trends, 2016).

In Zimbabwe, most of the children are involved in manual work in farms, gold panning and communal areas. The majority of these children work under exploitative, illegal, difficult and precarious conditions. As a result, some of them end up being emotionally, physically and sexually abused (Chimininge, 2013:124). Others end up leaving their homes to live in streets. The political instability for the past decade or so in Zimbabwe has not helped the plight of children. In 2008, some girls were raped by the youth militia during the re-run Presidential Campaigns (RAU Report, August 2011:8). As a result, some of these girls were infected by sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. According to the Girl Child Network, at least 100 girls in Zimbabwe are sexually abused every day (The Sunday Mail). The Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit says about 10 girls were raped daily in 2013 (The Sunday Mail).

This chapter observes that, despite concerted efforts by key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MoWAGCD), Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to implement Article 39 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1999), cases of child sexual abuse remain on the increase in Zimbabwe. It is important to note that conventions and constitutions, though critical for the governing of modern societies, in certain instances fail to benefit the intended beneficiaries. This could also be clear proof that the 'safety' of children cannot be left in the realm of politics. There may be need to reconsider the role of religion. As a result, this

chapter proposes the utilization of existing appropriate African Indigenous Religious beliefs systems, structures and practices as a panacea to the problems affecting children in Zimbabwe and Africa at large. Before making this proposal, let us provide some working definitions for common terms used in this chapter.

Definition of Terms

There are two important terms in this chapter that need to be explained. These are: 'children' and 'African Indigenous/ Traditional Religions.'

Children

Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18. Article 30 of the Convention states that minority or indigenous children have the right to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The right to practice one's own culture, language and religion applies to everyone; the Convention here highlights this right in instances where the practices are not shared by the majority of people in the country. Article 31 indicates that children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

In addition to the definition of the UNCRC, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC) defines a 'child' as a human being below the age of 18 years. It recognises the child's unique and privileged place in African society and that African children need protection and special care. It also acknowledges that children are entitled to the enjoyment of freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, thought, religion, and conscience. It aims to protect the private life of the child and safeguard the child against all forms of economic exploitation and against work that is hazardous, interferes with the child's education, or compromises his or her health or physical, social, mental, spiritual, and moral development. It calls for protection against abuse and bad treatment, negative social and cultural practices, all forms of exploitation or sexual abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation, and illegal

drug use. It aims to prevent the sale and trafficking of children, kidnapping, and begging of children.

From the two understandings of children above, we can deduce that the age limit of a child is 18 years, but the Convention is also leaving room for the country to have its own age limit though encouraged to raise it to 18 years. Therefore, the discussion of children in this chapter is guided by the UNCRC and ACRWC definitions of children.

African Indigenous/ Traditional Religions

African Traditional Religions and Indigenous African Religions are both common terms used to discuss the subject of indigenous faiths found within Africa. Each term is debated among scholars. Some challenge the word 'traditional' and prefer 'indigenous' since 'traditional' can also include traditional African Islam and Christianity. Some scholars such as Mbiti (1969) contend that while using the singular 'African traditional religion,' a plural understanding is needed. Other scholars suggest that these thousands of 'religions' are only differing expressions of the same basic 'religion.' However, many suggest this is problematic as there is no 'genetic' relationship between these plural beliefs to create ideological homology, and the observed similarities can subjectively also be found outside of Africa.

According to Wyatt MacGaffey (undated), the term "African Traditional Religion" is used in two complementary senses. Loosely, it encompasses all African beliefs and practices that are considered religious, but neither Christian nor Islamic. The expression is also used almost as a technical term for a particular reading of such beliefs and practices, one that purports to show that they constitute a systematic whole—a religion comparable to Christianity or any other "world religion." In that sense, the concept was new and radical when it was introduced by Parrinder in 1954 and later developed by Idowu and Mbiti. The intention of these scholars was to protest against a long history of derogatory evaluations of Africans and their culture by outsiders and to replace words such as "heathenism" and "paganism." It is in light of the above explanations that this chapter is going to use African Traditional or Indigenous Religions interchangeably.

According to Gehman (2005:11), African Traditional Religion is not a religion in the Western sense of the word religion. This is so because most African peoples do not distinguish between the sacred and the profane. They have no written scriptures, so members of the community

are trained from childhood to perform prodigious acts of memorization, reciting the whole history of the community for successive generations (Lugira, 2009:16). This means that ATR is lived out in the whole of life; it is a holistic religion that is related to every aspect of life. It permeates the social life of the traditional African. The traditional religion of Africa is not practiced in a segregated compartment of life but permeates all of life. The religion rather drenched the African, as rain drenches the perched ground. In this case, ATR is relevant in all situations. It is the total traditional worldview with all the values and beliefs. It is important to note that many professing Christians rely on ATR in times of crisis that requires special attention. The values of religion, therefore, are the fundamental allegiances to the right and wrong, the moral and immoral, proper and improper (Gehman, 2005:29). Lugira (2009:16) argues that African cultural beliefs and rules for the living are passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. So, followers of ATR make no distinction between religion and other aspects of their lives. Their beliefs are so closely bound to their culture so that religion and culture are one. Religion for Africans is, therefore, not something people do at certain times and in certain places, but it is part of the fabric of living. People and gods are constantly interacting through ritual, prayer, and sacrifice, but mostly through the business of living.

African Traditional Religion as a Source of Safety for Children

Although we propose ATR for the safety of children, let us point out from the onset that the religion has also been abused by some people resulting in it being a source of danger for children. Scholars like Francis Anekwe Oborji (2005), Shoko (2012), Masengwe (2012) and many others have repeatedly claimed that traditional or faith healers prescribe sex between a young girl and an adult male so that the man can improve his business prospects or obtain good luck. A further belief commonly mentioned in the literature is that sex with a young virgin is a cure for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. This is a common assertion in the Zimbabwean literature on child sexual abuse, even though there is no ethnographic evidence to prove it. Perpetrators of abuse from both rural and urban areas have given these myths and beliefs as reasons behind sexual abuse of children, particularly of children below seven (Court Records: Harare Regional Courts, 1996). According to Shoko (2012:101) Karanga cultural beliefs and practices such as pledging (*kuzvarira, kuripa ngozi* and *kugadza mapfiwa)* have also aggravated the

problem of sexual exploitation of children, particularly of girl children. However, Shoko (2012) goes on to suggest that there are certain possible positive roles that ATR can contribute as a source of safety for children.

Like Shoko (2012), this chapter proposes the need to reconsider the utilization of African Traditional Religions as a source of safety for children in times of crises. We call for the utilization of the positive aspects of ATRs which would then guarantee the safety of children. For example, in the traditional society of Africa, all children were considered vulnerable simply because they had very little power over their lives and few skills for protecting and caring for themselves. As a result, children needed to be protected from all forms of danger. The African idea of security and its value depends on a personal identification with and within the community (http://www.emeka.at). The community offers the African the psychological and ultimate security as it gives its members both physical and ideological identity. In support of this idea, Ifemesia (1979:17) argues that community values are a central force in African life and the African view of the world is focused on being part of a communal group. She looks at humane living in Africa "as a way of life emphatically centred upon human interests and values; a mode of living evidently characterized by empathy, and by consideration and compassion for human beings" (1979:2). In African traditional life, a man had the obligation to cater for the widow and orphans of his dead relative. Failure to do this earned him strong public criticism and as a result, it was difficult to find someone in the community without help. As a result, there was no need for orphanages.

Anusiem (2010) looks at the notion of child upbringing in African traditional orature and proposed the need to adopt the African traditional learning processes which integrate every member of the community from infancy. For him, the oral transmission of narratives and customs from older generations to successive ones is done through folktales, folksongs, proverbs, parables and other symbolic verbal forms. It should be noted that a lot of things that come up in adulthood are fecundated during the time of the development of the child. The community thus serves as an educational institution with extensive and effective social, cultural, economic, and religious curriculum. The African community sees the child as an asset of the community in whom it maintains a stake. In addition to this, every member of the community becomes a potential teacher of the child. The community actually takes the responsibility of caring and upbringing of all children. This is in agreement

with the ancient African proverb that says, 'it takes a village to raise a child.' The community is a cohesive unit which ideally provides social, cultural, economic and psychological security in the developmental framework of the children. Thus, within this inclusive African community, children occupy a central place and are brought up in close family groups. The social and cultural development of the child is undertaken and shared by members of the community. Generally, the idea of child upbringing in African socio-cultural context is a community initiative and action oriented. Hence, the African child has many mothers and fathers. From infancy, the community leads the child to develop a strong sense of social responsibility, solid moral base as well as fitting economic and religious education.

The Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA) has outlined a code of practice for traditional healers, which clarifies the responsibility of traditional healers to protect children against abuse. According to the ZINATHA code of practice, a traditional faith healer must not prescribe sex with a minor as a form of treatment nor the use of a young child as compensation for pledging. The code recommends that the payment should be in the form of money or domestic animals of value. It further provides that minors should not be left alone with the healers during treatment. Contravention of the code results in disciplinary measures from the Association as well as legal accusations, such as rape. Although the ZINATHA code of practice enshrines a lot of good provisions, these are unknown to most members. On the other hand, most of the healers who are still prescribing sex with minors are not members of ZINATHA. Little work has been done by the Association to advocate for the universal implementation of the code, particularly to members from the grassroots were the membership is very high. The Association lacks the financial and human resources to do awareness meetings with their grassroots members (personal communication: Mr Sibanda, ZINATHA Secretary for Legal Affairs, 14 September 2014).

Lastly, there is need to pay attention to the use of initiation rites. There are five major African initiation rites which are fundamental to human growth and development. These rites were originally established to link the individual to the community and the community to the broader and more potent spiritual world. Initiation rites are a natural and necessary part of a community, as are arms and legs natural and necessary extension of the human body. These rites are critical to the development of children, and it should not be taken for granted that the young ones

automatically grow and develop into responsible, community-oriented adults. The process of initiation concerns undergoing a fundamental set of rites to start a new phase or beginning in life. It marks the passing from one phase in life to the next, more mature, phase. Initiation fundamentally has to do with transformation and has been a central component of traditional African cultures since time immemorial. The details of the rites vary among the different societies, but these rites are nevertheless basic components of the society as they help guide the person from one stage in life into the next stage of one's life and development, that is, from birth to death and beyond.

Tasha Davis (2011:11) argues that "Rites of passage play a central role in African socialization, demarking the different stages in an individual's development (*gender and otherwise*), as well as that person's relationship and role to the broader community." For Davis, the major stage in African life is the transition from child to adult when they become fully institutionalized to the ethics of the group's culture. Rites of passage are for this reason critical in nation building and identity formation. Manu Ampim (2003) added that initiation rites are critical to individual and community development, and it should not be taken for granted that people automatically grow and develop into responsible, community-oriented adults. For this reason, this chapter argues that rites of passage serve a double purpose in African societies namely; preserving the ongoing community as a symbol of collective immortality and permanence as well as providing a clear and guided means for transition from one life stage and sphere of responsibility to another. For the good of children, rites of passage should be observed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Following the dictates of the UNCRC, African communities should make their own decisions about how to balance traditional and external support structures when dealing with children's issues. In this case we are proposing that for those children who are already victims, reintegration processes should mobilise existing community support structures, including appropriate religious, cultural, educational, psychosocial, protection, and economic structures, for improving the well-being of children, young people and their families. The Kampala Recommendations on the recovery and reintegration of children and youth affected by armed conflict (Kampala Recommendations, 2013), state that linkages with traditional practices, transitional justice approaches should be rele-

vant and appropriate to the local, cultural and situational circumstances, while building on experiences in other settings.

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Marginalization means being disregarded, ostracized, harassed, disliked, persecuted, or generally looked down upon. Marginalized people often include women and children, the poor, the disabled, sexual, religious, or ethnic minorities, refugees. The marginalized are those who are socially, politically, culturally, or economically excluded from main-stream society. In history, the Church in Zimbabwe has played a role in improving the lives of the marginalized, but what is religion, especially Christianity, doing for the marginalized now? Although religion is also implicated in marginalization, the contributions in this volume did not address this angle as they focused on the role that religion can and should play to fight marginalization. The chapters come from two conferences (2012, 2014) that were held under the flag of ATISCA. The contributions have been updated to include later developments and publications.

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