

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 An experience of church's leadership abuse

In July 1986, the author participated for the first time as a delegate from Mazengane parish, Gaza province, when she attending the annual Synod (General Assembly) of the Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (IPM). According to the 23rd Article of the 1963 IPM Constitution, the assembly of a parish elects delegates from among those who are communicant members and from whom the consistory gives good testimony, as their delegates are considered to be their immediate superiors in all organs (IPM Constitution 1963: 24). These delegates assist the minister in his service in the parish, but they also represent the members of the parish in other meetings like the Synod. Therefore, the author's participation to the Hlamankulu Synod was in her capacity as a parish delegate.

The IPM Constitution defines the Synod or General Assembly as “the meeting of the church where leaders, ministers and delegates in representation of their local churches, meet two times per year with the objective of analyzing her evangelistic work” (Ibid: 67).

The IPM Synod was busy analyzing her evangelistic work when the issue of low stipends was raised. The issue of low stipends was raised because it was expected that decisions concerning its increment would be taken. When the discussions started, the author at first felt uncomfortable and as discussions continued her feelings developed to surprise, and then shock. The emotional reaction of the author was due to the revelation of the insignificant amount of stipends that were being paid to the church workers were unexpected. For example, a minister received five thousand Meticais monthly. This amount corresponded to R2.00 (two rand) in South African currency (according to the rate exchange in 2008).

While Mozambique had been experiencing a difficult financial situation since her

independence in 1975, stipends paid to church workers were irrelevant for their function, qualification and responsibility, which was the reason why the author was shocked.

From that moment, the author considered the IPM practice to be an atrocity. An overwhelming desire of ending this shameful practice took control of her. The severity of pain that she felt can be compared to an abrupt and unexpected childbirth. Only a woman who has experienced such suffering can understand what the author wants to say.

While carefully listening to the delegates interventions, different emotions continued to emerge in her. The desire to offer help and to show care for the IPM workers dominated her. With a wholehearted commitment to addressing this issue at a Synod, she raised her voice to propose twenty thousand Meticaais as the monthly stipends to be paid to a minister.

For her surprise and shame, another woman responded to this proposal, suggesting that the amount rather be increased to a mere twelve thousand Meticaais. These two proposals led to heated discussions among the Synod attendants.

As a follow up, the Synod nominated a committee to deal with the issue, but it never met to carry out its mandate. Surprisingly, there were no further discussions on the issue by the IPM Synod during the following years.

It seems to the author that the IPM' leadership failed by not providing a "sensitive, listening ear" (Gerkin 1997: 99) to the plight of her workers. When members feel that their leaders listen carefully, they develop a sense of belonging that overcome barriers (D' Souza 2001: 143). Because the IPM leadership failed to provide to the Synod a climate that could have lifted up the self-esteem of workers and members, the situation of low stipends is still a serious problem and a source of discontent and indignation within the church.

As aforementioned, it was very hard for the author to believe that ministers who bless individuals, families, and the wider society through their services were living and doing

their work in such dehumanizing conditions. How can one remains silent while the IPM is denying them their rights to receive good and sound stipends? How can it be possible to turn a blind eye to such injustices happening and affecting women, men, and their children day after day and year after year?

The pain of these workers was exacerbated by the fact that their colleagues who were working only part-time for the IPM and had found part-time employment elsewhere were comfortable with their situation, because this combined monthly income could sustain their families with fewer difficulties. It seems to the author that their apparent wellbeing made it difficult for them to voice support for their colleagues in this regard. Instead, the economic situation and social differences among the two groups of church workers fostered division. Certainly, the leadership of the church had marginalized these full-time workers, and their suffering and that of their families was ostensibly ignored. Hence, their efforts and dedication to the church seemed not to be appreciated.

As the issue of receiving low stipends is considered to be an injustice and abuse that traumatizes individuals and families, the author felt that this was an opportunity for her to speak out and to show care.

The absence of a listening ear from the leadership of the church, coupled with the apparent apathy of the community to the constant appeals of workers, caused trauma to church workers and their families. The circumstances in which these workers lived showed “prolonged and repeated trauma that only occurs in circumstances of captivity” (Herman 1997: 74).

The author had to reflect on captivity a lot, because it is hard for her to understand what could cause these workers to be so submissive. As captivity is generally responsible for “the destruction of the sense of autonomy” (Ibid: 70) on their victims (which seemed to be the case in this instance), one can assume that these workers were psychologically dominated. These workers seemed to be so depleted of energy that they were unable to establish either a sense of order in their life or strive for a sense of justice.

This was the first time in her life that the author directly testified to the injustices and

abuse of workers from the leadership of her church, the IPM.

Having shared the way in which the author came to know about the practice of paying low stipends to IPM workers, the author will now explain what is meant by 'stipends' in the IPM.

1.1.2 What are Stipends?

There is a difference between salary and stipends. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2005), salary is the amount of money that employees receive for doing their job, and is paid every month. Stipends are an amount of money that is paid regularly to somebody, especially a priest, and serve as wages or money to live on (Ibid: 1453).

The IPM workers receive payment in the form of stipends, because they are paid whenever it is possible for the church to do. Within the IPM, stipends are known as 'mphamu'. The profound meaning of the word mphamu is that someone is unable to sustain him or herself. Because of his or her inability to produce their own bread, others have the moral obligation to provide them with something so that he or she may survive. Therefore, members of the church are forced to give mphamu to their workers so that they can survive. It thus seems that church members see their workers as incompetent and as people with low instruction. This indicates that those involved with finance in the church give mphamu primarily through pity, and do not appear to consider paying stipends to the church worker to be a priority. They thus pay mphamu when possible, and they cut it when they decide to. This may be the reason that church workers have grown to hate the word mphamu as mentioned by Mazenzule, who is one of the co-researchers, that:

We do not have salary in the church. We are only given mphamu, as if we were beggars. We learned to live with this situation; and, in order to maintain our integrity, we work on agriculture, we raise poultry, and do other activities that allow us to have the daily bread. The mphamu that we receive does not cover a quarter of our basic needs. We were sensitised to accept mphamu because we belong and are citizens of this country, contrarily to Swiss missionaries who were foreigners (Mazenzule 25/02/2009).

It seems to the author that a series of reasons make the practice of paying or receiving low stipends a shameful and hated practise by church workers. These reasons are:

- All church workers receive the same amount, independently of their academic instruction;
- The amount is independent of the place (geographical) in where they are exercising their ministry;
- The amount is also independent of the level of responsibility they hold; and
- The way in which church workers are treated shows a lack of consideration; they feel as if they were mendicants.

The practice of paying stipends as it is done within the IPM forces the author to investigate its sources. The preliminary information that she collected indicates shows that this practice has been in since the beginning of the church.

According to the definition provided above, “stipends must be paid regularly as wages” (Synod report 1996: 4).. However, within the IPM this principle seems to be ignored or not respected, as a worker can wait for months or even years to be paid. The author pondered why this practice was being tolerated by the Church.

For the author, the practice of paying low stipends within the IPM merits attention. The practice needs to be challenged, and the involvement of IPM’S church workers, its leadership, and members strongly encouraged. The involvement of all is felt to be necessary, because it seems that this practice carries abuse and injustices. It also seems that the leadership of the church is unable to challenge it alone as the leadership has argued that they are unable to address this issue due to the severe financial constraints of the Church. The author thus needs to ascertain the reasons behind the Church being so financially dependent.

1.1.3 Why is the IPM financially dependent?

While the practice of paying low stipends continues, the social conditions of the IPM

workers deteriorate year after year, contributing to the growing phenomenon of dependency disorder of the IPM.

However, the literature surveyed by the author has indicated that that the IPM has been dependent for years (Manganhela 1971: 1) It also seems that the phenomenon of dependency disorder is caused by the dissatisfaction of church workers who, in many of the cases, are no longer providing Bible studies to church members (as was affirmed by the Co-researchers); further, it seems that these ministers are also no longer spending time caring for members of the congregation when they are need. The immediate consequences of this behaviour may be easing the responsibilities of members, especially in terms of their financial contribution. This attitude certainly results in the decrease of the members' contributions for the IPM budget. Then, the leaders of the church seek help from the mother church. As the situation deteriorates year after year, the IPM becomes increasingly financially dependent. Therefore, the author needs to know the real motives behind the dependency of the IPM so that the two problems identified by this research may be solved simultaneously.

While investigating this problem, the author took time to find out what practices other protestant churches were employing in terms of paying their workers. It was interesting to note that the practice of paying low stipends was a generalized one. Nevertheless, the author observed that there are important differences between the IPM and these other churches.

Ricardo (not his real name) told the author that in his church there is a system of control on how much a minister has to be paid. The amount collected each Sunday is immediately given to the pastor. Apart from this, members are divided in groups that guaranty monthly food for the minister. He also told the author that in his opinion, this practice is not a good one, because there are members who are not happy to see that the money they give to their Church for the purpose of church work is instead handed over to the minister. They would prefer for their money to be used for something else, and specifically for their Church itself.

Wilson (not his real name), stated that his church awakened when ministers lived it and joined other congregations and institutions. When the leadership of the church met to analyze the situation, it reached the conclusion that important changes had to be introduced in order to value the ministry of their church. After many meetings and discussions, they decided that members of the church have to contribute monthly in the form of goods for the welfare of their ministers, while continuing to pay stipends (the amount of which are revised annually). Simultaneously, the tithe was introduced. They are sure that in a short period of time they will be able to pay good stipends to their ministers, because the community is thus far responding favourably to this solution.

The IPM is a national church with many workers. The material conditions of her members differ from region to region. This prompts the author to ponder whether examples like the above could also be introduced successfully here, or would such a solution possibly exacerbate the differences between the regions and add more pain to those who are already calling for justice? The author's personal opinion is that she, along with her Co-researchers, needs to arrive at a solution that will satisfy the IPM workers, leaders and members.

It was because of injustices that were inflicted on people by the priests in Israel that God rebuked them, as mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah:

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustices, who uses his neighbour's service without wages, and gives him nothing for his work (Jer. 22:13).

The author interprets the above passage of Scripture as an alert to those in power who have no concern for their workers. They are advised that God sees them and their actions, and rejects their attitude.

Similarly, when Jesus started his Mission on earth, He announced liberty to the captives through saying that "the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him and enabled Him to proclaim

liberty to the captives” (Luke 4: 18), because injustices were rampant. Jesus’ will is to see humanity enjoying justice and living in peace and harmony with others, God and the environment.

The sense of captivity that the IPM workers seemed to live in made the author ask herself questions such as, “What causes these ministers to remain silent? What causes them to be so submissive? How does the situation affect or not relationship among the church workers and their families? What are the core values that the IPM stands for and defends? Do IPM leaders act intentionally and deliberately against workers in order to inflict more pain on them or are they convinced that they are living and doing what pleases God? Does it please God to be served by people who are simply resigned to their work, instead of finding joy in their job? How does the community evaluate the service delivered by church workers?”

The above questions challenged the author to find out how is the IPM is organized and administered, that is, how she is governed, and ruled, and how conventions are made and followed. From this time, the author decided to question the Autonomy of the IPM in order to know how it is cared so that workers feel happy with it.

1.1.4 Why question Autonomy?

It is felt that it is necessary to question Autonomy, because the IPM uses a Constitution that was written by the Swiss Missionaries before their withdrawal. All the decisions that the IPM takes in her Synod are supported by this Constitution. The salary policy is also supported by the Constitution. This means that all of the IPM’s actions depend upon the Constitution that was approved in 1963. This Constitution could thus be considered to be the mother of the IPM Autonomy. Therefore, it is necessary to question the Autonomy in order to find sources of the practice of paying low stipends, as it is only through knowing the sources that one can challenge them and propose changes.

The situation of the stagnation of the IPM may be compared to the story of the man

healed by Jesus at the pool of Bethesda as mentioned in the gospel of John. Reading this passage, one has genuine difficulties in understanding what prompted the man to remain by the pool for thirty eight years, and why did he failed to answer Jesus' question that: "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5: 6).

Similarly, the IPM members may have genuine difficulties in understanding and challenging the reasons behind the stagnation of their church so as to be able to affirm their will for real Autonomy. Questioning Autonomy will open space for questioning the practice of paying low stipends; for questioning dependency and for questioning how did the IPM get this Autonomy and why. Therefore, this research is an attempt to answer questions that not only confronted the author but also those of other members of the church.

Akiiki said, "The recognition of the problem is already a major step towards a solution" (Akiiki 1995 in Waruta 1995: 15). One recognizes that the IPM is sick and needs to be healed. The healing will be possible if she is challenged with questions that will help her to reflect, to analyze own praxis as an autonomous church "with a view of promoting freedom from *dependency* [italics mine] (Pieterse 2004: ix).

The author is not the only minister who is preoccupied with seeing the IPM coming out from the true sense of Autonomy. Many others have questioned the motives that have made her dependent. Andre Karamaga is among those who have expressed their concern, observing that many churches may no longer be considered to be Autonomous, as they are more loyal to their donors than to the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. He says:

Indeed, the fear of change among our church leaders; the absence of any creative activity in the intellectual, pastoral or liturgical fields; their desire to control everything without any transparency; their wish to suppress anything which does not function in accordance with their image of orthodoxy only serve to keep our communities preoccupied with superficial issues (Karamaga 1995 in Waruta 1995: 71)

The above example portrays the drama of Autonomy within the IPM. Members feel as if an invisible hand is making them play a strange game and causing them to adapt to a

situation. They feel strange in their own land. This situation prevents them from singing the Lord's song in their own land (Psalm 137: 4).

The writing of a thesis on Male Clergy Abuse of their Spouses in 2007 stimulated the author desire of knowing more about the IPM' Autonomy. The women that the author interviewed denounced arbitrary transferences of their husbands from one parish to another when they faced social problems. This practice instead of helping the minister or the couple, it transferred problems to the whole church. This procedure made the author question how Pastoral Care was implemented within the IPM.

Similarly, the preliminary research on Autonomy has indicated that the IPM defends a theology of self-denial. It will not be possible to understand the practice of paying low stipends without first questioning this theology.

1.1.5 The Theology of Self-denial

It was eight years later that God opened the doors for the author to learn more about the IPM. Indeed, in 1994 she was appointed to work as HIV and AIDS program coordinator for the IPM. She profited from this opportunity by gathering information that could help her understand how the IPM is administrated.

The contact with both people in need and with the church's leadership, coupled with her participation in decision-making bodies, provided the author with the opportunity to be faced with many stories concerning various forms of abuse of power in the church. The abuse was experienced by individuals, couples, and even communities as being traumatic in nature. How could these "traumatic experiences accept to be buried" (Herman 1997: 1)? Indeed, Jesus told the Jews that if disciples keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out (Luke 19: 40). Jesus wanted to teach them that atrocities must not to be buried or ignored.

Two years later, the author deepened her understanding of the dehumanizing situation in which the IPM workers lived when she was elected General Treasurer for the IPM.

This new post allowed her to listen to the stories of pain as a result of receiving low stipends, but it also offered her the opportunity to begin challenging this practice by proposing measures of reducing expenses and by using this money to increase the stipends (Financial report 2000: 3).

The proposing of better stipends was supported by the Constitution. The 21st Article states that “although workers of the IPM accept self denial, the church must do its best in order to assure sufficient stipends because this will make them available for God’s service” (IPM Constitution 1963: 22).

The major challenge for the author was to understand how the leadership, workers and members interpreted the above article. She questioned whether those who accepted God’s calling had knowledge of this article, and whether they knew that the church expected them to accept low stipends’ payment as a form of self-denial? The author’s hope was to find answers to this question through her Co-researchers. She also hopes that through this research, a solution will be found to address the issue of low stipends. The Constitution makes it clear that the IPM must increase these stipends continually, so as to make her workers available for God’s mission. Therefore it is important to question not only the issue of low stipends, but also this of dependency of the IPM on her mother church as these two issues concern all members of the IPM.

The author’s proposal of increasing the stipends paid to church workers did not solve their problems due to debt that the workers had incurred. Many of them were unable to clear any salary for themselves at the end of the month, because they had already borrowed all the money. Indeed, some of the workers owed the institution itself.

1.1.6 Consequences of getting low stipends

The painful experience of getting low stipends may have forced some workers to leave the church and to look for better-paid employment elsewhere. Others joined different denominations and faith-based organizations. Those who joined faith-based organizations continued to work for the IPM during weekends. This picture and its

traumatic effects affect the whole church.

Members also question why the IPM leadership is maintaining this situation, which in turn prompts the author to question the Autonomy of the IPM further. In a Presbyterian system, decisions are made by the Synod so there is a need to know why the Synod has remained silent in this regard. Why are church workers choosing to serve in other institutions, which is a clear prejudice of the IPM, but nobody questions their attitude? What then is happening that prevents delegates from assuming their roles?

Working as General Treasurer for the IPM reinforced the author's calling. She decided to continue with the theological studies that she had interrupted, and accordingly sought permission to do so. Now, she herself is a minister and is experiencing the pain of getting low stipends and of having to wait long time to be paid 'poorly' firsthand.

1.1.7 Personal Experience of not being paid

When the author concluded her BA Practical Theology Studies in 2007, the leadership of the IPM transferred her to Namaacha, a parish that is situated seventy kilometers away from her home. The immediate consequences of this transfer can be summarized as follows:

- She had to travel to Namaacha, because no accommodation was available for her there;
- She did not have transport of her own, and as a result depended upon the public transport system that did not have regular schedules;
- This erratic transport often resulted in the author only being able to join the worship services more than half an hour after its beginning. Therefore, she failed to provide the Holy Communion in established occasions;
- Due to the lack of accommodation near her parish and the difficulty in obtaining reliable transportation, she also occasionally failed to provide pastoral care for church members in times of sicknesses, death and to provide spiritual comfort;
- She led a parish where she could not provide adequate services, hence, she

was not paid because the community budget was insufficient and the administration of the IPM refused to acknowledge this problem, despite being informed;

- For the first time in her life she experienced firsthand what it meant to be employed without being paid;
- For the first time she felt useless and worthless as a minister;
- She also felt as though she was failing as a mother, because she was absent from home for long periods of time;
- She also felt as though she was failing as a person, because the parish was not able to pay her as well as the church administration was being paid.

In summary, she was not receiving even the low stipends that she was supposed to receive. This situation remained unchanged for two long years. During all this period, she was unable to contribute to her household, and felt frustrated that she could not bring anything home to show that she was working.

From the author's personal experience it seemed as if the church's leadership:

- Does not care for their workers;
- Does not care for the congregations;
- Does not protect the Institution's image; and
- The spiritual dynamic is weak and governance is weak, which combine to result in a bad economy.

The above picture shows that the IPM has no concern for justice, peace and love, which are the core basic values that Christ asks all Christians to respect. Without respectfully implementing these basic values, IPM members will continue to be prevented from enjoying fullness of life (John 10:10b).

It is for the search of fullness of life promised by Jesus Christ that the author decided to question the Autonomy of the IPM. By knowing why the IPM is failing to provide adequate stipends to her workers, the author will be in a good position to continue her

calling for providing better Pastoral Care Ministry.

1.1.8 The need for Pastoral Care

The author is a practical theologian who, challenged by the abuse in the church, began to understand the kind of her calling. Indeed, during the sixties, while she was still very young, she took care of missionaries' children. She learned how to play with them and which kind of games they appreciated the most; she learned how to tell stories that captured their attention and stimulated their imagination and she learned how to select songs that led to their peaceful sleeping. Later, when she had turned nineteen she applied for a course at hospital, and completed the course three years later. Then, she worked as laboratory analyst for fifteen years. She was forced to leave this job in order to take care of her husband after he was involved in a car accident that left him badly handicapped. All the above experiences endowed her with special skills. She believes that God was preparing her to care for His flock. Gerkin wrote that:

From very early in recorded biblical history the custom was established of designating three classes of such leaders: the priests, a hereditary class that had particular responsibility for worship and ceremonial life; the prophets who spoke for Yahweh in relation to moral issues, sometimes rebuking the community and its stated political leaders; and the wise men and women, who offered counsel of all sorts concerning issues of the good life and personal conduct (Gerkin 1997: 23).

Taking care for children who spoke in a different language in her youth encouraged the author to learn this language in order to be able to communicate with them. Now, decades later, she is experiencing the joy of being able to read and understand decisions written in French by Swiss missionaries. These decisions were taken in order to develop a systematic core of statements that guided the IPM towards Autonomy. She can consider herself as a wise woman who is offering her service to the welfare of the IPM.

The above example shows that the author's present role stems directly from her past experiences as a caring person. Now that she is a minister and experiencing the pain of getting low stipends, she is in a good position to challenge this practice, and to ask what

the role to be played by shepherds is, as aforementioned by Gerkin.

A shepherd is expected to care for, to protect, to guide, to direct his/her flock and to do it courageously and “*to help the flock to liberate itself from any kind of bondage that threatens the image of God on it*” [italics mine] (D’ Souza 2001: 45).

As a liberator, the author must help the IPM to liberate herself so that she enjoys her autonomy. As a reconciler, she must also help the IPM to find ways out from bad economy so that she can pay good stipends that will transform workers into God’s image that they are meant to represent.

Like the Psalmist, she can affirm that “God brought her up out from a horrible pit, set her feet upon a rock, established her steps” (Psalm 40: 1-3), so that she can call her colleagues to trust the Lord, while challenging the practice of getting low stipends that is associated with the dependency phenomena disorder that seems to destroy the IPM.

The author finds that it is important to contextualize the IPM by describing the situation in Mozambique. Therefore she will share a brief history of this country.

1.2 Brief History of Mozambique

Mozambique is situated at the Southern part of Africa. It is surrounded by Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland. To the East lies the Indian Ocean with an extension of two thousands four hundred and seventy kilometers. The country has eleven provinces, hundred twenty eight districts and forty three municipalities.

Mozambique was colonized by Portugal in 1498 and remained under Portuguese rule until she gained her independence on 25 June 1975 after fighting for ten years through the liberation movement led by FRELIMO (Mozambican Front for Liberation).

The Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (IPM) is one of the historic churches operating

in the country. In the following section the author will share the background of the IPM. This background will help the reader to better understand the need to research the Autonomy of the IPM.

1.2.1 The Birth of the IPM

The birth of the IPM goes back to 1880 when Yosefa Mhalmhala went to Mozambique in search of his family members who had been scattered by the war between Mawewe and Muzila. While in Maputo, he invited all those he met to listen to the gospel and to pray (Junod 1933: 103; Butselaar 1987: 36; Cruz e Silva 2001: 40; Harries 2007: 69). The stories of the Bible impressed his listeners to such an extent that when he returned to Spelonken, South Africa, he shared his experiences in his Sunday worship. This experience greatly impressed the missionary Ernest Creux, who was present at the above worship (Junod 1933: 104; Butselaar 1987: 36- 38)

Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud are acknowledged as being the pioneers of Swiss missionary work in South Africa and Mozambique (Junod 1933: 52; BMS 1886/87: 4-7; Shimati 1954: 5; Butselaar 1987: 23, 31; Biber 1987: 19-20; Maluleke 1995: 19; Harries 2007: 21; Gil 2008: 45) According to Nwandula, in 1869 Creux and Berthoud offered themselves to their church, the Free Church of the Canton de Vaud in Switzerland, to establish a foreign mission. After due consideration, the Synod of their church accepted their offer and the Mission of the Church of Vaud (Mission Vaudoise) was inaugurated (Nwandula 1998: 44).

In 1872, Creux and Berthoud departed to Lesotho under the auspices of the PEMS (Paris Evangelical Missionary Society) where they spent three years. In 1875 they left Lesotho for the North Eastern Transvaal. They arrived in the Zoutpansberg, at an area that the local Afrikaners referred to as Spelonken (caves), they began their mission work. They called the new station 'Valdezia' in honor to their country Vaud (Ibid: 44; Shimati 1954:6)

Therefore, people from four countries with different cultures, (Switzerland, Lesotho,

South Africa and Mozambique) came together for the sake of evangelization.

Yosefa Mhalmhala who started the evangelization of the Mozambicans in Delagoa Bay (later Maputo), was converted by a Sotho evangelist named Bethuel. He joined Valdezia in 1878, and was immediately baptized and married. As already mentioned, in 1880 he went to Mozambique. When he returned to Spelonken, he shared the news concerning the conversions made in Delagoa Bay. His report impressed the missionary Ernest Creux.

According to Butselaar, from the day that the missionary heard Mhalmhala's story, he decided to prepare him as evangelist. By the following year (1881), the preparation of Mhalmhala as evangelist was in place.

Meanwhile, Swiss missionaries wanted to know if there were possibilities of establishing a protestant mission in Delagoa Bay. Together with the Tsonga Christian community that had gathered in Spelonken, they officially decided to send Mhalmhala, Hakamela Tlakula, David Marumo and Efraim Madjokwane to Mozambique on an expedition that aimed at:

- Initiating contacts with traditional leaders with the aim of obtaining permission for the establishment of missionary activities in their territories;
- Sharing the gospel with everyone;
- Studying the climate;
- Knowing the kind of food that was produced in each territory; and
- For giving a letter to the Portuguese governor in Maputo, asking his permission to establish a Protestant mission in the country.

The expedition was successful. The chief Magudzu welcomed the initiative.

On their way back to Spelonken, the delegation took Loice Xintomana and her husband Eliachib Mandlakusasa who later, together with Mhalmhala, become the founders and pillars of an African church that in 1948 was baptized as Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (IPM) (Butselaar 1987: 40-44).

The report of these missionary pioneers was very much appreciated by the Christian community at Spelonken. As a result, the community made a voluntary contribution for the establishment of a mission near the chief Magudzu. Thus, the community was declaring the intention of establishing a church that could be self-propagating, self-governing, and self-sustaining.

On 23 April 1882, Yosefa Mhalmhala was inducted as an evangelist, pastor, and missionary to his people (Ibid: 45).

Commenting about the presence of Mozambicans in South Africa, Titus Mobie affirms that:

Historically, geographically and linguistically there are strong ties between the people of Southern Mozambique, mostly those that dwell along the eastern part of the Kruger National Park.

When the Portuguese regime came for the first time in 1498, it found that the Tsonga people had, for over more than eight hundred years, been in what is now the Kruger National Park (Mobie 2008:19-20).

Mobie is right in this assertion, because the evangelization of the southern part of Mozambique was done by those who were instructed in Christian faith at Spelonken in South Africa. The ties between the inhabitants of these two countries and the sharing of evangelism continue to date. The majority of the Vatsonga living in Transvaal were originally from Mozambique, who went to South Africa as refugees fleeing the wars, hunger, and draughts; and also seeking employment in the mines. During their visit to their home land, they founded Christian communities that were later annexed by Western missions.

The designation Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (IPM) was announced in 1948, when the church launched Autonomy. During its sixty six years of existence before Autonomy, the IPM was known as Swiss Mission (SM).

The sister church of the IPM in South Africa is called Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA). These sister churches were originally one church, and were only split with the introduction of Apartheid in South Africa. The apartheid system

prevented the two churches from continuing to share human, financial, and spiritual resources. Now, efforts are being made in order to make up for the lost time.

Five years later, Mhlahhala and his fellows founded the bases for the establishment of the IPM. Antioca, Ricatla and Catembe are the spiritual centers where they developed their activities (Biber 1987: 25; BMS 1888-89: 42; Butselaar 1987: 97; Chirinda 2008: 15).

In 1887, Paul Berthoud joined the above founders and implanted the Swiss Mission (BMS 1886-87: 321-324; Butselaar 1987: 97-98; Harries 2007: 75).

Paul Berthoud is therefore the founder of the Swiss Mission in Mozambique, and he continued to work there until the end of his life. His tomb is in Ricatla, the spiritual center of Protestantism in Mozambique.

Below is summarized the work developed by the Swiss Mission in Mozambique.

The IPM developed through the guidance and missionary work of the Reformed Church from Swiss Romand. This work involved in the beginning the Cantons of Vaud and Neuchatel through the first envoys Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud in 1875. Later they were joined by Arthur Grandjean and Henry Alexandre Junod.

Since 1948, the leadership of the IPM was transferred to the Mozambicans through a process called 'LUMUKU' – Autonomy. However, the complete Autonomy of the IPM was only reached with the signing of the 1970 Convention.

It is widely acknowledged that the evangelistic work being conducted in local languages, the formal and informal education, the profound involvement in social work all strongly contribute towards the formation of a conscious citizenship among the members of the IPM.

This peculiar evangelistic action of the IPM during a period when the country was under colonial dominance is nationally seen and recognized as having strongly contributed to the emergence of the Mozambican nationalism. Indeed, the efforts and educational programs of the church contributed not only to surpassing the educational needs, but

also to offering an alternative formation to that of the colonial system. In this way, the church educational system contributed to raising nationalist leadership. Eduardo Mondlane, the architect of the Mozambican unity, is a symbol of inspiration in realizing the values of the missionary educational system.

Through the above engagement, the IPM attracted the attention of the colonial Police of the Defense of the State (PIDE - International Police of Defense of State). This Police body thus persecuted and imprisoned members and leaders of the IPM. Zedequias Manganhela, the first Mozambican pastor to be elected as Synod Council President, and José Sidumu, the evangelist, were barbarically assassinated in prison by the PIDE in 1972 (IPM 2009).

The above summary does not indicate how the Swiss missionaries developed their activities in order to create structures that were in accordance with the Western culture and how this affected the self-esteem of the natives. It further does not inform how the process toward Autonomy was carried out, which Articles of the 1963 Constitution defended the payment of low stipends, and why the church is still struggling to reach effective Autonomy. These will be examined in chapter four, when the author discusses the Autonomy of the IPM.

Having shared the necessary information that provides a background and context of the study, the author will move on to the problem statements that the research study aims to address.

1.3 Problem Statement

The background indicated that the IPM needs evangelists, ministers, administrative staff, and other collaborators in order to be able to accomplish her mission. Accordingly, all those who feel God's calling enter the ministry. They do so knowing that they would not be earning competitive salaries like their counterparts working for the government or the private sector. In spite of this limitation, it is acknowledged that many church workers do their work with great dedication through their teachings and by carefully

finding solutions to the problems that are affecting their members. Therefore, it is expected that the church will aid them in addressing the challenge of being underpaid. Instead, the church continues to pay her workers poorly. When the parishes they serve fail to pay the expected monthly stipends, no one is available or prepared to sit down with them to find amicable solution to their own problems.

The IPM's workers and family starve by getting low stipends and for having to wait for long periods of time to receive these low stipends. They interpret the silence of their leaders as neglect and an abuse of power. While the workers are struggling to avoid the problem, different emotions which make them experience feelings of trauma and a sense of "dissociation" (Herman 1997: 1) emerge.

Trauma is reinforced by their inability to face the vulnerable situation in which they find themselves. For the majority of Mozambicans, vulnerability equates with weakness (Chamango, 1998), which makes the Autonomy of the IPM dysfunctional and an issue of concern to all church workers (including the author).

The practice of paying low stipends can mean different things. Firstly, it can mean that the IPM is unable to sensitize members to be committed Christians that give generously. This fosters a sense of dependency on the mother church in order to survive. It can also mean that she does not have policies that help her avoid injustices; she does not have Pastoral Care System or simply that she is lazy.

This is the reason the IPM members have to be called to analyze the dangers of living in such a situation. In order to find solutions, the IPM has to have the courage to question herself and her constituencies by answering the following questions:

- Why is the IPM paying low stipends to her workers?
- What is Autonomy?
- How do workers and members experience the Autonomy of their church? How do they care for it?
- What kind of theology is the IPM addressing? How is it practiced for the welfare

of workers and members?

- What challenges is the IPM giving to her members, majority of whom are business people, in order to address the poor state of their church?
- What does it mean for members who receive blessings from the minister and be successful in their enterprises, but forget to give their tithes to God?
- How do members respond to being served by a hungry, sick, and discouraged minister?
- How is the IPM managing the resources (human, financial, and material) entrusted to her by her members?
- What must be done so that workers feel valued and important in their calling and service in the church?
- How can the leadership of the IPM be empowered in order to deliver good services to her constituencies and good image to the society?
- How can Pastoral Care Ministry be introduced and guarantee that it is implemented correctly?

The problem of getting low stipends (if at all) has become a norm in the IPM that appears to troubles nobody. The information is reported at annual Synods, but it is not addressed from the Pastoral Care point of view (cf. 1986: 2; 1987: 3; 1996: 5).

As a practical theologian who is concerned with the phenomena of dependency of the IPM and of her practice of paying low stipends to workers, the author believes that one must serve as a mediator and reconciler between individual believers and the community of Christians (Gerkin, 1997:81). She therefore feels that she is personally being called upon to meet the needs of the IPM, the workers, and the community. She also feels that through searching for a healthy Autonomy, she can offer help so that solutions can be found that ultimately support the IPM. This exercise will require her to question both the meaning and the functionality of the IPM Autonomy. This questioning corresponds to the aims of the research study.

1.4 Aims of the Study

This research aims at caring and empowering leaders and members of the IPM pastorally. The IPM leadership is silent and the workers felt as though their rights were being neglected and abused. The aims will be achieved by addressing four objectives, namely:

- To liberate the IPM from her practice of paying low stipends to her workers and from dependency;
- To liberate the IPM from her failure of getting Autonomy;
- To empower the IPM leadership and members; and
- To introduce a Pastoral Care Ministry of healing and liberation.

In order to find appropriate answers that will help the author address the above objectives and aims, she will invite the IPM leadership, workers, and members of the church to be involved in the research process. She will also invite workers and members to serve as Co-researchers, to actively participate in their common search for solutions, where they will be encouraged to share their stories and knowledge by responding to a pre-designed questionnaire that has been developed for this research (See Appendixes II).

It is hoped that from scrutinizing these stories and outcomes from the questionnaire, the Co-researchers will reveal the values, beliefs, and other practices upon which the IPM played her faith during fifty years of her Autonomy (1948-1998).

This knowledge will identify some of the reasons that cause the IPM to be dependent on the mother church and to continue paying low stipends to her workers. Then, the IPM praxis will be challenged by a liberation theology that will fight the practice of paying low stipends to workers and the phenomena of dependency disorder. It is hoped that this will empower both leaders and members, and ultimately lead to the process of healing and reconciliation among members of the church and with their Creator.

Because of its specificity, the present research addresses issues that concern the IPM as a national church. This leads the author to explain the reasons of this limitation

below.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Research Study

The Swiss Mission had four areas of activity in Mozambique, namely the church, education, health, and agriculture. In 1948, the Swiss Mission asked members of the Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (IPM) to choose which of these four areas those they most wanted to lead. Members chose to remain with the church. Therefore, the other three areas remained entirely in the hands of the Swiss Mission after the 1948 Autonomy (Lumuku).

The present study deals with the Autonomy of the church, and more specifically how the IPM is dealing with the issue of paying the salaries of her workers, as well as the causes of her dependency.

Because of its nature, this study is limited to the Mozambican context, particularly to the Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (IPM). This is so because the IPM has many unique features that can not be totally found or reproduced elsewhere. Despite the limitation that this brings to the study, the author hopes that lessons from this study could be applied to other contexts in Africa and beyond.

Most of the issues to be addressed are related to the way in which Autonomy was attained and carried out by different generations of the IPM leaders, workers, and members. All of these generations wished to reach a moment where all would rejoice because of the progress attained. However, it seems that despite more than fifty years of Autonomy, the IPM workers still ignore what it means to live in dignity. It also seems that the absence of a dignified life is linked to the infinitesimally small amount of money (Mphamu) that church workers receive as their monthly wages.

Despite the humiliation that IPM workers claim to be experiencing due to their low stipends, they often remain silent. It seems that they are resigned, but at the same time

they are revolted because they perceive their work as being a 'heavy burden'. This situation leads to the third concern, which is the dependency phenomenon. In order to understand this phenomenon, the author will work with Co-researchers, in an effort to find the sources of it. The author hopes to demonstrate how dependency destroys both the workers and the church. Then, it will be necessary to know what needs to be changed in order to transform the system and restore hope, dignity, and self-esteem back to the IPM.

As a mediator and reconciler of God's people, who also knows the source of the misfortune of the IPM workers, the author will need to find the most appropriate treatment for their wounds. Therefore, she will develop praxis of liberation that will empower leaders, workers, and members of the IPM. This praxis will conform to the teachings of the Bible, while also drawing from the experience of selected scholars who have developed therapeutic models of healing.

It is both necessary and important to note that this study is not saying or presupposing that all church workers in Mozambique are getting low stipends or that they are disadvantaged. It further does not say that they have all gone through similar experiences to those described above. Therefore the author is obliged to clarify why the present study is relevant.

1.6 The Significance of the Research Study

The church has existed for centuries with a system of rules and customs. When failure is identified, this may mean that the final objectives of an undertaken project were either not achieved or had unexpected results. According to Mugambi:

Many of our grandparents saw Jesus as a doctor who healed them when they were sick or as a savior when they were ostracized or condemned to death. Our parents might have seen Jesus as a teacher who provided the needy with skills to survive in the contemporary society (Mugambi, 1997: 20)

Mugambi is inviting the church to clearly define the role that Jesus plays in its theology or, how it interprets His deeds.

From the above statement, the IPM is challenged to share how it views Jesus, and more specifically how it identifies itself with Him and how it uses this identity to liberate itself from both the bondage of paying low stipends to her workers and from dependency. This is the role of theology in the branch of Practical Theology.

1.6.1 Defining Practical Theology

Practical Theology is a science that helps people to know God, as affirmed by Pieterse:

Theology engages in the actions of understanding, making things comprehensive and appropriating or apprehending which is essentially a communication process. The field of practical theology is to convey the faith and to communicate it through mediatory actions (Pieterse, 2004: 8)

Pieterse's statement helps us to understand how to engage members of the IPM, particularly in communicating the Good News to members in a way that reflects that life has been inherently challenged, changed, and liberated from the bondage of evil that destroys the image of God on them. Once liberated, members will be willing to know how the IPM is carrying out its commitments to its members. This process will help in identifying tensions that call for actions that will renew the theories and praxis of the IPM, so that the practice of paying low stipends to workers is definitely eradicated.

Practical theology deals with the complexity of human experiences and relationships in a given context. Therefore, in this research, the author wants to understand the dynamics of the IPM during its fifty years of Autonomy.

Accordingly, a theology of shepherding and liberation will be introduced. Both concepts are found in the Bible and will be the tools from which the church leadership, workers, and members will be challenged and liberated from the bondage of paying low stipends and from dependency on the mother church.

The shepherding model empowers leaders with special skills to preach a gospel that

“cares for people, care for all human affairs and for the earth” (Gerkin, 1997: 24). While liberation links people’s life stories with the story of God revealed to humanity through Jesus, the book of Exodus explains how God liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and guided them during forty years in the wilderness as they moved towards the Promised Land. The history of the liberation of the Israelites shows that they found their power through God’s invitation to Moses to be their guide:

Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. I will certainly be with you (Exodus 3: 10, 12)

Despite the miracles that preceded the exit of Israelites from Egypt and the extraordinary power that God demonstrated to save them from Pharaoh’s persecution, the Israelites were blind to seize the opportunity provided for them to become free. This part of the history of Israel illustrates how their stubbornness prevented them from appreciating the freedom God had given them, and to fully participate in the process of their liberation.

Liberation theology was a praxis used by Jesus to expose the traditional practice of the Jewish faith. In Luke 4: 16-20, Jesus announced that the purpose of His ministry was to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recover sight for the blind, release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour. In this way, Jesus was here confirming what the prophet Isaiah had predicted many centuries before.

In spite of the clarity of Jesus’s message, the church has failed to see itself as God’s instrument for transformation. It has given only spiritual interpretation to this prophetic message. This difference of interpretation had consequently exposed the Church to situations of hopelessness and abuse. The people of God have lost hope even in God himself (Amos 5:7-12).

On the other hand, Swinton and Mowat affirm that Practical Theology has the duty to enable the church to perform its mission faithfully. They say:

The fundamental aim of Practical Theology is to enable the Church to perform faithfully as it

participates in God's ongoing mission in, to and for the world. As such it seeks to reflect critically and theologically on situations and provide insights and strategies which will enable the movement towards faithful change (Swinton & Mowat 2006: 25).

Challenged by the above statements, the Church has the moral obligation to communicate the gospel in such a way that it will respond not only to the spiritual needs of its people, but also to the daily practical and material needs of the believers within both the IPM and Mozambican society as a whole.

What makes this study relevant is that it will contribute to the improvement of the quality of the mission held by the IPM. It will seek to address, evaluate, and challenge the dependency found within the constituencies. This exercise is deemed to be a necessary one, because it will help the IPM to better understand how its members and the wider society want to be served. This knowledge will allow her to restore the image that has been damaged, and to reconcile members by transforming the unjust structures.

This exercise will be accomplished by:

- Exposing the damage and abuse of workers that is a direct result of the current practice of paying low stipends;
- Helping the leadership of the IPM to meet the needs of the congregants;
- Educating members of all ages to value their likeness with God;
- Educating members of all ages to care for their Autonomy, so that they enjoy fullness of life;
- Embracing enculturation as a way of enhancing the relationship between the Gospel and the different aspects of the Mozambican culture;
- Introducing a Pastoral Care Ministry that aims to reconcile its members with their creator and with one another; and
- Calling the government to adopt laws and measures that will not accommodate practices that discriminate and abuse part of the citizens.

In order to reach a practical solution, the study will analyze the praxis of the outcomes, select key problems that emerge from the praxis, and create an environment where

members will be willing to solve the challenges that prevent the IPM from standing on her own feet.

The author needed to know if other researchers had conducted research on Autonomy of a church. If such research had been conducted in the past, she would need to know the scope of these studies in order to identify existing research gaps so that her own research could address them. The research gap that she identified is detailed below.

1.7 Research Gap

The books on Autonomy that the author consulted dealt generally in the way in which a church gains Autonomy, with a focus on the component of the process of Autonomy that regards the appointment of lay people. The author did not find any work that explained the complex, layered process or particularities of the Autonomy of the IPM.

The IPM has been a source of research from many scholars inside and outside the country. These researchers focused their studies on different areas of the church life according to their interests. Certain studies were conducted in South Africa and looked to the ECPSA, which is a sister church of the IPM.

Although a multitude of studies have been conducted, none of them have addressed the poor state of the IPM workers and of her dependency. This is thus the gap that the author identified and endeavored to address through this research study. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to address Autonomy of the IPM from the two perspectives that are the practice of paying low stipends and the resulting phenomena of dependency disorder. These dual aims are designed to enhance human dignity within the IPM.

1.8 Conclusion

The present chapter shared the background of the research study. The background focused on the issue of the current practice practiced by the Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (IPM) of paying stipends to workers. It also denounced the existence of a phenomenon of dependency disorder that seems to destroy the image and credibility of the IPM, which became the second issue to be looked at by this research.

The practice of paying low stipends to workers is perceived as unjust, abusive, and traumatic by workers and some members of the IPM.

The author had thus looked at these two contentious topics, in order to formulate a Problem Statement that allowed her to define the aims of the study. Further, she reviewed previously published research studies, in order to identify the Research Gap that the present thesis is addressing.

For a period of time, the IPM was under the tutelage of the Swiss Mission. This study will seek to find how the Swiss Mission influenced the church and how it may have created the phenomena of dependency that the IPM finds herself trapped in.

The following chapter will discuss the available literature that is relevant for this study. The research will explore some of the work documented by missionaries, especially their understanding of mission and of autonomy of a church.