

**MAGISTER ARTIUM  
(CHURCH HISTORY)**

**THE RELEVANCE OF MARTIN LUTHER'S  
PNEUMATOLOGY TO  
REFORMED CHURCHES IN ZIMBABWE**

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## SUMMARY

During 2017 Reformed churches will celebrate five centuries of church reformation. Seen from a historical perspective, Martin Luther was the central figure within the Reformation movement. The question is: To what extent could churches in Africa still benefit from Martin Luther's theological insights? How relevant is Luther's theology in contemporary Zimbabwe and specifically to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA)? In the Zimbabwean context there are many divergent views in various Reformed churches on the work of the Holy Spirit. This diversity threatens the unity, relevance and survival of Reformed churches

The focus of this dissertation is to establish whether the pneumatology of Martin Luther is still relevant and applicable to Reformed churches in Zimbabwe. It analyses the current context in Zimbabwe and concludes that the practical situation in Zimbabwe presents theologians with similar challenges as those Luther had to face, specifically in terms of the misunderstanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. Reformed churches in Zimbabwe may learn from Martin Luther on how to face these challenges. The Holy Spirit is God who works in this world. It is imperative for Reformed churches in Zimbabwe to revisit the Reformed understanding of pneumatology in terms of contextual relevance. The insights gained are applied in terms of prosperity religion, African Traditional Religion, the Charismatic movement as well as churches in the Reformed tradition.

The methodology used in this research is typical of Practical ecclesiology, i.e. a multi-disciplinary, theoretical and practical study of the church. Practical ecclesiology departs from the assumption that the church exists as a complex system which requires a multi-disciplinary and integrated methodology to do justice to its complexity. Not only is the church an integral part of the Christian confessions (the church we believe), but it also manifests in our everyday life (the empirical church). The dialectical tension between the nature and mission of the church, between the visible and invisible church, requires a specific methodology to do justice to the research object. Because of this complexity and multi-disciplinary approach, the theme is approached from a hermeneutical, historical, practical and strategic perspective.

## **KEYWORDS**

Martin Luther

Pneumatology

Context and growth of Reformed churches in Zimbabwe

Institutionalism

Spiritualism

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Prosperity religion

African Traditional Religion

Practical Ecclesiology

Strategic perspective

# **THE RELEVANCE OF MARTIN LUTHER'S PNEUMATOLOGY TO REFORMED CHURCHES IN ZIMBABWE**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Problem Statement**

During 2017 Reformed churches will celebrate five centuries of church reformation. Seen from a historical perspective, Martin Luther was the central figure within the Reformation movement. The question is: To what extent could churches in Africa still benefit from Martin Luther's theological insights? How relevant is Luther's theology in contemporary Zimbabwe and specifically to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA)? These questions will be addressed with reference to Luther's understanding of the Holy Spirit and the effect it had on the reformation of the church.

### **1.2. Actuality of this dissertation**

In the Zimbabwean context there are many divergent views in various Reformed churches on the work of the Holy Spirit. This diversity threatens the unity, relevance and survival of Reformed churches. Some of the specific issues that need to be addressed are the following:

- The influence of popular perceptions regarding the work of the Holy Spirit.
- The economic meltdown, suffering and the growth of prosperity religion within Pentecostal churches.
- Reformed churches need to better articulate their understanding of the Holy Spirit.

- Church members need to be educated to withstand the flawed representation of the work of the Holy Spirit and the church prevalent among many Zimbabwean Christians.

### **1.3. Hypothesis**

This dissertation is based on the assumption that Reformed churches can still benefit from Luther's understanding of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) and the church (ecclesiology). It can make her better withstand some current challenges in the highly contested religious terrain in Zimbabwe. This dissertation seeks to contribute to the current Zimbabwean discourse on pneumatology and ecclesiology by discussing some of Luther's Pneumatological insights. The assumption is that Luther's pneumatology facilitated his struggle against the institutionalism of the Roman Catholic Church as well as the spiritualism of the Radical Reformation. It is the hypothesis that Luther's theology provides a balanced model for handling the above-mentioned issues.

### **1.4. Objectives**

The research will have the following objectives:

- To examine the current context of Reformed churches in Zimbabwe;
- To assess the growth of selected churches;
- To examine Luther's understanding of the Holy Spirit and the effect on the reformation of the church within the context of the 16<sup>th</sup> century;
- To draw conclusions concerning Luther's pneumatology and possible application by churches in contemporary Zimbabwe.

### **1.5. Methodology**

#### **1.5.1. Introduction**

The methodology used in this research is typical of Practical ecclesiology, i.e. a multi-disciplinary, theoretical and practical study of the church. Practical



ecclesiology departs from the assumption that the church exists as a complex system which requires a multi-disciplinary and integrated methodology to do justice to its complexity. Not only is the church an integral part of the Christian confessions (the church we believe), but it also manifests in our everyday life (the empirical church). The dialectical tension between the nature and mission of the church, between the visible and invisible church, requires a specific methodology to do justice to the research object.

Practical ecclesiology isn't limited to a systematic or exegetical reflection on the church. It is also concerned with the practical reality of being church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Practical ecclesiology continually moves between theory and praxis, between the church we discover in Scripture and which we confess and the challenge of being church in the world. With this in mind, it is only natural that Practical ecclesiology would benefit from insights gained from Biblical exegesis, Systematic Theology, Church History, Church Polity, Practical Theology, Missiology, Philosophy, Sociology and Business Management.

Practical ecclesiology became increasingly popular during the last decade and could even be regarded as a specific theological discipline (cf. Browning, DS 1996; Healy, N 2000; Gay, DC 2006; Heitink, G 2007; Dreyer, WA 2011; Hegstad, H 2013). Some Theological Faculties in Europe, the USA and South Africa includes Practical ecclesiology as part of the formal curriculum.

In this dissertation the methodology developed by Heitink (2007) and Dreyer (2011) is utilised. In their approach to Practical ecclesiology different perspectives or lenses are used for reflection on aspects the church's nature and mission. It has the specific intent of producing research results which would benefit the church in its practical situation. These perspectives are the following:

- Hermeneutical perspective
- Historical perspective
- Empirical perspective
- Strategic perspective

### **1.5.2. Hermeneutical Perspective.**

In Reformed theology the one fundamental question which needs to be asked, is what Scripture says about any specific issue. In this dissertation, the question would be: *What does Scripture say about the work of the Holy Spirit, and how should it manifest in the church today?* More specifically: How does Luther's understanding of the Holy Spirit rest on Scripture?

In a hermeneutical approach the question is also how the church interpreted Scripture and how it reflects in the confessions. In this dissertation the question is raised regarding the pneumatology of the UCCSA and how it translates into everyday church life.

### **1.5.3. Historical Perspective**

A historical perspective will be developed by means of a literature study. Primary and secondary sources will be used relevant to Luther and the 16<sup>th</sup> century as well as churches in Zimbabwe. The history of the Church in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2014 will be examined, with a special focus on the UCCSA in the context of Reformed churches.

There is a considerable volume of literature available pertaining to the current situation in Zimbabwe. Much of this is directed on commenting and addressing the economic, social and political climate that has characterised Zimbabwe for the past decade.

There is, however, little research on current trends regarding spirituality. One of the few sources is a work by Rev. Dr. Sifiso Mpfu who last year submitted his PhD thesis on the 'Religious Rights Response in Zimbabwe' to the University of Pretoria (Mpfu, 2013). It must however be noted that this work was not influenced by Practical ecclesiology as is the case with this dissertation.

Primary sources to be used include *confessions* and *faith statements* as outlined in different constitutions and polity documents of various churches, for example the *UCCSA Model Constitution* and the *Kwekwe Baptist Church Constitution*. Documentation from archives different churches will be utilized.

#### **1.5.4. Empirical Perspective.**

Due to limited written sources this dissertation will also utilise empirical data extricated from interviews and questionnaires. Empirical research will focus on four topics:

- Do people in a particular Church have a proper understanding of the working of the Holy Spirit?
- How do they experience the working of the Holy Spirit?
- Membership statistics of churches.
- Accommodation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit within congregational ministry.

Data will be gathered by means of interviews and questionnaires. This will bring objectivity to the conclusion of this dissertation and facilitate useful recommendations to Reformed churches in Zimbabwe. The questionnaires, interviews and statistics of church membership are tools designed to establish a reliable picture of Reformed churches in Zimbabwe with specific focus on the UCCSA.

The data produced through empirical research requires twofold attention: The data will be analysed as accurately as possible and secondly the implications would then be related to the rest of the dissertation and ultimately assist in the formulation of the conclusion. In carrying out this process five individuals, inclusive of the minister of each church, were consulted. The people interviewed included youths and adults.

The research tools addressed four topics: (1) churches' understanding of the Holy Spirit; (2) challenges faced as a result of this understanding; (3) context and proposed solutions to the challenges and (4) to establish membership statistics in the selected churches. Some people who were interviewed were not willing to talk about their church's understanding of the Holy Spirit, while some - especially those of the Pentecostal churches - would refer the interviewer to their Apostle or Founder who is not easily available. As a way of overcoming these challenges only those who were willing to participate voluntary were consulted.

### **1.5.5. Strategic Perspective**

Having done research on the state of the Church in Zimbabwe and examined the pneumatology of Martin Luther, this dissertation will have to formulate a strategy in terms of the worship, liturgy, pastoral ministry and mission witness for the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe, and the UCCSA in particular. This is very important in providing a balanced approach between the reality on the life of the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe and theological academia.

## **1.6. Terminology**

### **1.6.1. Reformed churches**

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation different churches were established over and against the Roman Catholic Church. These were predominantly national churches, i.e. the Lutheran church in Germany, Calvinistic churches in Switzerland, Netherlands, France, Scotland and Hungary as well as the Anglican Church in England. These churches are often referred to as ‘Protestant’ or ‘Reformed’ churches. To facilitate the focus of this research, the term “Reformed churches” will be used in a restricted sense, i.e. referring only to churches who are historically regarded as part of the Calvinistic tradition.

### **1.6.2. Pentecostal churches**

These are established churches whose ecclesiology though not necessarily written down, are based on and inspired by their understanding of the Holy Spirit. Talking about the Pentecostal churches, Kärkkäinen (2002:75) argues that they understand the church as a Pneumatological reality: Most of these churches emphasize speaking in tongues as a sign of the Holy Spirit. Without arguing the point, this dissertation

departs from the view that Pentecostal churches represent a separate tradition which should be distinguished from the Reformed tradition.

### **1.6.3. African Independent churches**

Most of these are established churches that are founded by Africans as a protest against Western missionary churches. Most of them seek to bridge the gap between African and Western spirituality. They are also called the AICs in short. Those that are not necessarily established as a church may be called movements but they espouse the values and teachings of the AICs.

### **1.6.4. Charismatic Movement**

The charismatic movement emphasise the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The charismatic movement operates within certain established churches (Kärkkäinen 2002:76) and should be distinguished from Pentecostal churches which functions independently. In these movements there usually is a charismatic figure that adherents follow.

## **1.7. Chapter Outline**

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Hermeneutical Perspective

Chapter 3: Historical Perspective

Chapter 4: Empirical Perspective

Chapter 5: Strategic Perspective

Chapter 6: Conclusion

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Appendix

## 2. HERMENUTICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 2.1. Introduction

In Reformed theological reflection Biblical interpretation is of paramount significance. The question is: What does Scripture say about the working of the Holy Spirit, how did Luther interpret Scripture and how does that compare to the interpretation of Scripture by churches in Zimbabwe? How ‘scriptural’ are churches in their understanding of the Holy Spirit?

### 2.2. The Holy Spirit in Scripture

Biblical accounts present God as one. Deut. 6v4 says: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' This one God reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Mt. 28v19 commands Christian baptism in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This threefold nature of God is called the Trinity (Butler 1991:1372). The doctrine of the Trinity was disputed during the early history of the church. During the Council of Nicaea the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated and articulated in the Nicene Creed. During the Council of Chalcedon the doctrine and creed were further refined.

Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit is first and foremost God. He is the very presence of God amongst his people. As such no one group of believers can monopolise the claim to God or speak of him as if He is the preserve of certain group. According to Luther, the church exists because of the Word and the Holy Spirit. The church is *creatura Verbi et Spiriti Sancti*. This truth excludes the human demarcations of denominations.

The working of the Holy Spirit is often interpreted in terms of Pentecost as described in Acts 2:1. ‘Pentecost’ means ‘fiftieth’. It was so called because it fell on the fiftieth day, a week of weeks, after the Passover (Barclay 2003:23). The events of Acts 2 are regarded by many as the birthday of the Christian church because of the first sermon, conversion and baptism which took place. During Pentecost the Holy Spirit is said to

have come upon each of the disciples that were in the upper room resulting in them speaking in new tongues which were actually languages that foreigners heard as the disciples were glorifying the mighty works of God. It is from this experience of the early church that the name Pentecostal has emerged from the belief that this experience still happens in the present to those who believe. This body of such believers have thus been referred to as Pentecostal churches.

According to Douglas (1996:898-9) Pentecost (*pentekonta* in Greek and *h`missim* in Hebrew) are both used in the Septuagint and the Tanak, i.e. in Lev. 23:1. Both refer to fifty days after Passover. In the inter-testamental period it became a celebration of the law given to Israel through Moses. The full significance of Pentecost must be understood in the context of the Jewish festivals. It was a day of joy for God's provision through the harvest and deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

In the New Testament there are three references to the Pentecost. These are Acts 2:1, Acts 20:16 and 1Cor. 16:8. These citations of Scripture reveal the Pentecostal experience in the life of the Christian church and not any particular group. The word 'Pentecostal' should not be the exclusive preserve for one strand of Christianity. Reformed Christians should not ignore certain Biblical teachings because they have been branded 'Pentecostal'.

For the full significance of the Pentecost season, we refer to Jewish feasts. There are basically seven Jewish feasts as cited in Lev. 23. In this context I will only raise three for their significance to this research:

- The first is the Passover mentioned in Lev. 23:5 and many other Biblical passages. By its sacrificial emphasis it pointed to Jesus Christ the ultimate sacrifice. The blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of the sins of entire humanity. In 1 Cor. 5:7 Jesus Christ is referred to as the Passover lamb.
- The second Jewish feast of significance to this argument is the First Fruits (Lev. 23:10). This coincided with the first day (Sunday) after the Passover. It celebrated fertility and in the Christian Church it celebrated the resurrection of Christ from the dead which is called Easter. 1Cor. 15:20 refers to Jesus Christ as our first fruits.

- The third feast is Pentecost (Lev 23:16). It occurred fifty days after the Passover celebrating the harvest and (Houdman 2012) argues that this was fulfilled in the Harvest of Souls that happened at Pentecost in Acts 2.

The rationale behind this analysis is that these three Jewish festivals have now been fulfilled in Christ; it is Christ who died on Good Friday, rose on Easter Sunday and baptised the church with his Holy Spirit. This has been done once and for all. The church cannot recreate Passover, Easter and Pentecost, we can only commemorate these events. This runs against the idea that we can recreate Pentecost today and things may happen as they did in Acts 2. The Holy Spirit came to the church on Pentecost, and we never read anywhere in the Bible that he left for heaven. This implies that the church of today is filled with the Holy Spirit.

A related subject is 'Holy Spirit baptism' as articulated and practiced in the Pentecostal tradition. According to Jong (2001:22), a celebrated Pentecostal minister, "...in Acts 2, God wants to emphasise the truth that the Holy Spirit came on people because they already believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit." The implication is that conversion leads to a spiritual experience which results in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Many Pentecostal churches teach this concept and argue that the evidence one has been baptised in the Holy Spirit is the speaking in tongues. This seems to be contrary to the teaching of the Bible as will be demonstrated in the next paragraph.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments. According to Philip (1994:115) the Bible teaches that "if we have come to faith in Jesus Christ and have found in him salvation, we have been made new creatures with a new life. By the Holy Spirit we are given a new heart...This is the truth of salvation." This truth is witnessed in the Old Testament Scriptures like Ezek. 36:26-27 which says: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you..." Jer. 31:33-34 resonates with it when it says: "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel...I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sins no more." Philip continues and says: "The fundamental lesson to grasp is that the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit go together. This scriptural focus of relating salvation and Holy Spirit of the Old Testament is upheld by the New Testament in Scriptures like Acts 2:38-39 and Gal. 3:2-3.



According to Carlsen (2000:405) there are four instances when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon people resulting in speaking in tongues. The first was upon the Jews (Acts 2:4), the second upon the Samaritans (Acts 8:15) and the third upon the Gentiles (Acts 10:44) and the fourth upon a group of John's disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19). It is evident that this does not establish any pattern as it is descriptive (indicative) and not prescriptive (imperative). The problem arises when speaking in tongues is understood as an imperative, ignoring other incidents where speaking in tongues are not mentioned whatsoever. In these passages Luke wants his readers to understand that new believers are incorporated into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, in the same way the Jerusalem disciples were incorporated in Acts 2. It is in this context that one may then understand the difference that in Acts all believers seem to speak in tongues upon receiving the Holy Spirit while in 1Cor. 12:10-30 not all believers spoke in tongues.

Douglas (1996:898-899) is of the opinion that the original Greek *glossa* (tongue) and *lalia* (speech) as presented in Acts 2 are intelligible languages while in 1 Cor. 12 they are not intelligible and for them to be meaningful to people there is need for an interpreter, otherwise the speaker must be silent. One thing that he raises and notes to be very significant is that in the Bible tongues are a sign for covenantal judgement to Israel, for instance in Is. 28:10-12, Deut. 28:49 and 1Cor.14:21-23. Speaking in tongues at Pentecost was a sign that God would transfer the kingdom from Israel to the Gentiles. Speaking in tongues in the book of Acts must therefore be understood in the context of this transition of the gospel from Jerusalem, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world.

Another issue which deserves due attention is the gifts of the Holy Spirit as articulated in 1 Cor.12 and 14 and some other passages. According to Morrison (2001) the list in 1Cor. 12 is not exhaustive of all the gifts. Faith sustains us. Discernment of spirits is the ability to evaluate spirit inspired utterances and the nature of that spirit. Prophecy relates to the inspired preaching. Even though in prophecy there may occur some elements of prediction, all is done in the context of church edification and comfort. Tongues refer to ecstatic utterances that must be practiced in the context of personal private worship otherwise if it happens in the context of the church there has to be an interpreter. The gifts of knowledge and wisdom were very much in the public domain in Corinth and they all refer to

achieving knowledge of some situation and knowing what decision to take all resulting to the glory of God and common good of the church. Those to do with the working of miracles also happen by the Holy Spirit as he wills for the common good of the church and not for personal glory.

The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as God, the very presence of God amongst His people. He was there in the Old Testament and he is there in the New Testament. He is given to believers in conversion and is always present in the process of salvation. The belief in the Holy Spirit baptism as a secondary conversion is strange to the Bible.

In the early church, as presented in the book of Acts people spoke in tongues as an emphasis of being incorporation into the body of Christ and as a sign that the gospel of the kingdom was now being taken to the Gentiles. Having said this, I must point to the fact that any attempt to systematise the working of the Holy Spirit will always be difficult.

### **2.3. The Holy Spirit in Reformed Confessions**

A confession is a testimony to the Word of God that is based upon a particular context or situation of life (Allen, 2010:48). In these confessions are truths concerning faith and these are inspired by the interpretation of Scripture. A close analysis of these reveal a particular understanding of the Holy Spirit. It was in this light that McGowan (in Allen, 2010:150) stated that the Westminster Confession of Faith had done well to address the subject of the Holy Spirit amongst other things, but he now yearned for a newer version of it to address the issues of the Holy Spirit and sanctification within a new context. This may mean that such confession has outlived its context.

In the Reformed confessions of faith, the Holy Spirit is addressed from the conviction and commitment to the Trinity. A good example is the Belgic Confession in Article 11 (Richardson 2014:6). Herein the Holy Spirit is said to be the member of the Triune God and He was never made or created but he proceeds from both the Father and Son. He is therefore not a thing or a power but a person as can be seen in Scriptures as John 14:16-17 which refers to the Holy Spirit as 'another, Helper, Him and He.' In

this way the Holy Spirit is defined as the very presence of God amongst his people. This confession has a profound implication on his sovereignty because He is God. This point can be understood alongside Scriptures as 1 Cor 12:11.

Just as Martin Luther used the creeds of the church as one of his sources, so does the confessions of the Reformed churches. In the representation of Allen (2010:134) there is an admission in the words "yet we confess that the Spirit is, in the words of the Nicene Creed, 'the Lord and giver of life'." This shows that the Reformed view of the Holy Spirit is in line with catholicity and in the spirit of ecumenical witness so long as it advances the proper meaning of Scripture. It was this regard of Scripture that was manifested in the catch word 'sola scriptura.' This speaks of a special relationship of the Holy Spirit and the Word. This was earlier taught by John Calvin when he said "the Spirit is not without the Word, and the Word is not without the Spirit" (Faber1990:285). Herein comes the significance of the Word in the concept of the Holy Spirit.

Reformed churches confess their inadequacy in understanding the full meaning of the Scripture and the mind of the Holy Spirit. It was in this breath that that the Bern Consensus of 1532 concluded by saying " If anything were presented to us by our Pastors or others which might lead us close to Christ and in the power of God's Word be more supportive of common friendship and Christian love than the views presented here, we will gladly accept it and not block the course of the Holy Spirit" (Guder et.al., 2002:24). This confession reveals that the Reformed churches believes that there is more truth that the Holy Spirit is yet to reveal from Scripture. We see here that the Holy Spirit is believed to be behind revelation and interpretation of Scripture.

Furthermore, Reformed churches confess that the Holy Spirit gives gifts of grace to the church and is behind the institution of church leadership. This is presented in Bettenson (1963:252) on the contents of the Savoy Declaration in Article 11. These gifts of the Holy Spirit are never given to an individual for his own good but for the common good of the church. This is in line with 1 Cor 12:7 which states that the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the good and edification of the church. This implies that an individual endowed with a particular gift of the Spirit must not use it for personal gain but rather must use it in the church with humility. The church, in

this regard has the duty of confirming what is indeed of the Holy Spirit. This means that no one person is infallible as a result of the grace upon them from the Holy Spirit.

To add on the above, in the Reformed confessions, the Holy Spirit is seen as working within the context and parameters of the Scriptures. This may be seen in the Second Baptist Confession of 1677 (see Bettenson, 1963:250), which is categorical in saying that "Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infinite rule of saving knowledge, faith and obedience ... Nothing is anytime to be added whether by new revelation of the Holy Spirit or traditions of man." This implies caution over the abuse of the concept of the Holy Spirit. In order to mitigate this, the concept of the Holy Spirit is bound to the basis of the rule of the Scripture.

Lastly, as in many other confessions of the Reformed tradition, the Second Baptist Confession links the Holy Spirit with predestination (Bettenson, 1963:246) and this is seen in the words "Those whom God calleth, He also freely justifieth...They are not justified, until the Holy Spirit in due time apply Christ unto them." Herein we see that the activity of the Holy Spirit is not dependent upon the human will but God's sovereign choice of the elect. So the Holy Spirit is associated with the elect in the church. This confession learns from John Calvin who taught that 'the Holy Spirit was a sure guarantee and a seal of adoption to those who had been predestined for salvation' (Beauty et.al, 1991:31).

As an epitome of this discussion on the Holy Spirit in the Reformed confessions, one would say that they address the Holy Spirit as a member of the Triune God. The Holy Spirit is believed to act in a sovereign way since he is God amongst his people. He equips the church with gifts of grace and inspires leadership. He comes within the boundaries of Scripture and he reveals truth from it. He is active in the justification and the sanctification of the elect. These confessions are rooted in Scripture within a particular context and hence with time their revision may be necessary.

## **2.4. The Holy Spirit in the UCCSA**

The position regarding the Holy Spirit is not a clearly formulated doctrine in the UCCSA. When one reads the theology of the Congregational church, he/she can

come up only with an implied doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Like all Reformed churches, the UCCSA in Zimbabwe believes and teaches the doctrine of Trinity. In the preamble of the constitution, UCCSA says that “church is the community of those who believe in one God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; who accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour: and so by the power of the Holy Spirit seek to live to the glory of God the Father.” (UCCSA Constitution, 2009).

The Holy Spirit is believed to be the living presence of God amongst his people. This belief is at the centre and foundation of the ecclesiology of the UCCSA in Zimbabwe. Briggs (1996: 5) articulates the view that the church is the creation of the Holy Spirit. Congregationalists read Matt 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, I am there in the midst of them.” It is understood that it is the presence of God or the Holy Spirit that defines the church. The term Congregational is related with this coming together in the name of the Lord. In this context, the UCCSA in Zimbabwe departs from the basic tenet that the church can come together in the name of the Lord only if the Holy Spirit is present, contrary to the assertion that the UCCSA has no Holy Spirit. As such it is almost inconceivable that the theology of the UCCSA does not address the concept of the Holy Spirit.

In church meetings the Holy Spirit is present. People come together in the name of the Lord in a meeting and seek to discern the will of the Holy Spirit. This is the reason why the UCCSA run its administration or government through meetings from a Congregational ethos. Briggs (1996: 188) says: “For those gathered in the church meeting.....they are also restricted by their obedience to Christ and submission to the Holy Spirit.” This therefore reveals that church meeting is an extension of worship service, hence many UCCSA congregations in Zimbabwe hold their monthly meeting or diaconate meeting after a church service. This follows from the convictions about the role of the Holy Spirit in the church worship and meetings.

In a church worship service or meeting, the UCCSA believes that Christ is able to speak by the power of the Spirit through every member of the fellowship (Briggs, 1996: 189). This follows the priesthood of all believers but it also follows the belief that every born again believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. This understanding of the Holy Spirit by the UCCSA in Zimbabwe runs against the idea of an ‘idol charismatic person’ who is believed to be full of the Spirit, and giving a portion to each person in the church. The UCCSA believes one cannot monopolize and

personalize the Holy Spirit, He is there for all in the church and may speak through anyone in the fellowship.

The UCCSA believes that God speaks to an individual by His Spirit for the common good of others in the church according to 1 Cor. 12:7 “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” It is to be understood however that the nature of this conversation by the Holy Spirit to an individual must find confirmation in the large body of the church or fellowship . As an example the constitutional procedure of processing the candidature of someone who believes to have had a call must be confirmed and supported by relevant structures of the church (see Procedure 1 of the UCCSA Constitution).

The UCCSA and its members like every church of the Reformed tradition believes that each person (member) has to be filled with the Holy Spirit if they are to effectively carry out the mission of Christ. This is according to Briggs (1996:197). One then wonders, when the church seems not to be achieving much in terms of missionary work and evangelism, whether such a belief is not compromised. This is in line with the teaching of the Bible, and it is true of the mission of the church. The mission can only move as God is using his church under the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **3. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

#### **3.1. The context of the Reformation**

The 16th century Reformation is one of the most significant events in the history of the church. The question of context occupies a prime position in the studies of the Reformation. It reflects various influences of the late medieval period. These includes the fall of the feudal system, rise of nationalism, Renaissance and Humanism, the absolute authority of the ecclesial hierarchy, abuse of office by the clergy, immorality and corruption in the church.

This dissertation will focus on issues related to the work of the Holy Spirit such as medieval spirituality and mysticism and its significance to Martin Luther's theology. According to Atkinson (1983:121) medieval spirituality reflects a combination of Aristotle's philosophy and Augustine's theology. The work of scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, Anselm and Abelard also exerted a specific influence. Contrary to Augustine their theology taught that justification was a process by which a sinner underwent transformation to become righteous. If one was baptised, he or she received enough grace to start this process. Grace depends on meritorious conduct and participation in sacraments.

Being an Augustinian monk, Luther understood justification as an event which is followed by a process of sanctification through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Word (Bolt 1985:75). This is Luther's fundamental point of departure from medieval theology.

The Renaissance was a time of cultural awakening due to resurgence of new learning. According to Pillay et.al. (1991:124) the preceding years were dominated by Platonism. Platonism saw matter as inferior to the soul, so earthly life was degraded to a preparation for heavenly life. This shaped the theology of the time with the focus on universal truths rather than particularities. The dawn of Renaissance learning was influenced by a rediscovery of Aristotle. It brought a new appreciation for earthly life which led theology to focus more on particulars and individual people. Spirituality

became personal as much as it was a shared experience. Herein one may locate Luther's concept of justification and sanctification. According to him, these were events which depended on personal faith and effected by the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the medieval period, the theology of Augustine was influential. It emphasized the grace of God. It was later compromised with the advent of Nominalism and Humanism. Nominalism taught the primacy of humanity in the story of salvation. This is seen in the thesis that 'God does not deny grace to those who do what is in them.' Luther was critical of any teaching which departed from the merits of humanity in accessing salvation. Even as a monk, he had done all what was expected of a disciplined adherent and felt no better in terms of experiencing forgiveness. Scanion (see [www.villanova.edu](http://www.villanova.edu) accessed on 03/07/14) argues further that "while the Reformation was a rediscovery of the Bible, especially of the Pauline writings, it was even more rediscovery of Augustine, who had been resurrected by the Renaissance. This was pre-eminently the case with the young Luther teaching at Wittenberg."

The spirituality of the medieval period was enhanced by the impetus of translating the Bible into vernacular languages. Wycliffe produced a translation of the English Bible in 1380. Erasmus (1469-1506) produced a Greek text of the New Testament which facilitated translations (Pillay et.al. 1991:125). Luther produced his own translation of the complete German Bible. In Luther's theology the Bible takes the centre stage as the Word of God that is inspired by the Holy Spirit, but also, the preaching of this Word precedes the coming of the Holy Spirit and it provides boundaries of his operation (Lenke n.d., 300).

Medieval theologians often saw Scripture as amounting to genealogies, descriptions of furniture of the temple and the history of Israel in particular. According to Lindsay (2006:242) there were a fourfold understanding of the Bible, i.e. historical, allegorical, moral and mystical. Using this fourfold hermeneutic was quite difficult as these senses often led one to different meanings. As a result Biblical interpretation was left to the Pope and the ecumenical councils. This practice robbed the laity of the Bible. Luther (as other reformers) argued that God speaks to the people through the Bible and not through the pope. Luther (in (Kepler ed., 1952:6) argues that the



Holy Spirit inspired the Bible and therefore "the Holy Spirit must be our only master and tutor; let youth have no shame to learn of the preceptor."

In the medieval church, the source and summit of all religious devotion was the Eucharist. The Eucharist was called *missa* (mass). The mass was seen as sanctifying space and time (Breaten et.al, 1996:35). The ministry of sacraments - mass, baptism, confirmation, penance, marriage, ordination and the holy unction were seen as means of grace. "The visitation to the sick included the extended distribution of holy communion, pilgrimages culminated with the celebration of the mass at a place of pilgrimage. The church year, with its seasons and special days, provided for 'proper' material of for the celebration of the mass" (Jenson, *ibid*). The external things and rituals that could be done by people characterised spirituality. Luther failed to find lasting peace in these edifice of Catholic faith hence crafting his theology that focussed on God's salvific work. Salvation is based on what God can do and not what a person can do to merit salvation. In this approach the role of the Holy Spirit is of utmost importance.

Sacramentalism was the drive of spirituality in the medieval church. Penance stood out with mystical powers to reverse mortal sin. Even though Luther did not teach penance, one may not rule out its influence on his theology. He taught that if one comes in faith to Jesus Christ, they will be justified or forgiven their sins. Justification does not mean that they are no longer sinners. It is to say they have been reckoned as righteous by God, to use other words, they are sinners who have been saved by grace (*simul iustus, simul peccator*). So repentance or confession remained part of everyday life as they continue in the process of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. This is demonstrated in his 95 thesis (Jacobs 1957:17-19). In the first thesis Luther says: "Our master Jesus Christ, when he said *Poenitentiam agite*, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance". This life of repentance may be a lesson from the medieval practice of penance. From this sense, the Holy Spirit is never to be seen to make one supper human or as more holy than others. Such insights will be raised further in this dissertation in relation to contemporary challenges in the belief concerning the Holy Spirit.

Atkinson (1983:123) goes further on medieval spirituality and the Catholic belief saying, penance was very significant and central as it was the only way to reverse the mortal sin. The disposition of the sinner as he confessed was emphasized. The act reached its climax when the priest declared one absolved from their guilt. This aspect of penance introduces us to mysticism. The priest were deemed to possess some mystical powers for the function of their ministry. This may have influenced the theology of Martin Luther in that he fought this teaching in his theological works. He taught against any meritorious deed or disposition and argued that salvation was not to be seen as a temporary thing. Atkinson (ibid), argues that "it was at this point that Luther rent the medieval fabric of thought. He had done all that was required of him, had gone beyond that devotion and discipline demanded of a dedicated monk...yet never knew the real sense of pardon for which he yearned with his entire being..." This therefore provided context for his theology in which grace of God and the Holy Spirit was central to 'justification and sanctification.'

The other contextual issue to the 16th century Reformation that calls for consideration in the context of some traditions today that emphasise the concept of 'man of God' is the status of the clergy. From practice of penance in the medieval times we saw that the priest were believed to mediate god's forgiveness of sin. This put the clergy in a higher position than others in the Church. Martin Luther taught the principle of the priesthood of all believers. This was based on the belief that all people have access to God as they are all his children by faith in Jesus Christ. According to Roman 8: 13-17 they have an access to God by the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit who is the spirit of adoption. This is supported by Nurnberger (2007:132) when he argues that Martin Luther rejected any idea of a distance between Christ and us. God was in Christ and Christ is present for us in the Spirit as individual believers not only the priests.

According to Barron (1985:38), the state of the Catholic Church on the eve of Reformation was inviting renewal from many fronts and chief amongst these were the mystical and absolute hierarchy of the Church. He says the clergy were mainly noblemen. It was believed that they had power to impose spiritual sanctions, even for political offices. The clergy were charging for their services in marriage, baptism and burials. This directly enhanced the practice of the sale of indulgences. In places like

German and Prussia, there was resistance to the clergy and their practices hence anti-clericalism. One can locate Martin Luther's ecclesiology, soteriology and pneumatology in this context. Such a position finds justification in Martin Luther's words (1937:13) in saying, "Therefore the Church can never be better governed and preserved than if we all live under one Head, Christ, and all the bishops equal in office (although they be unequal in gifts), be diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, sacraments, prayer, and works of love..." It is such utterances by Luther which reveals that his theology was rooted in a particular context.

The absolute hierarchy of the Catholic Church is one of the compelling factors in the consideration of the context of the 16th century Reformation. To a considerable extent, this influenced the theology of the reformers. Starting with Martin Luther and John Calvin and moving on to later Reformed theologians such as Karl Barth they rebutted any hierarchy which assumes the position of God in the church and in the world. It is in this line that Ferguson et.al. (1988) stated that "The centrality of God is a theme that pervades Reformed Theology, which developed under the compelling demand of God's Self Revelation in Scripture, its ultimate focus being on the Trinity with a more mediate focus on Jesus as mediator." This is clear from the letter that Martin Luther wrote to Pope Leo, explaining himself in relation to Papal authority on September 6, 1520. Writing from Wittenberg, he argues (Lambert 1915: loc. 4396 of 6433) "Be not deceived by those who pretend that thou art Lord of the world and allow no one to be Christian unless he accepts your authority; who prate that thou has power over heaven, hell and purgatory..." Luther argued that the Pope is not a god but a servant of the people. John Calvin also taught that the head of the church is Christ alone. In this vein Thomson (1976:25) argues that "both Luther and Calvin were influenced in their understanding of the church by John Wycliffe" All this means is that the absolute leadership of the Catholic Church provided context for the 16th century Reformation.

In pursuit of the context of the 16th century Reformation, particularly those aspects which influenced the theology and spirituality of Martin Luther, one aspect that deserve attention is Pietism during the late medieval times. This emphasised heartfelt religious devotion and discipline. According to (Barron et.al 1985:13-25) during the dawn of the 16th century, there were about 107 parishes in London. These

parishes had smaller groupings within them. Many people in these parishes were from the middle class. They lived a communal way of life. They gathered together to celebrate feasts such as the mass. They took each other accountable in issues of discipline, not wanting their members to be exposed to the civil laws and authorities. According to Barron et.al. (1985: 25), "eating and praying together remained essential elements in 'fraternity associations'. Another common theme throughout the period was constant concern that all members should live at peace with one another." These fraternities were vibrant precursor to the Reformation, as they developed to value preaching of the Word. Such piety demonstrates that the spirituality of the medieval period was not the same all time and everywhere. This was not an age of apostasy. This form of piety may have influenced Luther in the interest of the inner experience of salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit in individuals and the Church. Meier (2012:3) quotes Luther that "prayer is a very precious medicine, one that helps and never fails."

Spiritual awakenings spread in Europe due to pietistic mysticism and its influence coming from some of the monasteries. Luther became an Augustinian friar in 1505. In the monasteries discipline, pietistic devotion and purity were emphasized. The reforming instincts of Martin Luther are also likely to have learnt from this monastic piety. It is notable that the emphasis of heartfelt devotion and experience may be related to his doctrine of justification and sanctification. McGrath (1987:9) asserts that, although it has been suggested in the past that the late Middle Ages was a period of disintegration, a careful study of the church attendance and religious activity such as personal devotion and pilgrimages mark a spiritual awakening and this got its impetus from the piety in the monasteries.

Having seen the argument for some kind of spiritual awakening in some parts of Europe during the late medieval period, one cannot confidently rule out apostasy at the same time. It seems that these two characterised this period depending on the area and times. According to Lindsay (2006:5) apostasy was as a result of paying much attention on the external expressions of spirituality while negating the meaning there of. When Luther visited Rome, Lindsay (2006:9) argues that "Luther found Rome what it had been for centuries, a mass of moral corruption...He found the monks and priests who were bad men, scoffing at religious services they took part in. He found

the people treacherous and greedy, the Pope himself little better than a pagan." He had come to Rome for salvation, not finding it brought awareness to him that neither a human institution nor a person could help him but the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the inspiration behind his transformation. He sought to pastorally guide the church to true salvation and sanctity. Such a cause opened his eyes to the work of the Holy Spirit in the experience of being saved hence he would later argue (see Saarnivaara 1951:11) that "Faith purifies through the remission of sins; the Holy Spirit purifies by his effect."

On the spiritual side there was rise of different views that opposed the *status quo* in the Catholic Church. There was an awakening in terms of theological discourse and reformation may be seen as a culmination of all these. One example is the Waldensians who rose up in the Alps. They taught the atoning death of Christ and his justification, the incarnation of Christ and rejected purgatory as the invention of the Pope whom they saw as the anti-Christ. The Waldensians were very influential in 1215 and later condemned by the Catholic Church as a heretic group. During the time of reformation some of them adopted Calvinistic teaching and continued to thrive. This shows that the context was ripe for renewal. Reformation arose from a context of discontent and deep need as far as spirituality was concerned.

Having argued thus far, it must be understood that the 16th century Reformation found its impetus in the works Martin Luther, however, there was a long struggle of reform before him. There were reformers who preceded Luther, though a number of these were condemned by the Catholic Church as heretics. According to Pillay et.al. (1991:31-32), these included John Wycliffe (1330-1384), John Huss (c1373-1415) and Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498). Wycliffe's reform was based on the Scripture and what he considered to be the true gospel. Huss rejected the sale of indulgencies and Savonarola spoke against the immorality in the church. Herein, we see that reformers of the medieval age attacked the fruits of the main problem. Martin Luther however sought to address the root cause of the problem which to him the whole question of salvation. It is against this understanding that one may argue that Luther must have learnt from his predecessors in shaping his theology that dealt with salvific process and the role of the Holy Spirit in this.

In conclusion to the context of the 16th century Reformation, and in the context of Martin Luther's theology, as noted above there are many characteristics that were part of the eve of Church reformation. Some of them as noted above related to the spirituality and theology of the medieval Church, mysticism therein and the state of the Catholic Church. As noted on the discussion the argument that Martin was in a way influenced by these factors is very convincing. A few examples may be the value of Scripture and its centrality in spirituality as in the earlier reformers like Wycliffe, his emphasis in the salvific experience and the role of the Holy Spirit, as a sharp contrast to the outward religious expression of the middle ages, the ecclesiology that believes in the priesthood of all believers as an opposite to the absolute Catholic hierarchy of the middle ages and the life of repentance in a believer as something influenced by the practice of penance of the medieval era. Most of these issues are yet to be raised in the application of Martin Luther's pneumatology to the Reformed churches in contemporary Zimbabwe.

### **3.2. Martin Luther's pneumatology**

Some people may wonder if Martin Luther did not leave any doctrine of the Holy Spirit behind. It is true that he never wrote any systematic work on this subject but his pneumatology is inherent in his theology as will be demonstrated in this chapter. It is seen in his sources which are the Bible, the church fathers especially Augustine in particular and his own experience as relating to spirituality. His theology can also be referred to as Trinitarian. This fact on its own tells us that there is some concept and convictions about the Holy Spirit therein. Even though there are many references to the Holy Spirit in the writings of Martin Luther, this chapter will however built his pneumatology mainly around the confines of two extremes that he dwelt with. These are the Roman Catholic spirituality and the extreme position of some reformers that he referred to as radicals, enthusiasts and *Schwärmer*. This will be discussed under five sub themes namely his views against mysticism and radical reformers; the Word and sacraments; miracles and materialism and lastly the relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology.

### **3.3. Against Mysticism in the Catholic Church**

As has been demonstrated that Catholic spirituality was epitomised by external rites over the inner experiences that happened in the human heart, this reached its climax in the celebration of sacraments and the mystical union with Christ. Mystical spirituality was synonymous with sacramentality (Lindsay 2006:5). Martin Luther addressed this situation by focussing on the role of the Holy Spirit in the experience of salvation. He (1537:15) taught that sins were fruits of the original sin and rejected the mystical understanding of faith as the believer's good work effecting salvation. He vehemently argued that man does not need works for salvation. He taught that faith was the work of the Holy Spirit alone. In this argument he stated that the Holy Spirit effected grace to the soul leading to justification, by which without salvation was not possible.

Martin Luther saw justification as an event in the life of a believer. It was made possible by the Holy Spirit who is a Spirit of grace. After this event was a lifelong process called sanctification (Saarnivaara 1951:11). Martin Luther argued that grace and justification is given or imputed during the sacrament of baptism but the Holy Spirit and His gifts increase daily in a believer's life. Although they received the Holy Spirit they are not yet perfect, evil lust remains in them. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to transform them every day and this process is called sanctification. Herein we see Martin Luther's concept of the Holy Spirit.

### **3.4. Against spiritualistic and radical reformers**

Martin Luther built his pneumatology on this foundation of justification and sanctification and herein is his rebuttal of the radical reformers. According to Atkinson (1983:107) the radicals sought to abolish church and ministry, claiming divine inspiration, being filled with the Holy Spirit and having a direct communication with God outside the Scriptures. Murray ([www.anabaptistnetwork.com](http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com) accessed on 20/08/14) adds that Anabaptists were one wing of the radical reformers who taught against infant baptism, saying only an adult



was to be baptised upon confession of faith, they believed in the power of the Holy Spirit to those who were born again, and that Bible interpretation was by the Holy Spirit alone. From this argument we see the preference of the term 'born again' over justification.

Belloc (1988:513) writes at length about the extreme left wing of reformation since 1522 under the leadership of Karlstad and the Zwickau prophets. They preached against infant baptism, emphasising the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and hence were against learning and training. Thomas Müntzer preached a famous sermon before the princes in 1524 deriding other reformers who were conservative like Martin Luther: "This is now the character of almost all divines with few exceptions. They teach and say that God no-longer reveal his divine mystery to his beloved friends by means of valid visions and audible Word, etc. Thus they stick with their inexperienced way...He (who has not the Spirit) does not know how to say anything deeply about God, even if he had eaten through a hundred Bibles" in (Williams et.al. 1957:54,58). Herein again we see the character and nature of argument by the extreme and radical wing of the reformers. When Martin Luther opposes these, it is an opportunity to see his theology.

As seen in the context of the 16th century Reformation, there was a lot of mysticism around the clergy. They were seen as possessing certain powers of the Holy Spirit that other people did not have. This was further enhanced by their role in the whole process of mediating salvation through the administration of sacraments and especially in penance. On the other front, were the radical reformers who wanted to abolish the church and since all believers who are born again had the Holy Spirit and heard from God directly. Martin Luther addressed these two extremes by his concept of the priesthood of all believers. In clarifying this concept, he used the analogy of the citizens and mayor. All citizens have equal rights but they elect one amongst themselves to serve on the civic functions as mayor. In Atkinson (1983:107) Luther argues that the mayor serves in the name and interest of all so that there is order for everyone to enjoy. Similarly the believer who have been justified by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, they have access to God by the Holy Spirit in them but still need some amongst them as a church to perform the priestly functions so that there is spiritual order. In this way he addressed the Catholic mysticism around the priesthood while at the same time addressing the doctrine of the radical reformers. It



is clear that Martin Luther believes that those who have been justified have the Holy Spirit.

The radical reformers had argued that they hear God directly outside the Scriptures. They boasted of being filled with the Holy Spirit hence they could now do what they previously could not do as a result of the power of the Holy Spirit. Against this belief and teaching Martin Luther (1983:334-5) argued saying "So I say we must be prudent; take heed we do not arrogantly and presumptuously boast about possession of the Holy Spirit, as do certain proud fanatics. The danger is becoming too secure in imagining ourselves perfect in all respects. The pious Christian is still flesh and blood like other men, he still strives to resist evil lusts and other sins..." He also said that enthusiasm is inherited from Adam and his children, and it extols the devil as long it ignores the Word and sacraments.

It is from the above paragraph that implications are that Martin Luther did not rule out some joy resulting from a Holy Spirit filled life but argued against pride that results from excess excitement. He saw pride and boasting as a wrong sign which reflects a contrary spirit from the Holy Spirit. Chastity and humility must characterise the life of those who are filled with the Holy Spirit. This comes from their realisation that they are still human just like other people, the only difference is that they have been justified by the grace of God. As such they must continue in the path of salvation through sanctification. The other lesson to observe here concerning Martin Luther's pneumatology is that any fanaticism or belief in the Holy Spirit outside the preaching of the Word and administration of sacraments is built on an erroneous theology that comes from fallen human state and the devil.

Martin Luther dealt with the teachings of radical reformers as epitomised in the teaching of Karlstad. He argued extensively against these, as he regarded the Zwickau prophets as possessed by a spirit of materialism because of their interest in signs and miracles (1967:191). He argued that though Karlstad claims to be filled with the Holy Spirit, his choices did not support this claim. Karlstad chose to minister at Orlamunde over Wittenberg because of financial gain. He also argued that God does not start a new order of things through miracles and signs but through the power of the Word and Spirit. Luther was not arguing against the fact that the Holy Spirit does miracles but against the wrong emphasis of miracles and prioritising miracles

over the gospel. According to Karlstad and his followers one could receive and hear the voice of the Spirit without the Word. For Luther, Word and Spirit are inseparable.

Karlstad had ordered the breaking and destruction of images in the church. This showed their militancy. These acts were suppressed by various cities' officials which led to further conflict. Luther rejected this militancy by arguing that the radicals were abandoning the foundational articles concerning the Holy Spirit and Christian faith (Tappert 1967:160). One purpose of God's law is to bring non-believers to obedience, while the gospel is preached to believers. Reform of the heart and will follows the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit. This is a matter of priority so that people can then make the right choices. Luther argued that the accusations he was receiving from the radicals that he was protecting the images in the church were not correct as he sought to destroy them in people's hearts by the preaching of the gospel and not to do like them who were destroying them outwardly while they remained in the hearts of the people. Here we see Luther' emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart over the outward actions that could be done to give proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit (Tappert 1967:163).

Furthermore, Martin Luther argued that the radicals implied works of the Law were important to receiving the Holy Spirit. In his commentary on Galatians, particularly with reference to Chapter 3v2, (Luther n.d.:60), he argued that "you cannot say that you received the Holy Spirit by the Law... It is clear in this kind of Biblical interpretation that Martin Luther saw the Holy Spirit as being given by grace through means of preaching.

### **3.5. The Word, Sacrament and Holy Spirit**

At this point it is prudent to appreciate Martin Luther's position that the Holy Spirit is working through the Word and sacraments. In Nurnberger (2007:129-130) we learn that Luther rejected the enthusiastic concept of a direct communication between God/Holy Spirit and the soul of the believer arguing that "God is present and accessible through the external Word proclaimed by a preacher on the basis of apostolic witness - (*verbum externum*) ...the Spirit is the presence of God for us here and now (*Christus praesens*). God is also present in the sacraments..." It was this

belief that led to Martin Luther's argument with Zwingli on sacraments and thus branding him a *Schwärmer* as well.

Luther believed the Holy Spirit was given in baptism for forgiveness of sins and also mediated for sanctification and future infilling through the gospel and Holy Communion. As a result the doctrine of sacraments was very significant for Martin Luther. Contrary to this position of Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli taught that the elements of the Holy Communion were only symbols of the body and blood of Jesus. The Holy Communion for Zwingli was only a commemoration (Lohse 1999:307). A passage from Scripture which was key for Zwingli was John 6:63 which says that it is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh profited nothing. Luther argued against Zwingli saying that the body and blood of Christ existed in a mysterious way with the elements of bread and wine (consubstantiation). Luther based his argument on the words of institution "for you" and "this is my body, this is my blood." He also used 1 Corinthians 10:16, "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?" Herein he excludes any symbolism and takes the words of institution in a literal way. He also argued that John 6:63 was placed by Zwingli and Karlstadt out of context as they did referred to the sinfulness of man and not sacraments.

From Luther's argument with Zwingli on sacraments, it can be seen again that the Holy Spirit is effective through the sacraments and the Word. In a sense the sacraments dramatizes the Word. So in the Holy Communion there has to be the body and blood of Jesus as this cements the significance of sacraments in the story of salvation. From his argument with Zwingli, we see his implied value of interpretation of the Bible as opposed to take in literal. The implication is that literalism leads to fanaticism. It is also important to note that even though Martin Luther accused others of literal interpretation, on the other hand he also took the Bible literal as seen in his use of the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper in his argument with Zwingli.

Luther argued that there is a special relationship between the Word and the Holy Spirit, the two cannot be separated. He stated that (1537:27) "for God wished even to appear to Moses through the burning bush and spoken word; no prophet neither Elijah nor Elisha, received the Spirit without the Ten Commandments (spoken word)..." While commenting on Heb. 3:7 which says 'wherefore even as the Holy Spirit says, today if you will hear his voice...' He argues that 'today' must never be

taken literally but in-terms of a season compared to yesterday (the past dispensation when the prophets spoke to Israel). Hearing his voice relates to hearing the gospel since faith comes by hearing the gospel (Rom 10:17). This cements his conviction that the Holy Spirit works in relationship with the preached gospel and he is not opposed to faith as fanatics had implied in saying that one must exercise faith first in order to receive the Holy Spirit. For Martin Luther if there is no Word it is impossible to receive the Holy Spirit.

### **3.6. The place of miracles in pneumatology**

The radical reformers kept on emphasising their teaching that God could speak directly to them apart the Bible. They claimed special powers to do miracles, revelations from God and emphasised spiritual gifts. It was against this position that "Luther limits the phenomena of Pentecost (tongues, fire, wind) to the apostolic era. The wind and fire symbolises the encouragement and zeal given to the apostles; and speaking in tongues symbolises the gospel itself preached in every tongue" (Kärkkäinen 2002:44). Though he maintained this position against the radicals he generally did not teach against the church practising the gifts of the Spirit. He only encouraged caution and fidelity to the Scriptures. This is clear (see Lenker et.al. 1909:213) when commenting on 1 Cor 12, Luther says "a peculiarity of the Christian profession and the heathen, is their recognition of the fact that workings, offices and their gifts are of God, Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. The world does not perceive this truth, though, it too enjoys the gift of God."

From the above paragraph one may be convinced that Luther saw the emphasis on the spiritual gifts over justification as a mark of fanaticism which had no basis in the Word of God. For Luther, first and foremost the Holy Spirit is given through baptism. He is active in the process of forgiveness of sins/justification. He comes through the power of the Word. Secondarily and forever he continues to come to the life of the believer through the preaching and sacrament of the Holy Communion. The Holy Spirit is the agent of transformation that is sanctification. His gifts as such should never be seen as a mark of true spirituality as the devil can mimic them. The gifts of the Spirit still continue in the church today but a special caution must be exercised

when one starts delving into the realm of speaking in tongues and claiming the Holy Spirit in the order of the Biblical Pentecost day as such was only limited to the apostolic era.

From what Luther says about the Holy Spirit, it is clear that our understanding of the Holy Spirit may never be isolated from the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible. It cannot be isolated from key doctrines of Christian faith such as the Trinity and the Atonement through the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. To deviate from the teachings in such key doctrines may lead to a wrong concept of the Holy Spirit as was the case with the extremists of Luther's time.

According to Atkinson (n.d.: 291) Luther all spirituality should be defined by the meaning of the cross. McGrath (2007:25) writes: "For Luther, the cross is the centre of the Christian faith. The image of the crucified Christ is the crucible in which all responsible Christian thinking about God is forged." It is from this emphasis that one may then argue that according to Luther, the teaching about the Holy Spirit, his power and glory without reflecting on the meaning of the cross leads to a wrong pneumatology. Though Christians possess the Holy Spirit, yet they are still human like others, they are not exempted from temptation and sufferings in this world. This aspect of Luther's pneumatology goes against the very grain of the gospel of prosperity and all materialism.

### **3.7. Ecclesiology and pneumatology**

Martin Luther argued that "where God's Word is purely taught, there is also the upright and true church, for the church is supported by the Holy Spirit and not by the succession of inheritance" (Hazlitt 1890:170). With reference to 'support by the Holy Spirit' Luther may have been dealing with the accusation by some radical reformers who argued that some conservative Protestants did not have the Holy Spirit. All Luther is saying here, is that the Holy Spirit is the one who constitutes a church. At the same time by the reference to 'succession of inheritance' it is likely that Martin Luther was addressing the papal church that believed in the succession of inheritance from Peter as constituting the church.

In his Larger Catechism Luther said: "...the Holy Spirit effects our sanctification by the following parts, namely, by the communion of saints or the Christian church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting; that is, He first leads us into a holy congregation, and places us in the bosom of the church, whereby he preaches to us and brings us to Christ" (Luther n.d.:55). It is from these words that one may argue that the church and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated as their function in the economy of God is inter-dependent. The Holy Spirit is seen as the one who constitutes the gathered Church, he leads people to church, but also in turn, it is the function of the church to minister him to the people through means of preaching and administering the sacraments.

### **3.8. John Calvin's pneumatology**

Martin Luther's principles were adopted by other reformers of his time and those who followed after him. John Calvin also learnt a lot from him and used Luther's theology as a point of departure. As an example, on the Christian faith and inner activity of the Holy Spirit, it is said that Calvin "echoed in his own way Luther's rediscovery of the gospel, recapturing the kerygmatic essence of Christianity" (Forstman 1962:139).

For Calvin (Beauty et.al 1991:17), "...all the holy prophets spoke by the Spirit of Jesus Christ and, in accordance with St Paul's teaching, that he was Israel's guide and that even the law was given by his hand." From this line we see that for John Calvin, the Scripture is the product of the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Word of God. It is in this context that Faber (1990:283) argues that "Holy Scripture is for Calvin the school of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture and takes man into his service. They are scribes of the Spirit. It is from this emphasis of Calvin that the Reformed church confesses its dependency on the Scripture and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

According to Wallace (1995:89) Calvin however explained what he meant by the Word of God in relation to preaching. He argued that "the word of the preacher can only become the Word of God through a sovereign and free act of the Holy Spirit, by whose power alone the preaching can be effective." It is clear from this context that

here Calvin is in line with his doctrine of predestination. It is very important to understand that according to him the Holy Spirit is God and he acts in a sovereign way in the church. This is important to this dissertation because Luther had emphasised the importance of preaching of the gospel in the church as means of receiving the Holy Spirit. In this way one may then understand the difference of pneumatology between the two.

John Calvin also saw the Holy Spirit as the seal of faith of the elect, those who are sovereignly chosen by God for salvation. It was in this vein that in Beauty et.al (1991) he argued that "we must hold this: However small and weak the faith of the elect may be, the Spirit of God is nonetheless a sure guarantee for them, and the seal of their adoption, and a sculpted image that can never be blotted out of their hearts." From this context, we see that according to John Calvin, the Holy Spirit is given by God alone and to those who are predestined for salvation. So this concept of the Holy Spirit is exclusively for the elect who are known to God in the church.

Another dimension of the pneumatology of John Calvin is seen in his understanding of the sacraments. As defined in the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Calvin defines sacraments as signs and seals of faith (McNeill n.d.: 1284). This definition is important because it introduces a difference in concept of the Holy Spirit. Luther had argued for the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the communion elements. He had also argued that the administration of baptism believers received the Holy Spirit as well. Calvin disagreed, arguing that the element in Baptism is only a sign to what God has done in the heart and also the elements of the communion do not change, Christ is only present in the sacraments in a spiritual sense, through the Holy Spirit. This is true for Beauty et.al (1991:21).

To sum up: The Holy Spirit is God himself. He acts in a sovereign way. He inspired the writing of the Bible. The Holy Spirit can choose to give efficacy to the preaching of the Word, and only in this way can preaching be the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is present in the church and he is present in the sacraments. The criticism that the churches in the Reformed tradition lack the Holy Spirit is clearly based on a very particular understanding of the Holy Spirit and lacks the breadth of vision we find in the pneumatology of Luther and Calvin.



### 3.9. Pneumatology of the Reformed churches

Reformed theology is often seen to be synonymous with Calvinism (Dyrness et.al, 2008:733). Calvinism is often associated with a rigid system and little room for the work of the Holy Spirit. To the contrary, Reformed theology is inherently spiritual and could even be termed a theology of the Spirit. According to Bolt (1984:78) the Reformed tradition has a remarkable passion of piety and this is possible by means of the Holy Spirit who dominates the content. This is present in the writings of John Calvin and other scholars like Abraham Kuyper. It is hardly conceivable to accept the accusation that the Reformed churches do not give enough attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. Influential Reformed theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century like Pannenberg, Moltmann and Brueggemann is known for the emphasis they place on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Another distinguishing feature of the Reformed theology is its Trinitarian emphasis. For Bolt (1984:20) any Reformed believer is Trinitarian in theology and catholic in vision. God the Father is believed to be the Creator. God the Son is believed to be the Redeemer and God the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. It is therefore clear from this context that in all Reformed churches, the Holy Spirit is associated with the process of sanctification. This process is seen as part of the whole which is the salvific work of the Triune God on humanity. The Holy Spirit is believed to be present in worship since God is present amongst his people. It must be noted that there is no emphasis on any member of the Trinity though sometimes the Father is emphasised (Allen 2010:61), hence the accusation by the Pentecostals who argue that there is no teaching about the Holy Spirit therein. This belief is what makes the Reformed churches very catholic going as far back as to the council of Nicaea.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the Reformed churches is also articulated in all the confessions. A good example is the Savoy Declaration (Owen et.al, 1658:1064) which states that the "way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, filled, and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of a pastor, teacher or elder in a church is that he be chosen there unto by common suffrage of the church itself, and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of that



church, if there be any before instituted therein." This implies that the Reformed churches believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and these are usually given in relation to ministry and therefore enhance the role of the church in mission. The second implication is that the Holy Spirit functions within the order of the church and the church has the power or authority to judge what is genuinely of the Holy Spirit. The other implication is that of the priesthood of all believers, all related to the concept of the Holy Spirit.

In the Reformed tradition the Holy Spirit is understood as part of a broader vision of the mission of God to the world. The goal of mission is understood as the establishment of the Kingdom of God over all creation. The purpose of man then is not salvation but to live a life that glorifies God, salvation experience is only a part. This is argued in Dyrness et.al (2008:737) in the example of John Calvin who "extended the scope of his ministry to all areas of life." From this background, one may argue that for the Reformed tradition, the Holy Spirit is the very presence of God amongst his people and the whole creation. This fits in very well in the goal of redemption that is the establishment of the kingdom of God in all of God's creation. Herein comes the pre-eminence of God the Father who is deemed the Creator.

Dyrness et.al (2008:735) further reveals the concept of the Holy Spirit in the Reformed churches in the argument that in this tradition the Holy Spirit is not separated from the Word. In practice then, there is a tendency to emphasise the supremacy of Scriptures in relation to faith. This results in the misconception that the Holy Spirit is ignored, yet belief abounds that the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit and convict by his power. This has resulted in some criticism from certain charismatic circles that the Reformed churches do not believe in the Holy Spirit. This is however an error as the Reformed tradition implicitly affirms the presence and power of the Holy Spirit everywhere the Word is preached.

To summarise: The pneumatology of the Reformed tradition is derived from the testimony of Scripture and is articulated in the creeds (such as Nicaea) which outlines the belief in the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is believed to be the very presence of God amongst his people. He is the sanctifier, and does not work independently of the entire work of salvation by the Triune God. In worship practice and liturgy, the Holy

Spirit is usually not addressed directly but referenced as God in the context of preaching. In the current context as in Zimbabwe, the Reformed churches are being faced with challenges from the charismatic phenomenon. These challenges have led to a deep reflection and some renewal in the area of the Holy Spirit in the quest for missional relevance.

### **3.10. Analysis of documents of churches in Zimbabwe**

#### **3.10.1. Constitution of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ 1973, Harare)**

##### **Article 4:**

“We believe in God, the eternal Spirit, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.... He gives us His Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding together faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.”

##### **Article 3.1:**

The church universal is people who, answering God’s call, confess Christ as their Lord and Savior, and gather to seek, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to do God’s will.

##### **Article 5.1:**

[On tradition of worship of UCCZ] UCCZ shall conduct its worship services and other programs in accordance with its tradition and practices. For the removal of doubt, UCCZ follows the Protestant traditions and worship. Practices of a Pentecostal nature are prohibited. In particular worship practice known as “mass prayer and or mass worship are contrary to the traditions and practices of the UCCZ and are prohibited without limiting its meaning.”

### **3.10.2. Minutes from UCCZ archives**

- Minutes of Synod officers meeting held on 13 May 2006, UCCZ Head Office. On the Agenda (10) was a discussion on mass prayer and the situation in Chipinge. The church was turning Pentecostal.
- Minutes of Synod officers meeting, 4 November 2006, UCCZ Head Office, Harare. Agenda 3.11. All ministers agreed to stop mass prayer in churches. Lawyers are to be engaged in stopping those who were adopting Pentecostal practices in Gaza extension in Harare.
- Minutes of the Synod Officers, Head Office, 29 December 2006. Reference on item 9 of the agenda of the spreading of mass prayer in 4 congregations in Harare.

*Other minutes that deal with issues of a Pentecostal nature are the following:*

- Minutes of Synod Officers meeting, 17 November 2007 item 8.5 on the Agenda.
- Minutes of the Synod Officers, 24 October 2009, Head Office, Harare, item 5 © on the Agenda.
- Minutes of the Synod Executive, Eastlea, Harare, 29 November 2008, Agenda, item 9 makes reference to rebels of the church tradition having formed their own church, Pentecostal church of Christ (PCC).
- Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> Synod AGM, 25-26 April 2008, Gweru. On item 7.3, there is reference to sects mushrooming throughout Zimbabwe, these sects have a large following, its gospel is attractive by emphasis of Holy Spirit, prosperity, healing. There is also mentioned a challenge of dual membership in churches.

### **3.10.3. Position Papers on Ordination**

A minister to be ordained in the UCCZ is to declare his or her position on mass prayer.

### **3.10.4. The Constitution of Kwekwe Baptist Church, Kwekwe**

iv) We believe in one God, eternal existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit..... That the one true church of Jesus Christ is comprised of those redeemed by Jesus' sacrificial death and regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

### **3.10.5. Position document of the Reformed Church of Zimbabwe, 2012.**

Prior to 2010 there was some serious problem in the church caused by misunderstanding of the concept of the Holy Spirit and influence from Pentecostal churches. The Synod then commissioned a doctrinal committee that produced a paper that the church now uses.

### **3.10.6. UPCSA Manual & Order, 2007**

4. Talks about God the Holy Spirit as Life Giver and Sanctifier and the Doctrine of the Trinity.

4.2 "The Holy Spirit is likewise the Spirit of Christ, His living presence and power. Christ poured out the Spirit on the church on Pentecost. He comes to us and works in us always by his Spirit, who resides in everyone who has faith in Christ. Scripture calls us to be constantly filled with the Spirit."

4.4 "The Spirit helps us to pray, moves us to worship and obey God... equips us with abundance of gifts and talents to build up His body, and empowers us to serve and witness to Jesus Christ in the world. In all these ways the Spirit brings life and revival to, and through, the church."

The above documents of the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe reveal a trend that points to crisis and transformation regarding the understanding of the Holy Spirit and His operation in the church. This has led to divisions and plurality of views related to the understanding of the Holy Spirit. This does not however take away the fact that there is a basic agreement in the Reformed churches of the major aspects of the Holy Spirit such as Trinity. An example of the said crisis can be seen in the minutes from

the archives of UCCZ which states that ‘sects’ (meaning Pentecostal churches) are mushrooming everywhere. This on its own leads to religious competition. It directly and indirectly affects the Reformed churches. If such sects or movements issue a statement or practice any immoral behaviour, the world says the church is responsible. Whatever the effects of these movements are, they leave people hardened or taking a certain position concerning faith. This affects the mission of the church as a whole. This is explained in the UCCZ Synod AGM minutes of 25 – 26 April 2008, that talks of mushrooming sects as a growing problem in Zimbabwe, and that these sects attract large crowds with emphasis on the Holy Spirit, healing and prosperity. This citation depicts the main characteristics of the third wave religious movements that are a common prevalent in the Zimbabwean context.

The above documents reveal that the churches in the Reformed tradition generally lacks a clear view on spiritual gifts and their pre-eminence as seems to be the case in Pentecostal Church circles. This is clear in the historical positions as outlined in the Kwekwe Baptist Church Constitution, and the UPCSA *Order and Manual Book*.

It was also interesting to note that the Pentecostals themselves in interviews cites problems they are facing. There is the problem of ‘order’. The order that characterizes worship in a church of the Reformed tradition is not present in most Pentecostal churches. However, 1 Cor. 14:33 tells us that God is a God of order. The disorder comes from the spontaneous culture of worship as people claim inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The other problem noted is that of submission. If certain individuals feel they are now more powerful than the leadership of the church, or if they believe that they have received more revelation from the Holy Spirit, then they start rebelling against authority and there is always a possibility of one starting his own ministry or church. The other points revealed by the research in the Pentecostal churches, is that of radicalism and extreme tendencies. All these are related to the understanding of the concept of the Holy Spirit. If the Reformed churches adopt Pentecostalism blindly, they risk developing these problems within them as well.

In mapping the way forward, the Reformed churches must teach the Bible correctly, coherently and in a systematic way. They must never avoid dealing with topics such as the Holy Spirit and his gifts to the church. This must never be left in the doctrinal

annals but must be put into practice by developing order of worship services that are friendly to the belief in the Holy Spirit. It must include slots like sharing and testimonies as well as a time for praying for people for different spiritual needs.

## 4. EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 4.1. Contextual analysis of the churches in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean churches' participation in the democratisation process overshadowed the ecclesiological concerns for the past decade. We could say the struggle for human rights and democracy was the *Kairos* moment for the Church. This struggle has been put aside since the July 2013 election. As this new era dawns, the ecclesiological challenges become glaring. It is against this background that this dissertation seeks to discuss the political, social, economic and religious context from the immediate past to the present. The focus is on how churches in the Reformed tradition have been affected by this context.

Politically, the struggle for justice and democracy in Zimbabwe has seen the Church forging some unity even though there are multiple differences within her. According to Ruzivo (2008:13), "The Catholic Church, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, and Protestant churches participated in the democratisation of the country through their para-church agencies..." This is a clear demonstration of how ideal ecumenical relations can be established. In such relational groupings the churches can dialogue in pursuit of common end in the key doctrines such as ecclesiology and pneumatology. It is possible to have a united church if ecumenism is objectively upheld. This may be the fulfilment of the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21 saying "that they may be one". If one looks at what is currently happening on the ground they will be faced with clearly divided Church and most of these divisions are in some way linked with their understanding of the Holy Spirit. This will be explored further in this dissertation.

The church in Zimbabwe, through the freedoms given by the constitution, provides an environment where there is a proliferation of churches. Some are strange and occultist, but still they find their religious right within the same constitution. Article 1 (a) of the constitution of Zimbabwe says "everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, which includes freedom of thought, opinion, religion and belief"

(Constitution of Zimbabwe 2012-1). The freedom of association and practice for these churches is enshrined in the constitution of the land.

The political landscape of Zimbabwe has seemed to favour the African Independent Churches (AICs). According to Mapuranga (2013:2) AICs are a group of independent churches formed in Africa. They comprise a wide range of religious movements such as Masowe or Mapostori. There is a deliberate alignment of the state or government to these churches ([www.nehandaradio.com](http://www.nehandaradio.com) accessed on 17/06/2014). This was evident enough in the period leading to harmonised elections in July 2013 in which government leaders were seen in rallies campaigning to the point of wearing the uniforms of these churches. The members of these AICs have been seen in large numbers attending state functions such as burial of a national hero at the national shrine, and they are always in their uniforms. This is relevant to the study of pneumatology in Zimbabwe because some of these churches like Johane Masowe reject the Bible arguing that it is the stale word of God, they as such depend on the fresh revelation and prophetic inspiration which is given by their own religious leader. The impression here is that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of the Bible a thing that the Reformed churches disapprove and Martin Luther vehemently repudiated.

Since early 2000, Zimbabwe has deliberately adopted and practiced the policy of indigenisation and black empowerment as could be seen in the 2013 Zanu PF election manifesto. This policy saw the country of Zimbabwe embark on what has normally been called the fast track land reform. This policy seems to be favouring the AICs and their beliefs over the mainline churches. These include the Reformed churches which are mainly western missionary founded. It is because of this perception that has seen some of the government officials approving of certain charismatic figures since they are indigenous and home grown. Though this may look or sound harmless, it does play a significant role in swaying the opinion of the general populace in terms of church acceptance. This impact on the final analysis does aid the one section of church in Zimbabwe in spite of the theologically soundness of the various doctrines as ecclesiology and pneumatology.



Socially, the nation of Zimbabwe for the past decade has been experiencing poverty due to failed economy. This also had a negative impact on the health front. Many people have been dying from curable diseases. Thanks to the non - governmental organisations like Plan International and World Vision who have been working closely with the government to curb the ailing economic situation. According to Mugumbate et.al. (2013:100), the social context provides an imperative for the Christian mission activity, "the Christian faith teaches its followers to love their neighbour and thy neighbour is any person in need of help as evidenced by the parable of the good Samaritan... link between social work and churches in the values of helping the poor and those in distress to overcome their social challenges." Instead of being relevant to this call, some churches in Zimbabwe have found this context to be ripe for preaching the gospel of prosperity and miracle healing.

Poverty in the society has affected many people. This has resulted in people being vulnerable to be exploited. The prosperity preachers come promising riches. According to Irene John in (Parratt 1997:134), prosperity preachers emphasize texts like Malachi 3 about tithing and teach that the measure of one's giving is synonymous to the measure of God's blessing to an individual which results in prosperity. Charismatic preachers who claim mystical powers of the Spirit are seen as the good news because in this way Christ is presented as relevant to the context. At close analysis this gospel does not preach the Kingdom of God and his righteousness as a priority as taught in the Bible (Matthew 6:33). People flock to churches not because they are pursuing a relationship with God but for the material things they can get from worship. As a result many cheat their way into richness while many remain poverty stricken and frustrated because they would have been promised lies. Because of such a gospel many people become hardened in responding properly to the genuine gospel.

This is related to the concept of the Holy Spirit in the sense that it is the Holy Spirit who gives the anointing for prosperity and miracle healing power. In this we see the link between the social context and the concept or the understanding of the Holy Spirit. This is of concern to the Reformed churches because such preaching is strange to what they believe to be the sound gospel. It is in this context that one, begins to question how the Reformed churches have been affected in such a climate and how

best they can better articulate their theology and in particular the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in such a climate.

In Zimbabwean society especially in the rural areas people still believe in magic and witchcraft (Sibanda et.al. 2013:252). Such is the case in the Zimbabwean social context in which the Reformed churches operates together with other denominational strands. Pentecostal and Charismatics claim certain powers from the Holy Spirit they use to conduct deliverance from spells of witchcraft and certain magic and mystical spirits. They also claim to use these powers even to heal and cure known incurable diseases. In this context, the Reformed churches are challenged to be relevant and diligent in addressing the context.

The economical context of the Church in Zimbabwe deserves consideration, if the Church is to be relevant to the situation herein. It is because of the economic collapse that we have some churches buying warehouses of big companies and converting them into auditoriums and churches. Such cases are prevalent in Bulawayo and Kwekwe. Such buildings used to be places of production that added to the growth of the economy but now there are places of worship where the gospel of prosperity is proclaimed against an ailing economic situation that is prevailing in the country.

Certain Charismatic prophets are currently predicting and prophesying an economic boom. As an example: Emmanuel Makandiwa who is leading one of the biggest charismatic movements in Zimbabwe is said to have prophesied economic revival. This is according to the information which appeared in the Daily News of 22 April 2014 (accessed in [www.dailynews.co.zw](http://www.dailynews.co.zw) on 17 July 2014). Makandiwa predicts the Lord setting Zimbabwe free. Divine solutions are said to be on the way. He admonishes the Zimbabweans to change their focus from diamonds, as gold will be picked up from the ground. It is in this context that the concept of the Holy Spirit becomes of key interest.

It may be true that churches in Zimbabwe have gone into different ways of economically fundraising and advertising themselves to the point that some churches are doing it to the extreme. It is a common thing now in Zimbabwe to note stickers on cars and fliers that declare the Church of an individual, some display stickers that

identify them as sons of a certain Charismatic figure. As if this is not enough, some churches go to the extent of selling substances as anointed water and oil as well as artefacts such as wrist band and regalia identifying them with a said prophet. A clear example of this is again Emmanuel Makandiwa of the United Family International Church (UFIC) who reported on the Daily Newspaper of April 22, 2014 having launched miracle working oil to prepare his UFIC members of the coming economic boom that he prophesied. Again these substances and artefacts are said to be containing the anointing power of the Holy Spirit thus increasing interest on the concept of the Holy Spirit as demonstrated in such practices. The main question of this dissertation is on how this impacts the pneumatology and ecclesiology of the Reformed churches in this context.

The religious space in Zimbabwe is highly contested. According to the information (in [www.zimbabweinstitute.net](http://www.zimbabweinstitute.net) accessed on 16/07/2014), based on "*A Mapping of Church Groups in Zimbabwe*" the following estimations were produced: Apostolic churches are 33%, Pentecostal churches 17%, Protestant churches 16%, Roman Catholic Church 10%, Other Christian 8%, Islam and other religions 1%, ATR 3% and non-religious 12%. This statistics show that the churches that claim to prophesy and preach divine healing and miracles are more compared to Protestant churches.

The Protestant churches in which the Reformed churches belong, and the Roman Catholic Church have in the past decade undergone some challenges as relating to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and this has influenced the worship trends in these churches either to adopt a charismatic stance or an absolutely conservative stance. A clear example is evident in the Roman Catholic Church in Kwekwe Zimbabwe where there has been some schism as relating the practice of mass prayer and speaking in tongues. This has resulted in the Church being strict in banning such practices and following the worship patterns that have been followed in the past. This is according to an interview I had with Father Pheneus Nakuza on the 1st of March 2003 in Kwekwe.

Another example of the challenges in the spiritual land space and traditions of worship in the Protestant churches is that of the Wesleyan Methodist Church normally known as The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (MCZ). This Church has experienced challenges regarding members understanding of the work of the Holy

Spirit. According to the interview that I had with Rev C Mushawatu of Kwekwe MCZ, in the year leading to 2008 there were members who were practising mass praying and claiming to speak in new but strange tongues. This became a problem in the MCZ until these members were disciplined leading to some of them permanently leaving the MCZ to form a new church which they called the Pentecostal Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (PMCZ). When the Methodist Church experienced this split, it relooked its theology and practices and resolved to maintain the old traditions of worship but bringing new innovation as slotting in a time of sharing and testimonies in the order of service so as to inculcate a culture of spontaneity and openness to what the Holy Spirit is saying, but in a controlled environment. Even though this had been done it did not eradicate the problems to finality as the typical Pentecostal practices continue to manifest themselves. These two incidents mentioned above show that the worship in Zimbabwean Reformed churches are facing major challenges, hence the aim of assisting Reformed churches with lessons from Martin Luther pneumatology. In conclusion, I would say that the fact that there has been challenges such as splits and division in practice among the protestant church, it is a significant reason for a serious reflection on the ecclesiological and pneumatological stand points of such churches as the reformed churches. Such a move will result in revision, re-alignment and re-emphasis of certain positions if need be to ensure the perpetual unity and relevance of these churches in the context of Zimbabwe. This may help bridge the gap that is being manipulated by the Charismatic movements as noted in this discussion. In this intervention there is a need to look at pneumatological positions of a person as Martin Luther whose theology is seen to be objective in dealing with the threats of spiritual extremism in this dissertation.

## **4.2. Empirical research**

### **4.2.1. Introduction**

This section gives the results of the empirical research carried out in the four Reformed churches that are the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Kwekwe town (RCZ), United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe Ascot in Gweru branch (UCCZ), Presbyterian Church in Gweru town (UPCSA) and Baptist Church in Newtown

Kwekwe (BC). These churches were chosen out of many of the Reformed churches purposely because of their proximity to the researcher.

These results will also include results of a research carried out on the two Pentecostal churches which were also purposely chosen because of proximity reasons. These are Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe in Kwekwe (POAZ) Amaveni Branch, and Foundational Christian Fellowship (FCF) Kwekwe. The tools used are questioners, interviews and document analysis.

This is just purposive sampling on which questioners and interviews as well as document analysis, addressed the four following issues:

- (a) Understanding of the church's doctrine of the Holy Spirit;
- (b) Challenges faced regarding this concept;
- (c) Proposed solutions / way forward;
- (d) Membership statistics.

The results are as follows: first for the Reformed churches and then the Pentecostal churches.

#### **4.2.2. Results of questionnaires and interviews (Reformed churches)**

##### **i) Understanding of the church's doctrine of the Holy Spirit.**

- 10% of the people consulted on this responded negatively that they do not understand their church's position regarding the Holy Spirit
- 90% of the people consulted responded positively that they understand their church's position on the Holy Spirit.

##### **ii) Challenges faced.**

- Less emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Confusion of the Biblical concept of the Holy Spirit and Pentecostalism.
- Following of tradition above Scripture.
- Dull services with no life.
- Nothing tangible that one can attribute to the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.
- Less teaching of the Bible.
- The church is too rigid.

- Confusion on the speaking of strange tongues when visiting a Pentecostal church.
- Confusion regarding Holy Spirit baptism when I visited a Pentecostal church.
- Emotionalism in worship as spread by Pentecostals.
- Dual membership in a Reformed Church and a Pentecostal Church.
- Lack of knowledge.

### iii) Proposed solutions:

- Prayerfulness.
- Go to Church for a relationship with Christ and not gain.
- Continue and intensify teaching about the Holy Spirit.
- Quality Pastoral ministry.
- Follow the Bible and not to be too traditional.
- Bible study.
- Ban any Pentecostal activity.
- Unrestricted worship.
- Research on the subject.

### iv) Membership Statistics

Name of Church	0-12 Years	12-19 Years	20-39 Years	40 Years and above
UCCZ	30	24	17	60
UPCSA	24	20	15	25
BC	30	30	17	20
RCZ	40	110	204	60

### 4.2.3. Results from questionnaires and interviews (Pentecostal churches POAZ and FCF)

#### i) Understanding of church's doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

- 100% responded positively that they understand the church's position regarding the Holy Spirit. They said you just follow what is in the Bible.

**ii) Challenges faced.**

- There is no order in worship as there is in Protestant churches and Catholic.
- Extreme tendencies regarding the Holy Spirit.
- Divisions in understanding of gifts of the Holy Spirit resulting in formation of new churches.
- Lack of submission to the authority.

**iii) Proposed Solutions.**

- Balanced teaching.
- Mentoring.
- Worship God in spirit and truth.
- Listen to the Holy Spirit and do what he says.

**iv) Membership Statistics.**

Name of Church	12 years and below	13-19 years	20-39 years	40 and above
POAZ	30	70	68	58
FCF	13	60	18	35

**4.2.4. Interpretation and Analysis of Research Data:**

**i) Interpretation and Analysis of Data from Questionnaires and interviews:**

- 90% of people consulted claimed to understand their Reformed positions on the concept of the Holy Spirit. This may be true but doubt comes when such members (in the Reformed churches) are involved in attending Pentecostal church services. They claim spiritual benefit from such visits to Pentecostal

churches. Well, it may be true that they understand their church's position, which in fact they do not accept as true and Biblical. In my analysis of the data, members in the Reformed churches, ideal know their church's position because if one looks at the declaration of faith and statements, he will get a different picture of the church. If our penned doctrines were put to practice, there would be less influence of Pentecostal church's view on the Reformed Church concerning the Holy Spirit. For example, the faith and order manual of UPSCA 2007, states that the Holy Spirit gives regeneration, fruits of the Spirit and gifts for the purpose of building of God's kingdom on earth.

- The data shows that the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe, are hemorrhaging as a result of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements influence in churches. There are problems of dual membership which impact the mission of the church. This is because the people who have dual membership do not commit themselves to one church but they split their commitment. This dual membership results in the dullness of services that are traditional and rigid. In them there is less room for spontaneity and individual contribution from the convictions brought about by the Holy Spirit.
- The teaching ministry of the Reformed churches needs to be examined as almost all people interviewed seemed to indicate deficiency of sound Biblical teaching in the Reformed churches as relating to the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, people confuse what is Pentecostal and Biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Many people also seem to confuse mass prayer which is a culture or tradition and Pentecostalism. This results in prejudice when teaching the subject of the Holy Spirit in some of the Reformed churches and as a result the Biblical testimony is overshadowed or influenced by prejudices and assumptions.
- The research revealed that in cases where there is teaching on the Holy Spirit the attempt does not include spiritual gifts. When the members of the Reformed churches go to the Pentecostal churches, they are further confused by the practice of speaking in tongues. The tongues spoken these days in churches are strange and intelligible. This seems a point that Reformed churches must be confront and address.



### 4.3. Membership statistics

There is usually the notion that Pentecostal churches attract huge crowds by their attractive doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This research did not prove this notion as some Reformed churches have got more members than Pentecostals. The only problem noted is that some confirmed members of Reformed churches have dual membership, as they constantly attend a Pentecostal church as well. This discovery shows that if the Reformed churches bolster their teaching and sharpen their concept of the Holy Spirit in terms of Scripture as Martin Luther called for, then there is potential for spiritual and membership growth.

The numerical data reveals that the 0 – 12 year old children are many in Reformed churches. This shows the future of the church. If these children are brought up in the teaching of the Lord and grounded in the Bible, it will set them on course for a bright future with Christ in the church. Though, at teenage stage, they seem to prefer Pentecostal churches, this shows that with proper teaching and sound guidance on topics like the Holy Spirit, it is possible to properly mentor and pastor them while in the church. So judging on the attendance of Sunday school going age, the Reformed churches have a future. The statistics of the two Pentecostal churches on the teenagers that research was carried out on add up to give a high number of members compared to the total number of any age group. The total number of those age 40 and above (in Pentecostal churches) is low compared to other age groups. This reveals that Pentecostal teaching of their concept of the Holy Spirit appeals most to young people, while older members prefer it in the Reformed churches where their total number was significantly high. As revealed in the questioners, worship in Pentecostal churches and their doctrine of the Holy Spirit is full of emotionalism. Normally this kind of worship expressions appeal to young people. The Reformed churches must see how to model their worship and teaching of the Holy Spirit, so that they are balanced and appeal to people of all age groups.

In conclusion I would say that the research in order to learn about the concept of the Holy Spirit in the Reformed churches was quite an eye opening exercise as some people contacted exhibited honesty in their response, while others were very defensive. These results revealed that the issue / concept of the Holy Spirit in the

Reformed churches is quite close to people's hearts. This made it evident that churches have been branded certain names, i.e. cults, and some Reformed churches have in the past been accused of not having or believing in the Holy Spirit. So this is an important issue in the church. It is against this background that in this dissertation, the pneumatology of Martin Luther will be used to benefit the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe and especially so to the UCCSA.

#### **4.4. Congregations of the UCCSA**

In carrying out this research, four congregations of the UCCSA in Zimbabwe were focused on in a purposive sampling manner. The congregations are Zamanyoni (rural congregation), Famona (conservative congregation), Mzilikazi (a liberal congregation) and Njube (a charismatic congregation).

##### **(i) The church's understanding of the Holy Spirit.**

- In terms of the churches' position regarding the work of the Holy Spirit, 50% of the members consulted responded positively that they understand, while 50% argued that they do not know it, if it is there.

##### **(ii) Challenges facing the church.**

- The church is silent on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- The teaching on the concept of the Holy Spirit is dependent on the minister in charge.
- People visit/go to Pentecostal churches come out confused about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and yet continue to go there.
- Disturbed by some members of the church who speak in strange tongues and do strange things like falling down.
- No quality time of unrestricted worship in the church.
- No sense of prophecy as in the church as in Apostolic and Pentecostal churches.
- Suppression of the Holy Spirit.

**(iii) Suggested solutions / way forward.**

- Embrace and encourage the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Avoid extremism.
- More teaching on this subject is needed.
- Invite ministers from other churches.
- Train more ministers.
- Separate between what is Biblical and what is Pentecostal as regarding the concept of the Holy Spirit.
- Prayerfulness and fasting.
- Freedom of expression and worship in the house of the Lord.
- Train more young people to be ministers.

**(iv) Membership statistics.**

Congregation	0 – 11 years	12 – 19 years	20 – 39 years	40 & above
Zamanyoni	10	14	11	90
Famona	8	10	25	35
Mzilikazi	40	30	66	74
Njube	20	40	350	200

**4.5. Results from document analysis**

**SYNODICAL CONFERENCE, ZINYANGENI, 1998**

**Youth**

“Most controversial group, the most active group in Zinyangeni who have worked for the glory, growth and sustenance of the church. The group is controversial because of Pentecostal influence. This cannot be ruled out but needs careful attention.”

## **SYNODICAL COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE SYNOD CONFERENCE.**

### **2004. BULAWAYO, NJUBE**

#### **Faith challenges**

“Challenge comes to the church to be relevant to our society with many missional trends that are taking place. These include “fundamentalism and HIV – AIDS. These are essentially theological challenges and as such require a response that is theological in essence.”

#### **Ministerial Leadership: Collective and Vision.**

“We uphold collective ministerial leadership of the church.....with Christ Jesus as our Lord and Master, we offer a humble service to His church.....”

### **SYNODICAL COMMITTEE MEETING, 17 NOV 2012, NJUBE**

“The meeting expressed concern that the church did not have its own literature leading to literature from other churches finding its way into the church.”

One such area that was noted to be problematic was on the concept of the Holy Spirit. Literature and Publications Committee was then tasked to look into this.

### **SYNOD MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE MEETING, SYNOD OFFICE, 14 FEBRUARY, 2014**

#### **Mission Council Report.**

“Current challenges faced by church members. The mission council raised concern on the issues that are affecting members but the church seems to be quiet, such as the gospel of prosperity, the gospel of miracles. What is our theological input?”

“It was noted that a Theological Commission Committee was needed to address such issues before they get out of hand.”

Nominations for a Theological Commission were then made.

## **4.6. Interpretation of results**

### **4.6.1. Interpretation and analysis of empirical research.**

Fifty percent of people consulted in the research who were members of the UCCSA in Zimbabwe professed ignorance of the church's position on the Holy Spirit. This is a cause for concern and justifies some of the problems revealed such as confusion resulting from the Pentecostal influence and concept of the Holy Spirit, and kind of justifies the exodus of many of the UCCSA members to such churches. The remedy for this problem of knowledge is proper teaching of our doctrinal position to the entirety of our church populace.

On the problems related to the concept of the Holy Spirit was cited that such teachings depended on the minister in charge. It may be dangerous to assume that all the ministers understand and believe the church's doctrine. A remedy to this would be to bring together all ministers in some form of retreat or workshop to dialogue and theologize on pneumatology, particularly in the context where there is a fair amount of instability caused by a diverse understanding of the Holy Spirit.

The research indeed highlights the extremism that affects some of the church members in and around the UCCSA in Zimbabwe. The position of the church on this concept must have the capacity to deal with such challenges. The church can learn from Martin Luther, who in his own context dealt with 'extremists' on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The other problems highlighted are related to the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy and speaking in tongues. The church must clarify these issues and state its position clearly. At the centre of this controversy are questions, what is prophecy and how does the Holy Spirit inspire this gift today? What is the significance of speaking in tongues and does it still happen today?

Even on these questions, as the church crafts or reinvents its position, she can consult the pneumatology of Martin Luther as he offers guidance in this area and this is the task of this dissertation.

As a way forward, prayerfulness in the church and training of young ministers was cited. There may be a feeling that maybe the church is not that prayerful. This suggestion implies that the Holy Spirit works best in an environment of prayerfulness. This also finds resonance in Martin Luther's piety that he probably learnt from his monastic background. Then there is training of young ministers. This implies that young people are quick to understand and adopt new trends while elder

people are more conservative. This may also rise from the comparison of young ministers versus elderly ministers in the church. The underlying belief is that the Holy Spirit inspires spontaneity.

#### **4.6.2. Interpretation and analysis of membership statistics.**

Membership statistics seem to suggest that Charismatic worship results in church growth mainly with membership of young people. This is demonstrated in the figures, where Njube Congregational Church which is a Charismatic congregation, is the biggest we have in UCCSA Zimbabwe in terms of membership. It however has to be noted that this Charismatic congregation where people practice mass prayer in worship, has a lesser number of membership above 40 years. This is justified in that other congregations less Charismatic and conservative have more members aged 40 and above as compared to other ages. This analysis tells us that as UCCSA we must craft a position that is balanced so that all age groups in our membership may appreciate belonging and worship in UCCSA in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.6.3. Interpretation and analysis of minutes**

The Documentation from the minute archives seem to suggest that from the 1990's up to 2014, trends have continued to evolve in terms of church's experience in the area of the Holy Spirit. In the church there has been members who are said to adopt tendencies from the Pentecostal churches. These people, especially the youth, are reported to be excelling in terms of missional work. Could it then mean that, indeed this Pentecostal phenomenon they are adopting is really the Holy Spirit at work, and He is inspiring them for serving in the church? If so, as it seems, the concept of the Holy Spirit must be given closer attention and explained to the church in a Biblical and sound manner. This must be done with care to avoid extremes and loss of identity of a congregational church with its Reformed tradition.

The issues raised in the documentation includes fundamentalism in the church. The positive stance revealed is that the UCCSA in Zimbabwe has set up a Theological

Commission. This is remarkable as this scholarly group will approach the subjects as the Holy Spirit with the seriousness they deserves. In the process, it is the suggestion of this dissertation to consult the pneumatology of Martin Luther as this could help in this regard.

All in all, this the empirical research uncovered the realities that the UCCSA in Zimbabwe is confronted with. Though its position on the concept of the Holy Spirit is clear, there are some areas where it is silent or weak. These include the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Extremism, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Sanctification and how to be filled with the Holy Spirit as well as the relationship between the Scripture and the Holy Spirit. A re look of this doctrine and adopting lesson from Martin Luther's theology of the Holy Spirit must help the church to come with a clear and effective concept / doctrine to help the UCCSA in Zimbabwe be relevant and successful in doing mission within her context.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

The UCCSA represents transformation that has and is still taking place in the churches of the Reformed tradition in Zimbabwe. When the first charismatic tendencies manifested in the church, they were associated with the youths. As time went on and history unfolded they became a challenge confronting the whole Church, and not just one organ. It is from this context that trends began to change. The Church became more accommodative though still some conservative people in the Church still see the charismatic emphasis as foreign to the Reformed way of worship.

It is arguable true that the gospel incarnational in nature. It must be clothed in the culture and be directed to addressing contextual issues of a particular people. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit within the gospel must never be an exception. This is not a suggestion whatsoever to compromise the theological content and what is known to be the orthodox teaching of the Church but it is to suggest that churches must adopt a certain culture of presentation and delivery so as to be relevant and have impact on the lives of the intended recipients. As seen above, the socio-political and religious context of the country of Zimbabwe influence the understanding of the concept of the Holy Spirit. This is important in the quest to understand such a concept in the Reformed churches as they exist in it. It is also important for the exercise of linking

the context of Martin Luther to the context in which the contemporary Reformed churches find themselves in Zimbabwe.



## 5. STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

### 5.1. The way forward: Reformed churches in Zimbabwe

The research in this dissertation proved that Pentecostalism is not synonymous with membership growth as there are some Reformed churches that have a bigger membership than some Pentecostal churches. The reality however is that, some members in the Reformed churches have dual membership as they also go to the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. It is also true that some Reformed churches have in the recent past lost members and even gone through ugly church splits, all because of differences over the concept of the Holy Spirit.

One aspect that is associated with the work of the Holy Spirit amongst churches in Zimbabwe which had caused much pain and resulted in schism, is 'Mass Prayer'. Some Reformed churches have gone to the extremes of having a position paper on worship practices, where before one is ordained into the ministry they must first denounce 'Mass Prayer'. Some Congregations of the Reformed churches practice it. This dissertation is in no way suggesting that these practices must be embraced. All that is being proposed, is that such practices must not be denounced on the basis of tradition but a theological sound teaching that is based on the Bible, if this is done properly and in the right spirit, the membership will be encouraged even if it means rejecting such practices.

This dissertation also established that the contemporary context in the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe face similar challenges in terms of pneumatology as did the reformers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although with differences in emphasis and approach. The one area which is neglected by Reformed churches in Zimbabwe is about how people receive the Holy Spirit. For Martin Luther the work of the Holy Spirit is inextricably interwoven with the Word and sacraments. In order to address these and other related challenges, the following interventions are proposed as the way forward.

## 5.2. Scriptural pneumatology

According to Allen (2010:10) the " Reformed theology celebrates its ever renewing impulse that is rooted in its affirmation of the living Word of God which brings light, life and love from the triune God." Based on this truth, to just refuse anything related to the Holy Spirit on the grounds of tradition other than a reasoned scriptural interpretation is a deviation from the norm. The suggestion is that they must be a clear pneumatology that is based on Scripture and context.

Another strategic intervention for Reformed churches in contemporary Zimbabwe is to work out what is the Biblical teaching of the Holy Spirit. The research proved that there seems to be a misunderstanding in the Reformed churches of what belongs to the Pentecostal and Charismatic tradition versus what is Biblically correct concerning the Holy Spirit. It is this misunderstanding that has relegated the concept of the Holy Spirit to the Pentecostal churches when in truth it is a Biblical concept. Such an intervention may help reduce or eradicate confusion in the Reformed churches, and it may well diffuse some of the accusations and criticism that the Reformed churches do not teach about the Holy Spirit.

The Reformed churches must take a deliberate stance to adopt a balanced theology between realised and future eschatology. In some Pentecostal and Charismatic 'churches', the teaching of prosperity, healing and deliverance over and above salvation emphasises God in the now (realised eschatology). The Reformed churches often celebrate communion and do baptise. Martin Luther put realised eschatological sense in these ordinances, by relating them with the true body of Christ present in the elements in the now. He also taught that the word and sacraments dispense the Holy Spirit now. It is arguably true that such an emphasis put the salvific activity of God in the present. The Reformed churches will do well to bring this emphasis in their theology and worship. This is in no way suggesting extremism but a balanced and eschatological view of salvation.

The Reformed churches espouse a confessional theology (Allen 2010:10). Following this nature and in pursuit of missional relevance, in the light of contemporary challenges related to the understanding of the Holy Spirit, it is advisable that the Reformed churches should group together and converge at an ecclesiological conference/meeting. This will enable them proper and wider reflection based on the

prevailing context. In such a manner they can educate one another. They can also produce a uniform position on the Holy Spirit and map a common response to such challenges. One such a response may be a press release that speaks to the Pneumatological trends that affect the general populace of Zimbabwe.

Lastly the Reformed churches must approach the subject of the Holy Spirit with humility and penitence. There are many people in these churches that have been hurt as a result of misrepresentation of the teaching related. Many others are now hardened and confused and since resigned in the relation to this concept. As a result many people may have missed on the blessings that come from the Holy Spirit. Still some Reformed churches have split apart over misunderstands of this concept. Adopting one extreme position concerning this concept can only result in negative experiences. Martin Luther's pneumatology proceeded from the conviction that humanity is sinful and must always confess to God and receive the word and sacraments which are necessary for the healing through the Holy Spirit. It is against this back ground the Reformed churches must respond appropriately to the demands of the moment. This must however be done in a spirit of prayer, humility and for the integration of the Church.

### **5.3. The way forward: The UCCSA in Zimbabwe**

The research in this dissertation revealed a UCCSA that is faced with a number of challenges related to the work of the Holy Spirit. Some of these are the exodus of young people in the church going to the Pentecostals and charismatic movements, dual membership, lack of clarity as regards to the church's position on the subject of the Holy Spirit and a seemingly restricted worship that has resulted in a compromised spiritual growth and stunted spirituality. As the way forward the UCCSA must consider the following strategic interventions:

#### **5.3.1. Make use of the ecclesiological structure**

The UCCSA as a congregational church believes in the liberty of people and the congregation in matters related to worship. People are free to worship as the Holy Spirit leads them so long as they do not deviate from the Bible and key aspects of

worship such as prayer, the Word and sacraments. In Biggs (1996:77), there is a warning against the temptation to understand Congregationalists as independent but as interdependent seeing they are bound to other congregations through a covenant and mission. Each congregation enjoys some level of autonomy in terms of worship life and administration. This ecclesiological character must be used to cater for the needs and preferences of worship. The research in this dissertation revealed that in the church there are people who are more or less conservative in terms worship. In a kind of ecclesiology as in the UCCSA the congregations can be run in order to address the needs of different preferences. This would mean, there are congregations that are charismatic there by serving much needs of the young people. Other congregations will be conservative or traditionally there by catering the needs of many elderly people. This will help the church to have a future because the tendency to nurture elderly people at the expense of young people will compromise the future of the church.

### **5.3.2. Ongoing theological discourse**

It was clear from the empirical research that the UCCSA in Zimbabwe is short staffed in terms of theological trained ministers. The result is compromised pastoral guidance and teaching, and this became evident as regarding the concept of the Holy Spirit. This gap results in the exploitation of the generality of membership in the UCCSA as they go after extreme teachings and practices related to the Holy Spirit. In this scenario, the first drive to remedy the situation is recruitment of people for ministerial training. The second is that of ensuring the establishment and capacitation of a theological commission or committee. This committee will drive the critical analysis and study of the theological trends as pneumatology. This committee will also drive the teaching of the church. If there is such a committee, then according to the findings of the research in this dissertation, such a committees is not doing enough to fulfil its imperatives.

### 5.3.3. Need for a clear position on pneumatology

In the *Pilgrimage of Faith*, a training handbook of the UCCSA (1987:15) it is stated that "sometimes the believers speak in other languages than their own. Sometimes the presence of the Spirit is evident in a kind of praying called 'speaking in tongues' which is no known language..." Also in Briggs (1996:197) it is stated that "like any other part of the church, the UCCSA and its members have to be filled with the Holy Spirit if they are to carry out the mission Christ delegated to them" From these two statements and taking into consideration the research in this dissertation one may be left with some critical questions as relating to the Holy Spirit. A question may arise on the use of the word 'sometimes' in relation to the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit in the church. Also, a question arises on how the filling with the Holy Spirit takes place. The seemingly silence on these questions make it possible for error and wrong teachings to arise. These result in extreme practices as evidenced in the contemporary context in Zimbabwe. Martin Luther's pneumatology comes in helpful in this regard as Martin Luther was clear that the filling of the individual with the Holy Spirit happens through the continuous receiving of the Word and sacraments. The position of the UCCSA in Zimbabwe is not clear and the generality of the church membership herein does not seem to know of any.

### 5.3.4. Gifts of the Spirit

It is clear from the concept of the Holy Spirit, in the UCCSA that there is a belief in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is believed by the generality of the Reformed churches. Martin Luther also taught the prevalence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in relation to the ministry even though he limited the gifts such as speaking tongues to the apostolic age. The research in this dissertation showed that the practice of spiritual gifts is not happening in the worship life of the UCCSA. The UCCSA should learn from other Reformed churches as the RCZ who have gone to the extent of producing a booklet on how to respond to such issues (*Doctrinal Research Findings* 2010). The Biblical exegesis revealed the need to respect whatever manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as they may occur in the church according to his will. Therefore there must never be an attempt to quench and suppress the activities of the

Holy Spirit. The church must encourage those with such gifts to come forward for the benefit of the church as was seen in the hermeneutics of the Bible that the Holy Spirit operates as he wills. The church must start relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to pray for the sick and to offer a deliverance ministry on spiritual problems of people in the church because it is such things they search for as they migrate to the Pentecostal and charismatic churches. This intervention may never be ignored if the church is true to the imperatives of a practical ecclesiology as was employed in this dissertation.

### **5.3.5. Liturgy**

It has been established that the UCCSA believes in the 'priesthood of all believers'. This concept was inherited from Martin Luther and other reformers like Calvin carried it forward. This concept is alive in the contemporary Reformed churches. The UCCSA must draw the church order of services in a way that enables participation of all in the church for example by singing as the Holy Spirit leads them, and sharing their experiences and convictions from the Holy Spirit. This is in line with charismatic nature of worship that supports the freedom of worship and spontaneity that the young people seem to advocate for. Secondly as pertaining to liturgy, the UCCSA must recognise the time of Pentecost and maximise on it with sermons and teaching on the subject of Holy Spirit. Those congregations who may be doing this, must intensify such liturgical efforts and activities. This was a clear mark in the theological practice and worship of Martin Luther as signified by sermons relevant to each liturgical season.

### **5.3.6. Pulpit Exchange**

Like most Reformed churches, the UCCSA maintains ecumenical relations with other churches. This is linked with the emphasis on the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth as the goal of salvation by the Reformed theology (Bolt 1984:120). In the pursuit of this ideal of ecumenism, the UCCSA must be involved in a pulpit exchange programme that will see preachers from other denominations including

Pentecostals come and preach in their pulpits. Still, doctrinal caution has to be exercised in terms of casting the invitations. This will aid reflection on the positives and areas needing improvement in terms of worship culture. This will also demystify the views of Pentecostal people in the minds of the membership in the UCCSA. It will also offer the Pentecostals with an opportunity to learn and appreciate the beliefs of the Reformed churches without each party having to compete and denigrate the other. In this way the UCCSA stands a good chance of developing a strong concept amongst its membership.

#### **5.4. Summary**

As a way of summarising these practical interventions that are herein proposed to the UCCSA in Zimbabwe, I would say these come to add on the generally recommendations that have already been made to the Reformed churches. It is recommended that the UCCSA take advantage of the ecclesiological polity that supports non uniformity amongst local churches, take seriously the needs for ongoing theological training and discourse, the formulation of a clear policy on the Holy Spirit, the uninhibited practice of spiritual gifts, improve and contextualise liturgy and strategic practice of pulpit exchange.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1. Introduction**

It is Martin Luther's argument that "the Spirit works in the church and in the believer's life through the preached Word and sacraments" (Kärkkäinen 2002:43). This was a distinct feature of Martin Luther's pneumatology. It was fundamental in his disagreement with the views of the radical reformers of his times. Even though the Reformed churches know and accept this teaching, it is neglected in preaching and general ministry. A new Reformed emphasis on a responsible pneumatology is of utmost importance in contemporary Zimbabwe.

The Reformed tradition normally emphasises the supremacy of the Scriptures alone in matters of the faith. The Pentecostals and charismatics in the context of the church in Zimbabwe believe in a kind of mystical concept of the man of God and prophets. This concept has in it some undeclared beliefs of the infallibility of the man of God as they are believed to speak direct communication of the Holy Spirit. This is seen by buying and using objects, symbols and artefacts considered to be holy and carrying with them the power of the Holy Spirit from the man of God. A clear example of these is Emmanuel Makandiwa who was discussed in the earlier chapters. The Reformed churches will do well to adopt this concept of the Word and sacraments from Martin Luther to bolster its position. For according to him, it is only the Word and sacraments and not any person who may mediate grace and the Holy Spirit to others.

### **6.2. Spiritual Gifts**

Reformed churches such as the DRC, UCCZ, UPCSA and UCCSA in Zimbabwe confess the Holy Spirit and his gifts to the church and to believers. The research in this dissertation revealed that though there is this belief in the Reformed theology, it tends to remain as a belief and an idea but is not reflected in the worship life in a way that is claimed by the Pentecostals and the Charismatics. These gifts are said to be practised in the worship life of the charismatics especially the gift of speaking in



tongues and healing. Part of the membership in the Reformed churches has been attracted by these gifts, while many others who secretly visit these charismatic churches come back to their original Reformed churches with very much confusion on this topic of the Holy Spirit. What the Reformed tradition must learn from Martin Luther is his bold move to unequivocally denounce the extremists of his time with Scripture. Without necessarily arguing against the continued presence of the gifts of the Spirit in the church, he limited the phenomena of Pentecost that is speaking in tongues, wind and fire to the apostolic era. He argued that the wind and fire symbolised the zeal and encouragement given to the apostles while tongues symbolised the gospel that was now to be preached in every language. So we see the Pneumatological argument of Martin Luther that are indeed relevant to the context of the church in Zimbabwe.

### **6.3. Gospel of Prosperity**

The research in this dissertation revealed the gospel of prosperity as one of the challenges confronting the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe. Again this emanates from the charismatic movements and some Pentecostal churches. This gospel is attractive to the majority of the people in Zimbabwe because of the prevailing economic hardships and poverty. The main content of this gospel is that Christians are supposed to have wealth. Poverty is seen as a curse and the work of the devil. The proponents of this gospel emphasise that the more one gives to the man of God or the church/movement, the more they are blessed. At the same time the cultic figures in these church movements are believed to possess power of the Holy Spirit that can make one rich, hence these churches command a huge following. In these 'churches' the so called man of god are enjoying riches and lead lives of celebrities. Martin Luther's pneumatology is relevant in this context because he argued that any responsible theology, included pneumatology, must be balanced or tested against the meaning of the cross (McGrath 2007:25). He also argued against any gospel of materialism saying it is a mark of the wrong theology of glory which leads to wrong results in terms Christian calling. At Heidelberg (1518), he said that the theologian of glory had no morality as he confused bad things for good and doing the opposite. It was only the theologian of the cross who calls things properly (Atkinson nd. 291).

This is to say that those who emphasise glory do so even when the reality on the ground is necessary suffering as the cross was a necessary suffering.

#### **6.4. Miracles and Healings**

An examination of the worship life and liturgy in the Reformed churches in contemporary Zimbabwe revealed that there is no time for miracles and laying on of hands in prayer for healing, a prominent feature of some charismatic's and Pentecostal churches. It is not that of the Reformed tradition, there is no belief in miracles, it is only that the genuine miracles as in the Bible seem not to be happening these days. Against this, the extreme circles of the church in Zimbabwe claim the existence of such miracles and healings. This is to the point that sometimes those who have been prayed for are commanded not to take their medication anymore a thing that has led to disastrous consequences. Martin Luther (1967:191) dealt with these Pneumatological challenges in his day and this is revealed in his writing against the heavenly prophets. He argues that the *Schwärmer* abuse people and the concept of miracles in the name of the Holy Spirit. He locates such miracles in the realm of the devil that are employed to authenticate the gospel of material prosperity over the genuine gospel that emphasises the primacy of the kingdom of God as Matthew 6:33 teaches. According to Martin Luther miracles must never be used to provide justification because the gospel is enough by itself, together with sacraments to be means of grace in the story of redemption and salvation experience. Such a teaching of Martin Luther is relevant in addressing the challenges that confront the Reformed churches in the area of the Holy Spirit in Zimbabwe.

#### **6.5. The Church**

The Reformed tradition represents a very rich and well-grounded ecclesiology (Kärkkäinen 2002:47). Membership of the church comprises those who confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and seek by the grace of God to live lives that glorify God, and this is possible by the help of the Holy Spirit. As an example the UCCSA, one of the Reformed churches in Zimbabwe confesses that (UCCSA Constitution2009:2)

"Scripture declares and faith accepts that from the beginning God's purpose was to gather people in joyful, loving and permanent communion with himself and with one another." It is taught and believed that it is the Holy Spirit who inspires and draws people together forming them into a church. Matthew 18:20 is fundamental in this belief, for it is believed that it is the presence of God through the Holy Spirit that constitute a church. This is a strong belief in the Holy Spirit in relation to ecclesiology. If this teaching is armed with Martin Luther's teaching of the significance of the Holy Spirit in the process of justification and sanctification, it may then mean that the Holy Spirit gathers people and constitute them into a church, uses the church to mediate salvation as relating to justification and sanctification. In this regard the Reformed churches may better withstand the Pneumatological challenges among its membership.

## **6.6. Mysticism**

One contextual challenge to Martin Luther's pneumatology was mysticism in the Catholic Church. There were many rituals in the church of his time. These according to Martin Luther did not help one achieve justification. The nature and summit of all worship was sacramental, as we so earlier in this dissertation. The priest who officiated these sacraments and pronounced the forgiveness of sins through the performance of penance were seen as possessing some mystical powers from the Holy Spirit and were thus seen as more than ordinary believers (Jenson 1996:35).

Reformed churches are still faced with challenges of mysticism. These challenges are in a way related to what Martin Luther dealt with in his pneumatology. In the current scene in Zimbabwe as in many other places, the founders and ministers of some Pentecostal churches and Charismatic movements are seen to be 'mighty man of God'. They are seen as special people who must mediate grace and the Holy Spirit to others. They normally preach every Sunday, all other people in the 'church' being listeners. They are believed to perform various miracles and are able to transfer to others the power or what they call as the anointing of material prosperity. Martin Luther diffused this mysticism by his concept of the priesthood of all believers. All believers have the Holy Spirit and may come to God on behalf of others and their behalf. All people are equal before God and can share their experiences of faith with

others. All may preach to the benefit of all in the church. This teaching of Martin Luther is relevant to the Reformed church and must be taught and proven by Scripture in the counter against the challenges of neo mysticism of our day that has emerged with the rise of the Charismatic movement.

In sum, I would say that Martin Luther's primary intention behind reformation was not to break away from the Catholic Church. He sought to purify the theology and hence effect change in the morality. He also argued against the radical reformers in order to curb religious extremism in the church of his time. In this way his theology and hence pneumatology may be considered objective. Since Martin Luther provided impetus to reformation, and was a leading figure from which other reformers including those of the Reformed tradition drank from, in his concept of the Holy Spirit are lessons that can benefit the Reformed churches of today. This is especially true as they are confronted with a myriad of challenges posed by the charismatic tendencies of our times. This is the conviction behind this exercise of applying Martin Luther's pneumatology to the Reformed churches in contemporary Zimbabwe.

## **6.7. Dissertation Conclusion**

Through a practical ecclesiological approach this dissertation has established the correctness of the hypothesis that 'because Martin Luther was the central figure in the history of reformation, his pneumatology is still relevant for the churches in the Reformed church, and the UCCSA, in Zimbabwe.' Martin Luther laid down the principles that were key to the reformation, and some of these teachings such as the supremacy of Scripture and the priesthood of all believers, other reformers as John Calvin embraced and developed further. Some of these principles were key for Martin Luther's pneumatology.

This dissertation further established that the current context in Zimbabwe presents theologians with similar challenges as those Luther had to face in terms of pneumatology. Reformed churches in Zimbabwe may learn from Martin Luther on how to face these challenges. The Holy Spirit is God who works in this world. It is imperative for the UCCSA in Zimbabwe to interrogate historical positions of

pneumatology in terms of contextual relevance. Above this, the Reformed church needs to realign its pneumatology with a bias to spirituality as may be inferred in Martin Luther and John Calvin. For example, Martin Luther taught the importance of the Word and sacraments in mediating the Holy Spirit, while John Calvin, taught about the spiritual presence of Christ in the communion, the things that seem to have been lost in the emphasis of the contemporary Reformed churches in Zimbabwe.

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## APPENDIX

The following questionnaires and interview schedules were used in the research of this dissertation to gather empirical data. Apart from these, there was also document analysis from the archives of the purposively selected Reformed churches in contemporary Zimbabwe.

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LAITY

Name:

..... (Optional)

Age:

.....

Denomination/Church:

.....

Does your Church teach about the Holy Spirit?

.....

Do you understand the position of your Church regarding the Holy Spirit?

.....

What would you attribute as the work of the Holy Spirit in your Church?

.....

Have you ever visited a Pentecostal Church /or a Church of the Reformed tradition before?

.....

...

If so - which one?

.....

.

How often do you visit there?

.....

What are you gaining in those visits?

.....

Do you think your church is doing enough in the area of the Holy Spirit?

.....

What would be your advice to a Church similar to yours?

.....

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CLERGY.**

1. Name.....

2. Name of Church/ Denomination.....

3 Position in Church.....

4. What challenges if there are any are you facing in your Church/Denominations pertaining to the concept of the Holy Spirit, if there are any?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. How many confirmed members do you have in your Church in the following age groups

a. under 12 years (of confirmed parents).....

b. from 12-19years.....

c. from 20-39 years.....

d. 40 years and above.....

5. In your own view what do you believe that your Church must do to overcome the challenges that you raised in question 4?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## INTERVIEW FOR THE CLERGY AND LEADERS

Date

Place

Church/Denomination

Position

1. Do you believe that as a denomination or congregation, you are doing enough in terms of ministry regarding the subject of the Holy Spirit?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What do you want to see changing or re-emphasised which relate to the concept of the Holy Spirit in your Church?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. Is there anything you would want to share with me for the benefit of my research?

.....  
.....

## 7.4 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH LEADERS OF DIFFERENT CHURCHES

PURPOSE: TO GATHER INFORMATION ON RECENT HISTORY FOR THE  
CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

NAME.....

DENOMINATION/CHURCH.....

POSITION IN THE CHURCH.....

PLACE OF INTERVIEW.....

DATE.....

IN THE PAST TEN YEARS ARE THERE ANY CHALLENGES THAT HAVE  
OCCURED IN YOUR CHURCH OVER THE CONCEPT AND UNDERSTANDING OF  
THE HOLY SPIRIT?

HOW HAVE YOU AS A CHURCH MANAGED TO DEAL WITH THESE  
CHALLENGES IF THERE ARE ANY?

WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND TO BE THE TRENDS REGARDIND THE CONCEPT  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CURRENT ZIMBABWE?

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF THE CHURCH IN  
CONTEMPORARY ZIMBAWE AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS INTERVIEW.