

**A PRACTICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON FEMALE  
LEADERSHIP IN A PENTECOSTAL CONTEXT IN ZIMBABWE**

**by**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and this dissertation has not previously in its totality, or partially been submitted for the attainment of a degree at any university.



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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the loving memory of my late sister, Reverend Scholastic Sekai Kwaramba, 2 September 1962 to 22 October 2010, whose pastoral and ordination into ministry incited the genesis of this journey of research, and to Pastor Rugare, my wife, for the unwavering support and encouragement she gave me through the entire period of study, and to my mother, Maria Goretti Gamanya, and mother-in-law, Rosaria Hwata, for being strong to raise us up alone with positivity and determination.

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## **SUMMARY**

The role of women in the Zimbabwean Christian faith communities, particularly in a Pentecostal context, has been subject to a patriarchal and masculine environment, as well as to African cultural systems. In order for women to rise to greater visibility than was the case up till now, a dynamic process of conscientisation was needed, among others through research and a deliberate input for change. This study focuses on the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, as an exemplar of the Pentecostal tradition in Africa. The AFM is the oldest Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe. The church celebrated hundred years of existence internationally and sixty years locally in 2008. During this time women have not risen in its structures to positions of overseers or president. The study traces the role of women in the history of Zimbabwe, that is the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The aim is to identify how their role was seen and how it functioned in relation to the role of male persons in the Church. Women's leadership in the Church as it has evolved over time and the present challenges, will be investigated. The study examines the leadership styles and types in the AFM in Zimbabwe and ascertains where women fit in. To this end, the church's constitution will be reviewed. The prevalent theological discourse with regard to the status of women in church leadership and how this functions in the AFM in Zimbabwe, will be analysed. The study shows that the constitution of the AFM does not support the election of women into higher offices in the church structures. They are 'allowed' to be ordained as pastors and serve in this office but do not have the opportunity to take up a higher office because the system of the church does not allow them to do so. Therefore, some women who feel deprived of their equal right to leadership leave the church to found their own ministries where they become the president and gain the highest authority. Their husbands serve in support of them. This represents a reversal of the roles that are prevalent in the AFM.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Practical theology, gender in Africa, female leadership, Pentecostalism, Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Apostolic Faith Mission, gender roles, leadership roles, women's ordination, spiritual baptism.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND FOCAL POINT

### 1.1 Preamble

This study investigates the experiences of women in ministry against the backdrop of the way in which the so-called biblical concept of 'the headship of all males over all females' is interpreted and used in practice. It focuses on women and leadership, specifically in the Pentecostal tradition with its particular theology and biblical interpretation as this manifests in Zimbabwe. The status of women in this ecclesial context will be investigated against the backdrop of the use of biblical and African traditional and cultural arguments regarding women and their participation in leadership. The study explores the religious, cultural, political, and economic, factors that have a bearing on women's full participation in these churches in Zimbabwe. The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in Zimbabwe is selected as a case in point since it is one of the oldest Pentecostal churches in the country and its history demonstrates the different phases in the progress made towards the ordination of women and their participation in pastoral ministry. The AFM was established almost more than 100 years ago (see Burger & Nel 2008:35).

The ordination of the first female pastor in April 1999 begged the question why it took the AFM, which was established in Zimbabwe in 1918, so long to include women in its ministerial leadership. A leading African woman theologian, Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1995:173), describes Christian churches in Africa and the position of women as follows: 'These churches, which most often take the form of patriarchal hierarchies, accept the material services of women but do not listen to their voices, seek their leadership or welcome their initiatives.' Since 1999 when women were first ordained in the church, the situation has changed somewhat. The question is whether ordination has brought about the necessary change to ensure the *full participation and equality* of women in the church and it is the focus of this investigation.

## 1.2 Problem statement

Patriarchy is part of African and other cultural systems. This mind-set has also had a decisive effect on the church. Whereas the message of the Christian gospel is that the kingdom of God is open to all people, church practice does not always reflect this. There is a complicated relationship between gospel and culture. What makes it even more complex is that the gospel message also derives from specific cultural contexts. The cultural contexts of the first (Old) and second (New) Testaments were also patriarchal. Already in the early Christian church a shift can be identified and in the course of 2000 years changes have taken place in ecclesial practice. In the various contemporary churches certain shifts have taken place over time as the mind-set changes and exegetical and theological insights evolve.

The complicated relationship between religion and culture is illustrated in Zimbabwe by the way in which the issue of female leadership is approached. In some Pentecostal churches and other religious groups of the African Traditional Religions, women can take top leadership positions (see Omoyajowo 1991:38). In other environments they are restricted from doing so. This study aims to investigate, from a theological perspective, the current ambivalent situation of women in the AFM structure in Zimbabwe. Women appeal for greater inclusion also with regard to the so-called 'highest positions' within the church structure. The point of departure of this study is that it is of no use to simply find ways of include women, while perpetuating a hierarchical and patriarchal system. The aim of the study is to distinguish ecclesial practices that reflect the values of the gospel which, in spite of the patriarchal and hierarchical social systems in which they originated, proclaim a liberating message. There is an inherent discrepancy in the value system when, on the one hand, women are ordained as pastors but, on the other hand, what is regarded as the 'higher church positions' are filled exclusively by males. Women are elected to local AFM church boards and provincial boards or on a national level to 'lower level' positions such as in social welfare, but not to higher levels of authority such as the position of the Overseer. This study investigates the underlying causes of this discrepancy.

### 1.3 Literature overview

The literature on the status of women in Christian churches in general is extensive. The contribution of this study is its focus specifically on the status of women in African Pentecostal church leadership and on the complicated web of cultural, religious and biblical factors that underlie present-day practices. In a recent work on Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe titled, *Aspects of Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe*, Togarasei (2018) points out that Christianity in Africa has grown quite extensively and that the greater part of with was within Pentecostal Christianity. Togarasei (2018:2) puts it as follows: 'The fact that Pentecostal Christianity is the fastest growing form of Christianity in Africa can no longer be debated'. Topics covered in this work include the role that *glossolalia* and the gifts of the Holy Spirit play in Pentecostal Christianity. Another topic is the role of women, among others how women work to build up the family, how Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe view women. Since this work is so recent, it sheds light on gender issues in the Pentecostal environment in Zimbabwe today and is therefore relevant to this investigation of the roles women play in the AFM in Zimbabwe. Togarasei (2018:33) calls the AFM 'the mother of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism'.

The older study of Bonnidell Clouse & Robert G Clouse (1989:34) traces biblical, traditional and cultural views with regard to the position of women in church leadership, which 'qualifies them to preach, administer ordinances and supervise the affairs of the congregation' (Clouse & Clouse 1989:34). Their study did interviews with women in ministry and those in support of women in ministry and is therefore relevant to the focus of this investigation. The fact that the study is more than fifteen years old, provides the opportunity to ascertain what, if anything, has changed since then. Also, this study was not done in the context of the Pentecostal tradition and more specifically the AFM, which is the focus of this investigation (see Murray 2002:39). A study that was done in the context relevant to this study is that of David Maxwell (2006). His investigation was located in the AFM and Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), but the study focus was on aspects of worship. Maxwell's study provides some insights into the AFM system of leadership in the places of worship. Though worship is not the central concern of this study, insights with regard

to the ecclesial context and the contemporary character of the study makes Maxwell's investigation useful to this investigation.

This investigation aims to ascertain what the actual situation is regarding position of women in Christian denominations and how mainline Christianity is confronting or conforming to biblical and cultural norms in this regard (see Taringa 2015:26, cf Klinken 2016:45). Some churches are taking action to break free from the more oppressive biblical traditions and are bringing about change with regard to the status and position of women. In some cases, women now have a more active role in the churches. In other cases, however, women are still bound to the home by an oppressive traditional patriarchal culture and customs. This study focuses on the question of gender and leadership specifically in the context of the AFM in Zimbabwe.

South African AFM leader, Isak Burger, and Marius Nel (2008) trace the history of the AFM in South Africa and how it spread to Zimbabwe. They describe the leadership role of black people in the church. The first such leader was Letwaba, a black South African, one of the first black converts and the first black leader in the AFM of South Africa. Their account of the inception of African leadership in the church also traces the trajectory of female leadership, though this 'leadership' is more about the role of the wives of the male leaders than women as leaders themselves. This historical information with regard to women and leadership in the AFM in South Africa and Zimbabwe is relevant to this study, since the contexts are similar and in many ways related (see also Erasmus 1996:36).

Daphne Hampson (2002:xvi) questions the truthfulness of Christianity as long as women are harmed and the church remains misogynistic. This question is relevant to bible-based churches such as the AFM in Zimbabwe and the way in which it interprets Scripture. Does the hermeneutics of the church resist misogyny and advocate inclusion of both sexes? Hampson (2002:vxiii) further critiques the Christian truth to be 'morally suspect'. Her critique does not exonerate Pentecostalism. This vibrant branch of Christianity is often suspected for being inconsistent with the biblical principles of Christianity exhibited by the early church. Hampson's critical view is a useful lens for this study through which to investigate the

role of women in leadership in the AFM and scrutinise the biblical justification for current practices.

The work, *Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic ministry: Informing a dialogue on gender, church, and ministry*, co-edited by de Alminana and Olena (2013), focuses specifically on women in both Pentecostal and Charismatic ministries. It highlights the broader charismatic movement as a space for women and their activities in service of the gospel. It gives voice to women who have been silenced in the Pentecostal or charismatic movement and in society. It provides a useful corrective and a productive way forward to shape gender-focused discussions beyond the ministerial boundaries. The inclusion of the charismatic movement, which is mostly ascribed to Catholicism, is useful to this study because women in Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches share similar experiences with women in the Charismatic movement. The reaction of men and the treatment of women by charismatic Christian communities provides a broader focus to this study than just the context of Pentecostal churches.

The work of African theologians such as Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1995) as well as that of Isabel Phiri and Sarojini Nadar (2006) will be utilized to elucidate the interplay between religion and culture concerning the place, role and treatment of women in Africa. In her 2013 work, *Bargaining with patriarchy? Women Pentecostal leaders in Zimbabwe*, Tapiwa Praise Mapuranga points to the notable rise of women to influential leadership in the Pentecostal movement in Zimbabwe. However, in the older Pentecostal churches males still dominate in church leadership. Mapuranga advocates for the emancipation of women in leadership sectors in the Zimbabwean context. This work underpins the treatments of women in an African setup.

Much information on the basis of being African, women and Christians has contributed to this study, for example, the publication by Oduyoye and Kanyoro (1992). Their work discusses the challenges of African women in from both the society and the church. As much as they try to pray and be in the environment of worship, masculinity dominates and they are derailed from pursuing their desires and dreams. The patriarchal bias in African tradition found an ally in the Hebrew Scriptures, and has found its way into theological debate. For them, 'the common argument against women playing a leadership role in the church is that women are

divinely decreed to be subordinate to men...' (see Oduyoye and Kanyoro 1992:209). This study benefits from the work by these two theologians since they speak and contribute from their experiences as African women hindered by patriarchy and misogyny. The AFM in Zimbabwe being African is by and large influenced by such a background. Kudzai Biri (2011:13) traces the historical roots of present-day attitudes and practices with regard to women in Africa. Isabel Mukonyora's (2007:12) work demonstrates how women in African contexts remain marginalised. Insights from these works will be applied to the situation and status of women in the Pentecostal traditions in Zimbabwe today, with special reference to the structures of the AFM.

In the work, *Anatomy of female power: A masculinist dissection of matriarchy*, Chinweizu (1990) challenges the key fundamental premises of feminist and womanist scholarship. This point of departure of this work is that women rule over men and have always done so. It explores what men can do to reduce female power and facilitate greater equality and male privilege. According to Chinweizu (1990:9) men rule the world but women rule over the men, who rule the world. Though the work is nearly thirty years old and the ideas seem outdated, such ideas are still prevalent in some 21<sup>st</sup> century Pentecostal traditions and social contexts. Therefore the work and the ideas it represents, is relevant to this study in order to come to a deeper understanding of contemporary attitudes that, though they may seem outdated, are in many ways still alive and well in practice.

In this study on the position of women in the church, the work of feminist theologian, Mary Daly, will be perused in order to further explore the root problem of the relationship between the Christian tradition and the possibility of full humanity and equal participation for women in this religious context. Daly is from a Catholic background, but later rejected her heritage completely. She believed that Christianity was destructive to women and that it was exclusionary by nature (cf McFadden 2001:66). In her feminist critique on Christianity's support of the repression of women, Daly concluded that feminism and Christianity were incompatible. She further pointed out that 'the patriarchal God is redundant for women' (Daly 1985:13). She positioned herself directly opposite the church and Christian faith with her aggressive and intentional attack. One school of thought responded to the reaction of Daly and suggested that the quest for women to find religious legitimacy required

a move away from tradition and the church (Isherwood and Mc Phillips 2008:5). Daly critiqued and rejected traditional Christianity and that became one of the faces of feminist critique challenging Christianity (see Pears 2002:9).

The work of feminist theologian, Carol Christ (1992), though fairly old, is pertinent to this study because of her insights that God, patriarchy, Scripture and language are all intermingled and have to be viewed critically if there were to be any possibility for women to gain full humanity in Christianity. In her book, *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding meaning in feminist spirituality*, Christ states that 'the image of God as the Trinity with all persons being males was the root of the problem' (Christ 1997:2). From this position God was seen to be 'judgemental' and a 'God of war and a military force' (Christ 1992:2). Some feminists view this 'judgemental' God as depicting the character of God and an integral part of who God is as patriarchal and male (see Bhasin 1993:3). If the core of Christian culture is patriarchal then it follows that Christianity would be incapable of providing full humanity for women. It is against such a backdrop that the chapters in this work regarding biblical narratives on women in Pentecostal churches are critically discussed and analysed.

In his book, *Bantu prophets in South Africa*, Sundkler (1961:12) argues that there are basically two types of leaders that exist in the African Independent Churches. He talks of the chief type and the *prophet* type. The chief type has 'been characterised by the courage of dealing with the whites during the colonial era, the embodiment of the law and a good executive in church affairs' (Sundkler 1961:12). This presentation by the Sundkler is critical to this work as it explores on the leadership that was prevailing during the colonial era. This work also examines the roles of women during the same era and the types of leadership that was practiced then will help discover where women were placed. The prophetic office on the other hand is that of witnessing and proclaiming the work of God. It is the ministry of the word for which both the ordained ministry of all believers in the church, including women, are held responsible (see Benvenuti 1997:17). These follow the preaching of the apostles among whom were women, (see Acts 1:14). In his book, Sundkler places his work in three phases in the leader's life and he links it with the Messiah: the prophetic calling as a leader; the death and 'resurrection' and lastly revelations among the groups or congregation. These are helpful in this study where the AFM in Zimbabwe leadership



is examined. The AFM in Zimbabwe practices a similar type of leadership o that mentioned by Sundkler and its leaders experienced the wave of colonialism and prevailed. The book is an old book but this work benefits a lot from it in the above mentioned areas.

Feminism and womanism are expressions of the idea that female persons should have social, economic, political, sexual and intellectual rights equal to those of male persons (Vazquez-Arroyo 2004:127, cf Mba 1982:44). Feminist and womanist insights help to clarify the extent to which women are still marginalised and oppressed in the church and also point to possible solutions. Vazquez-Arroyo (2004:127) further explains that feminism and womanism involve various movements, philosophies and theories and all apprehended with the issue of gender difference (see Rogers 1983:35). This work examines the gender roles and differences in the Zimbabwean society which have an impact on the AFM in Zimbabwe since the practitioners in the church are 'raw materials' from the society. They bring their beliefs and experiences as witnessed from their given societies to church and influence the way liturgy should be done and how believers must be treated. Feminist and womanist ideas promote equality for female persons alongside male persons and advocates for women's rights, aspirations and interests (see also Cahill, 2004; Piper and Grudem, 2006). Feminism, womanism and gender point the way forward for investigations that aim at the full emancipation of women and the promotion of their equal rights.

From a theological perspective, this study brings the issue of women's practices and their role in the church into dialogue with recent scholarship on some relevant biblical passages, since the Bible is often cited as the foundation for existing practices. African womanist theological responses include Musa Dube (2000) and Madipoane Masenya (2011), both members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. These women are doing theology in an African context and are concerned with women and their role in African cultures, specifically in the sphere of religion and religious communities (see Kwabena 2013:66). The underlying dynamics regarding the views and practices of churches on women and their role is complicated. This is also true for the Pentecostal tradition in the Zimbabwean context. The approach to Scripture and exegetical traditions play a central role. The

work of Paul with regard to the role of women is often the point of departure for church policy and practices. The teachings of Paul are particularly relevant. New Testament scholar, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (1983:50) explains scholarship on Pauline views on women and their roles as follows: 'Exegetes are divided on the question of whether the influence of Paul was negative or positive with respect to the role of women in early Christianity'.

This study explores feminist exegesis, theology and theory to shed light on the complicated dynamics underlying church practice and then applies the insights derived from this theoretical framework to the context which is the focus of the study. The discourse on the status of women in churches includes interpretation of the bible. In a bid to solve the tension between 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 as regards women roles, two schools of thought emerge (Goodacre 2004:8). Some deem 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 to be a gloss while feminist exegetes such as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza maintain that the texts are not a gloss but rather authentic Pauline writing. According to Goodacre (2004:9), Paul was not forbidding all women (unmarried, slaves, widows and virgins) from speaking because they are the ones allowed to prophesy and hold prayer offices in 1 Corinthians 11, but restricts this injunction to married women and mothers. Goodacre's approach to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 regarding the roles of women in Paul's era in church will be implemented in this study. The AFM in Zimbabwe, a Pentecostal church, utilises the Bible as their foundation of faith. Therefore the exegesis of the texts such as those pointed to above with regard to women and their position in the faith community has an influence of the positioning women in Pentecostal churches today.

Paul's ministry includes women. This is evidenced in Acts. Hawthorne & Martin (1993:589) in their work, *Dictionary of Paul and his letters*, point out that 'a number of women figures feature predominantly in Pauline epistles as his associates in ministry carrying various roles such as teaching, preaching, praying and writing showing that women were accomplished leaders in churches throughout Pauline Christianity' (cf Foakes-Jackson 1992:87). The titles these women assumed were given by high ranking officials with administrative authority. Phoebe, for example, was a deacon or minister (Rom 16:1). The study utilises this analysis and contribution to shed light on

Pauline teaching regarding women's roles and how the AFM in Zimbabwe benefited from such teaching.

In his work, *Paul and gender*, Westfall (2016:91) argues that understanding of the language and culture of the first-century Greco-Roman world is vital to the interpretation of Pauline Letters (see also Winter 2005:97). Her work explains how the context of culture helps to clarify Paul's use of particular language. According to her, it is necessary to understand how Paul was implementing words in the context of the culture of his day. Pertinent to this investigation is specifically the language used in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 understood in light of the social dynamics of the world to which Paul was addressing his thoughts. With regard to the leadership roles of women, Westfall (2016:116) points out that, 'as the gentile mission spread, leadership in the Pauline mission was more risky than glamorous. Persecutions of Christians led Paul to choose denigratory terms for leadership roles such as servant (*diakonos*), to refer to leaders in churches. The church was not a road to status, power, and financial gain'. These views are useful to help shape the argument on women in leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe either as deacons, elders or pastors.

## **1.4 Research gap**

The place, role and treatment of women in various cultures and religions have been the subject of much investigation, since the submission of women is one of the oldest problems not only on the African continent, but also in the world. The contribution of this study is to gain insight into the dynamics with regard to women and female leadership in the particular combination of the Pentecostal tradition with its theology and exegesis and African cultures in the context of Zimbabwe. The case study is the Zimbabwean AFM with its policies and practices. With this, the study aims to contribute to the larger discussion on the theme of women in leadership in Christian churches, especially in African ecclesial circles. The study aims to expand the scope of the prevalent theology in Zimbabwe and stimulate discussions on female leadership in church and society.

## 1.5 Methodology

The theoretical framework of this qualitative investigation is phenomenological, historical cultural-materialist and theological. The aim is to uncover attitudes from traditional religion and culture concerning women's roles that persist among Pentecostal Christians. Historical, cultural, socio-political, and economic influences on churches and their organisation will be traced.

The phenomenological approach with specific reference to phenomenology of religion will be employed. A comparative analysis will be made of the roles men and women play in church and society. There is no scholarly consensus on a definition of phenomenology of religion (Cox 2010:10-12). Phenomenology is a term that was primarily used in philosophy, worked out especially by Edmund Husserl (1981) as a theory of knowledge. However, since then the term has been used in a variety of ways by scholars. Consequently, it is regarded more as a family of approaches than *an* approach.

A phenomenological approach to this study aims at an understanding of certain aspects of religion and culture with regard to women that tenaciously remain embedded in the thought and attitudes of Pentecostal Christians in the AFM in Zimbabwe. Chitando (1998:99) points out that a phenomenological approach involves the application of *epoché*. *Epoché* is derived from the Greek word *epecho* which means, 'I hold back,' and implies bracketing out the investigator's own presuppositions in order to cultivate a better knowledge of other religious traditions (see Sharpe 1986:224). To approach an investigation of religion from a phenomenological perspective implies taking the believer's point of view seriously (Chitando 1998:99). In this study the utilisation of a phenomenological method aims to investigate the religious traditions of both the Pentecostals and the AFM in a non-evaluative manner. The investigator abstains from value judgements and aims to come to an in-depth understanding of what is being investigated.

One of the major criticisms of the phenomenological method is that it is not practical. This is further argued as follows by Segal (1989:22):

Phenomenologists invariably neglect to explain how to practise it. To prescribe the suspension of bias is one thing. To achieve it is another. Until the actual means of riding oneself of all biases gets explained the *epoché* must remain only a forlorn ideal.

Another challenge relates to the point of departure of not questioning the truth and value of the religion that is being investigated and to always place the emphasis on the views of the believers within that religious tradition. Neutrality and the suspension of value judgements by those doing the investigation, are difficult to maintain (Chitando 1997:105). A phenomenological approach calls for descriptive accuracy and scholarly neutrality in order to allow for an unfettered quest for knowledge and a systematic discussion of the information that is gleaned in the investigation. A phenomenological approach is broader than some other methodologies that relegate religion to one aspect of life, such as for example psychology or sociology. Because of the radically plural religious climate of Zimbabwe and the diverse understanding of gender issues in Zimbabwe, this is a viable method for the investigation undertaken by this study.

The aspect of *empathetic interpolation* in a similar vein as phenomenological method, where the focus is on an empathetic understanding of information is particularly useful to this study which aims to ascertain how aspects of gender have found avenues of expression in Pentecostal life in Africa in general and in the AFM in Zimbabwe in particular. The study aims to avoid premature judgements both with regard to the attitudes in the church and the experiences of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe. The goal is to understand rather than judge. Wrede B. Kristenesen (1994:132) explains this approach as follows:

Let us never forget that there exists no other reality than the faith of the believer. If we really want to understand religion, we must refer exclusively to the believer's testimony and experience. What we believe from our point of view, about the nature and value of religion is a reliable testimony to our own faith, or to our own understanding of religious faith ... but if our opinion about another religion differs from the opinion and evaluations of believers, when

we are no longer about their religion. We have turned aside from historical reality and are concerned only about ourselves.

An inquiry into the issue of gender and patriarchy is complex. Traditions have to be approached with respect and in their own right (cf Holmes 2007:36). The matter becomes even more challenging when the relationship between cultural attitudes in Zimbabwe and those of Pentecostal traditions are brought into dialogue (see Mugambi 1989:63). Despite the challenges surrounding the phenomenology of religion such as, for example, the difficulty in upholding *epoché*, the challenge to appreciate the believers' point of view without bias and that of cultivating empathy, this method is viable for the present study. The strategy of participant observation will be followed. Principles of phenomenological investigation will be upheld to minimise bias toward the leadership of the AFM. The emphasis of the phenomenological approach on the testimony of the believer also creates the space to focus respectfully on the experiences of the women in the AFM in Zimbabwe and to give them a voice. This approach informed the interview sessions where the focus was on the believer speaking for themselves and from their own experience in response to open questions. The aim of the interviews was to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of those who experience it first-hand.

Another trait of the phenomenological approach that is of value to this investigation is that of *eidetic intuition*. Al-Shari (2004:13) explains 'eidetic' as that it is possible to have intuitive insight into the nature of things, that is no less 'knowledge' than that derived by perceiving physical objects. The *eidetic* is about 'seeing essence' or 'essential seeing', which can distinguish, examine and describe the 'fundamental forms of the activity of consciousness', such as perception, enumeration and anticipation.

Katherine Young (2002:ix-x) points out that the awareness that something was amiss in the study of religion came gradually when people began to notice the absence to a large extent of female scholarship. Universal ideas and human nature were presented from a male perspective. For Young (2002:30-31), phenomenological and feminist approaches bring activism to scholarship. The aim is to improve the status of women (feminism), to analyse the situation of the marginalization or invisibility of women in historical records (textual studies) and to expand the study design by

documenting the real religious life of women (based on ethnographies, oral histories and interviews). In this respect, the study engages the phenomenology of religion in a critical way in relation to capturing women's religious experiences. Particular attention is paid to the extent to which men and women experience the same religion differently. A phenomenological approach has capacity to capture women's religious experiences and is therefore useful to this study.

A *qualitative* investigation of the practices of patriarchal dominance in leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe will be done. The qualitative approach provides a platform for close and thorough participation with people in order to understand their experiences more fully (Neta 2011:78). The data that will be gathered will reveal their core beliefs and the reasons for these beliefs (see Neta 2011:109). Swinton *et al* (2007:33) put it as follows: 'Knowledge of the other occurs when the research focuses on a particular individual or group and explores depth ways in which they view and interact with world.'

Male dominance over females in the church is not an age-old reality all over the world. It is experienced somewhat differently in different cultures and belief systems. This study focuses specifically on African Pentecostal Christians, particularly the experiences of AFM women ministers and their relation to top leadership within the church. The study engages with them and with church leaders in order to obtain knowledge from grassroots level regarding their realities and how they perceive them (see Babbie 2011:4). The purpose is that the investigator, who in this case is a cultural 'insider' and former member of the church is immersed even further into the participants' milieu in order to better understand and describe their experiences from their point of view (see Baloyi 2011:71). Practical theologians Swinton *et al* (2007:31) describe a qualitative approach as 'a process of careful, rigorous inquiry into an aspect of social world.' The process therefore involves a deep and thorough investigation into ways in which human beings experience life in general, and the focus of this study, namely the role of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe in particular.

Whereas a quantitative investigation is experimental in nature (see Hair *et al* 2003:211), a qualitative approach makes use of words and data that are collected and analysed in various ways (see Braun *et al* 2013:15-16). The main objective in this qualitative study is therefore not experimental, but to discover meaning and

develop an understanding of patriarchy and women's leadership in the Pentecostal church (see Leedy 1993:140; Hair *et al* 2003:212). The aim of the study is to explore, develop an understanding and explain the position of the AFM in Zimbabwe regarding women, as is also enshrined in their constitution as their statement of faith and belief. Therefore a qualitative approach to the collecting and processing of data is appropriate. It is an epistemological point of departure of this study that data is not collected in a theoretical vacuum but from concrete human experiences at the grassroots level.

The aim is to ascertain how wide-spread certain attitudes, notions and ideas with regard to the role and place of women and female leadership in society and in the faith community are (see Renzetti & Curran 1999:67). Through interviews, attitudes and meanings will be explored in greater depth in order to *interpret* the current situation with regard to women in the church and church leadership in the particular context of the study.

The phenomenological approach with specific reference to phenomenology of religion was employed in this study with regard to aspects of religion and culture where women are concerned. This is not only relevant to Zimbabwe but also elsewhere in Africa. It is useful to the investigation of the culture of the AFM in Zimbabwe regarding women's role in the church. The ideologies that have shaped the history of the church have evolved over time. Similar ideologies can be found in denominations and religions of the world, including African religions and Islam.

The epistemological point of departure of this study is that knowledge is a *social construct*. This will provide the epistemological framework for investigating, evaluating and understanding the experiences of the Zimbabwean people regarding the role and position of women in the Pentecostal church. This study regards a social constructionist approach as useful since it deals with the understanding of human beings as products of social process (see Burr 2003:1). It is 'concerned with meaning and understanding as the central feature of human society' (Lock and Strong 2010:6). The point of departure is that people are social beings who continually fashion who they are, what they think and what they believe through interaction with one another and with their environment. A social constructionist paradigm does not hold anything as fixed or absolute (see Beasley 2006:135). It is from this perspective



that the shift in AFM leadership with regard to women, which only began round about 1999, will be investigated.

Culture is a human creation and therefore subject to change as humans ideologies and education change. Not only are human beings themselves and their cultures, as products of social processes, forever changing, but the realities of the world in which they live are also constantly changing. Change takes place as human reality is constructed daily where conversation takes place and people face various challenges in life (see Gergen 2009:4). No human construct is perfect. Therefore, there is nothing about people, their ways and cultures, that cannot be challenged, critiqued or opposed. This study aims to challenge and critique the policies and practices of the AFM in Zimbabwe on leadership and succession, especially with regard to women.

A historical overview will be given of the progress that has been made to date with regard to the involvement of women in pastoral ministry and leadership in the context that is investigated. Theological understandings and biblical hermeneutics on which historical and current practices are based, will be explored. The study examines what is going on (the *status quo*) and describes the prevalent structures. Both the theological and ideological underpinnings and the social realities to which they give rise are interpreted from the perspective of a hermeneutics of suspicion. Such a hermeneutics enables a critical deconstruction of existing religious meaning and roles in ways that attend to the complexities of women's experience in various cultural and religious environments. This approach fosters an environment of acceptance and enables the identification of new ways of experiencing God (theological realities) which can lead to new ways of understanding and constructing reality and relating to 'the other'.

The study makes use of a *historical cultural-materialist method*, which focuses on the development of human societies over time. It hails from the Marxist approach to sociological analysis (see Mosala 1987:4-6) and is utilised here in the reading and interpretation of biblical texts, especially on the issue of gender and role of women in the communities of the Bible. Throughout history, religion has been a tool of both exploitation and liberation. Kerlinger (1973:701) defines the historical approach as the critical investigation of events, development and experiences of the past. The

Christian Bible has been used to oppress and exploit women. This method offers an ideology for economic and political revolution against the status quo by the oppressed and exploited classes. For Vengeyi (2013:41), religion is both part of the problem and part of the solution to the problem of exploitation. While the elite use religion to oppress the masses, the masses can also use religion to liberate themselves. One can argue that men used and still use religion to oppress women, who are the majority in the churches. However, religion and the Bible can also be liberating for women. It is the call of the Christian gospel that all people should be free from oppression and exploitation. The liberation, equality dignity and equal opportunity of women in church and society should therefore be a cause taken up by women and men who purport to be followers of Jesus Christ.

According to Marx and Engels (1968: 660) the historical cultural-materialist approach assumes that for human beings to survive and continue to survive it is necessary for them to produce and reproduce the critical requirements for life. In order to carry out production people enter into social relations or production relations, but these relations are not always free and equitable. The division of labour in society is such that, according to Marx and Engels (1968:660), some people live on the fruits of others' labour because they own the means of production. When applied to this study, this approach can be useful to investigate the situation of women who, though they comprise the majority of the membership of the AFM in Zimbabwe, do not have an equal access to leadership and policy making in the organization. Women are relegated to the position of follower rather than leader.

The past is not over but continues into the present and even into the future, as noted by Ranger and Kimambo (1972:23). The historical approach enables scrutiny of the religious past and reveals its positive contribution as well as its injustices. This creates the opportunity to correct past mistakes and work toward an improved future. This approach allows for future projections on the basis of past patterns. It is also useful with regard to the issue of women in top leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe. One perspective on historiography is that it is the recording of past events. However, this does not provide a holistic understanding of history, since not all events are recorded. For Whalen (1976:278), 'history is an event rather than a process'. The historical component of this study is an investigation of the recorded history of the

AFM in Zimbabwe in order to highlight the role of women in the church's history, from the early days, through the liberation war, up until today. One challenge of this endeavour is that certain periods have not been recorded sufficiently. A historical cultural-materialist approach to the Bible would be that communities are engaged in struggles and relationships that should be brought to the front and understood when later faith communities engage with the biblical text. Among others, such struggles would include gender, socio-economic or political matters (see Vengeyi 2013:41). The gap created by the lack of adequate records will be filled in this study through oral histories, collected by means of interviews and focus group discussions.

Data collection approaches employed in this study are: participant observation, formal and informal interviews with members of the AFM in Zimbabwe. This will now be explained in more detail:

- **Participant observation**

Participant observation combines participation in the lives of people under study with maintaining a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data, observations related to noting pattern of continuity between traditional religions and Christianity. Kim Knott (2009:250) points out that observation can influence the people who are observed. Because some members and leaders of the AFM felt uncomfortable to be interviewed formally, informal interviews were held. The AFM in Zimbabwe has a strict policy with regard to providing information to outsiders, because of some previous publications on the church and its leaders have been rather negative. The ethical stance of this investigation is that the selected interviewees are all former leaders of the church whose integrity is unquestionable and who have no wish or intention to harm the church. Participant observation also entailed listening to the sermons, attending evangelistic crusades, deliverance events (crusades that are held mainly to deliver people from various spirits perceived to be distracting the progress of believers) and women's fellowship groups. The investigation is therefore being done by a male 'insider' of the Pentecostal tradition.

Fieldwork has its rewards, but also had its pitfalls (see Hackett 2001:28). One of the factors that complicated the investigation was the fact that the researcher is male and the study focuses on female persons. Even if women speak openly and honestly

for themselves, because of the difference in the male and female worlds, it is not easy for a male person to fully understand female experiences. The challenge is to elicit free and full participation of women speaking in their own voice and from their own perspective, without hegemonic interpretation or patronising behaviour from the side of the male interviewer. In this respect it is challenging for an outsider (in terms of gender if not in terms of culture or religious tradition) to gather the necessary information in an utterly respectful way. A measure of suspicion and resistance was, nevertheless encountered. When participants were wary and reserved, it was difficult to obtain authentic and honest information. Some interviewees were hesitant to respond to questions and became evasive. Such challenges had to be negotiated in order for meaningful fieldwork to be conducted. To mitigate the suspicions of the interviewees, I explained my academic interests, the fact that I had permission from the church and also had ethical clearance from the university, which confirmed that the investigation was for academic purposes. In addition, to avoid any academic biases, I had to apply *epoché* (suspending preconceived ideas) and allow the respondents to speak for themselves. Despite this intent it would still be possible for preconceived ideas and biases to intrude unintendedly. No study can be approached without the prior knowledge or a theoretical framework. Every investigator brings her or his own experience to the interaction with participants. This will necessarily be part and parcel of the process. Therefore, critical self-reflection is needed throughout.

In my interaction with female Pentecostal religious leaders and in order to obtain information regarding their opinions about women in higher leadership positions, I had the advantage of being 'the outsider within' (an expression borrowed from Ugba 2013:85-89). As a male researcher in a female milieu, it was not easy to gain access to certain spaces. When granted access, I organized my questions so that it would be clear to the interviewees that they could respond freely. I did have access to some functions organised by women.

Interviewees were selected for different purposes. One group consisted of former leaders of the church since they have a vision for the church and insight into what leadership of the church looks like in practice. They also have a vision of what church leadership *should* look like which is in line with Richard Osmer's (2008)

“normative task” of practical theology. Women who were interviewed attested to their first-hand experience on the receiving end of how church leadership evaluates their contribution. They have an understanding of their own role in the leadership in the church which shed light on the research problem of this study. Of the women participants who were randomly selected, 60% were pastors. The others were people who fulfil other kinds of leadership functions (15%) and women who have supporting positions in the church (25%). Their responses indicated a desire to see the emancipation of women and their subsequent full participation in church leadership, also at the highest levels.

The interview questions were arranged in three categories. They were carried out in various locations in order to procure data from a variety of perspectives and contexts. Of the interviews conducted, 90 % were carried out in Harare, 6% in Bulawayo and 4% in Bindura.

Dutch practical theologian, Gerben Heitink (1999:6) describes practical theology as the ‘empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society.’ Practical theology investigates people’s experiences in their relationship with God. According to Klaasen (2014:1) practical theology has attracted renewed interest from both theology and other sciences since the mid-eighties. According to Ganzevoort (2004:2), theology is a forum where various scientific discourses meet. His rationale for this forum lies in the understanding of theology as ‘speaking of God’. The way God speaks is through his people. Since it is not about the gender of these people, women are included. There is then a need for investigating the language and other symbolic systems in their relation to people’s religious experiences, beliefs, and actions, since language can be exclusive. This has an impact on the way the theological message is disseminated to the people. Schmid (1998:103) points out that practical theology takes the locus of human history as its main source:

In a kairological perspective, the present actual historical praxis, the contemporary realization of life from faith, is in this strict sense a *locus theologicus*, site for the reflection on faith, source for theological learning. In it the *sensus fidelium* reveals itself in that it

becomes visible in action. Thus the con-sensus of many individuals becomes theologically meaningful, because the result of the sense of faith – the actual content of the consciousness of faith – is not a critically compiled or systematically presented product, but living testimony of faith.

Practice serves as a home for theology in that it offers the material from which theological discourse is built. This practical experience helps to position certain ideas from a given group of people in a specific community. However, as communities differ, experiences also differ and those experiences influence the behaviours in each community. Darragh (2007:1) uses the term 'practical theology' in the sense of a theological process that follows some form of hermeneutical circle with the aim to make connections between the world of human action and the Christian tradition that result in transformative practice. Practice as lived religion, both inside and outside the church, prompts the question of what is being done (see Ganzevoort 2004:5). James Cone (1985:148) viewed that as ortho-praxis which precedes ortho-doxo. He puts it as follows:

Theology in this methodology is a critical reflection upon prior religio-cultural affirmation and political commitment to be in solidarity with victims of our continents.

The church is a key environment for doing theology in solidarity with the context in which it operates. However, Klaasen (2014:1) points out that practical theology has become important for the church to interpret the increasing gap between modernity and post-modernity or between universalism and particularity, the gap between autonomous individuals and communitarian persons. Practical theology also exposes what rationalities function in the church and how they operate. It can therefore shed light on the way in which people perceive and behave with regard to the position of women in church leadership. Zimbabwean perspectives on the role of women in the church vary in the various ethnic groups and communities. For Klaasen (2014:2) the practical theological contribution goes beyond the support of clericalism and training people for professional ministry in the church. Modern

practical theology began with Schleiermacher's work, *Brief outline of the study of theology* (1811), in which he organises theology into philosophical, historical and practical theology (see Poling 2011:149–150). Practical theology was understood as theological reflection on church practices, and the focus was on the work of the clergy (see Wepener et. al. 2017:137). In the AFM in Zimbabwe, in relation to the clerical work, women are included as equally called to minister. However, the challenge comes in when it is about the highest leadership position of the church.

With regard to the training of clergy, to some extent they are trained in the AFM in Zimbabwe for ministry in the church. However, practical theology also investigates contextual questions which focus on a broader reality than the church. Practical theology, for example, is interested in the following questions: How do Christians and their teachings make sense in an ever-increasing secular society? In engaging with this question practical theology draws on practical reason to answer the even more fundamental question: What is going on? Practical reasoning helps with the analyses. Practical reason, according to Klaasen (2014:5), is reason in relationship with experiences (and practices). This is a tool of interpretation and is an 'inseparable reciprocal relationship' (Dreyer 1999:48). According to Wepener et. al (2017:137; cf. Wepener 2009) this relationship, this research process, not only tests the situation but also makes recommendations regarding the situation in which believers find themselves. This is the route that will be followed in this investigation of the situation of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe.

According to Woodward et.al. (2000:8), 'in principle, the scope of practical theology is almost infinite.' The discipline has a broad and inclusive scope when investigating praxis from a practical theological perspective. Developments such as globalization and postmodernity, with their focus on context, otherness, and particularity, emphasise the inextricable interconnections that are both international and cross-cultural in scope (see Grieder 2006:53). Therefore, both the inner-ecclesial and the public focus of activities within such inter-connectivity and in an inter-cultural world are part and parcel of the concerns of practical theology (see Browning 1991:57). This is enhanced by the inclusion of ethics by the practitioners of the practical theology in a particular context. For example, an ethical question can be asked when

assessing the role and position of women in the society and the church. If the inclusion of women in, for instance, top leadership positions, is dismissed without a consideration of the ethical foundations and the ethical implications of such decisions and actions, then the work has not been done sufficiently. The use of hermeneutical tools such as reason and experience, can help to make sense of the behaviour.

Emmanuel Lartey (2005:30) describes the scope of pastoral theology as including in its study and practice all that has to do with the care of persons and communities within the global village. From a postfoundationalist perspective it is imperative to listen to the narratives of the people in real life situations (Klaasen 2014:6). This hermeneutical endeavour 'is reflective and situational embedded in epistemology and methodology' (Müller 2011:3). In this study the role of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe will be investigated from their social experiences. Each experience produces a different and unique narrative based on the background of the people (males included) involved.

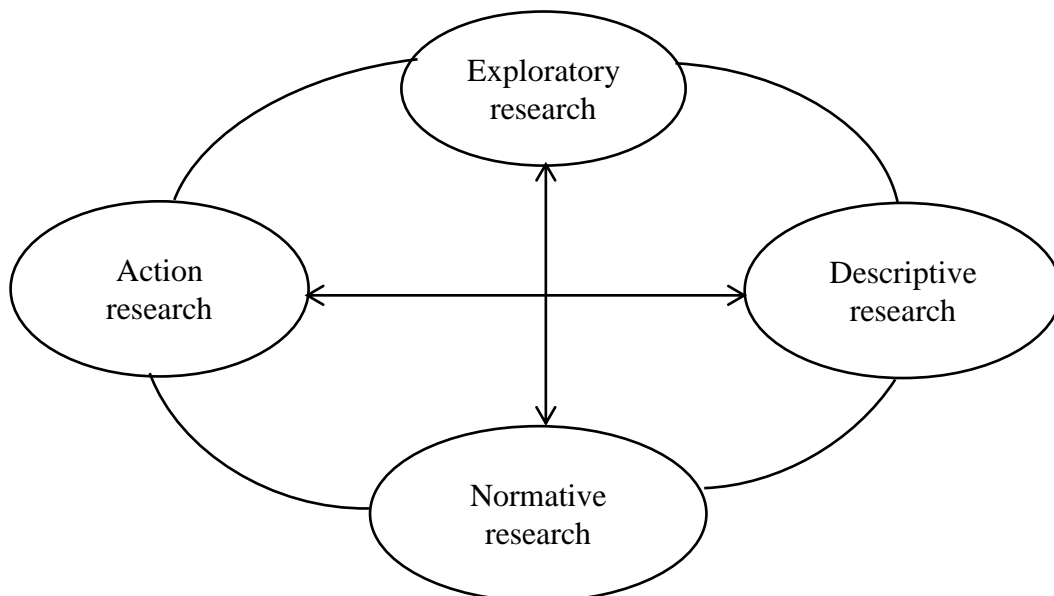
Lastly, the model of South African practical theologian, Noel Woodbridge (2013:20; cf 2014:89), which is a slight variation of the model of Richard Osmer (2008) and which Woodbridge calls the EDNA model, will be utilised. This name is an acronym that points to four areas of research, each introduced by a particular question:

- **E**xploratory research asks: 'what has led to the present situation?'
- **D**escriptive research asks: 'what is happening now?'
- **N**ormative research asks, 'what should be happening?'
- **A**ction research asks, 'how should we respond?'

The model can be utilised to finding answers and assess the arguments that are put forward by church leaders regarding the inclusion and acceptance of women in the church structures. The advantage of this model is that it fits well with the other theories, models and methods that will be employed in this study. This model is concerned with explaining a practical situation, understanding the situation through a dialogue between cultural and theological perspectives, and finally changing the situation toward a renewed praxis (see Heitink 1999:165).



The EDNA model covers three key perspectives that are relevant to this work. Firstly, it covers the hermeneutical perspective, namely the interpretation of human action. In the case of this study it will be the interpretation of human action in light of the Christian tradition. This is similar to the function of the hermeneutical circle in liberation theology. The EDNA model makes use of the hermeneutical circle in its presentation of the relationship and functioning of the four areas that are investigated (see Figure 1). In the case of the roles of women in leadership positions in the AFM in Zimbabwe the utilisation of this *hermeneutical* circle will provide a tool with which to find explanations for the suspicions and inconsistencies that can be found in practice. Secondly, the EDNA model covers the *empirical* perspective which focuses on human action in terms of its factuality and its potentiality. The factual position of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe will be investigated and the potential or what their role could be, will be explored in this study. Thirdly, is the *strategic* perspective is about the development of action models and action strategies for the various domains of action (Woodbridge 2014:96-97; see Heitink 1999:165, Smith 2010a:105). Even though the four areas of research are quite distinct, they are nevertheless closely connected. The EDNA model is illustrated in the diagram below:  
*Figure 1: (see Woodbridge 2014:89)*



In this study the four aspects of the EDNA model will be applied as follows:

- *Exploratory research*

The exploratory aspect which asks 'what has led to the present situation' will be attended to by means of an investigation of the role of women in church from its historical background. The history of the church and how women were treated since the establishment of the church in Zimbabwe will elucidate what has led to the present situation where women's position with regard to leadership roles is tenuous at best, even though they can officially be ordained as pastors. The interview with the presiding president, Rev S Mtemererwa, who first ordained women into pastoral leadership, breaking new ground in the history of the AFM in Zimbabwe (in chapters three, four and five) aimed at gathering data to engage with this first aspect and question.

- *Descriptive research*

The descriptive aspect which asks 'what is happening now' is applied in this study where the current position of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe is described. From Chapter 3 to Chapter 5, the current standing of women in the church is described, as well as how the present overseers and president see women's role in church leadership.

- *Normative research*

The normative aspect which asks 'what should be happening,' comes to the fore mostly in the findings of the study which indicate how the AFM in Zimbabwe should treat women in the church, including women's potential for taking leadership roles. This normative position flows logically from the previous data. Both the history of the church and the biblical-hermeneutical theology of the church culminate in guidelines for what should be happening in practice

- *Action research*

The action component of the model asks 'how should we respond?' In order to ascertain what actions can and should be taken by the church with regard to the future of women, the challenges and impediments that women encounter were

investigated in the study, especially the “glass ceiling” with regard to their reaching top church leadership positions. Also in this regard a historical example was informative, namely how Mbuya Murape functioned in an influential leadership role and was respected as a leader also by the church leadership of the day. The EDNA model, as a practical theological methodological model which hails from southern Africa, functions to draw information from the practices of people within the church. In this study, the processing of the data was done by identifying themes from the interviews and bringing them into dialogue with the available literature.

## **1.6 Chapter outline**

Chapter two provides an overview of women in the history of Zimbabwe. In this chapter women’s role in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial in Zimbabwe is examined.

Chapter three focuses on the role women play in the AFM in Zimbabwe and their participation in the church during the various phases of the church’s history. The first phase examines how Spirit baptism, central to the beliefs and practices of the AFM church was seen with regard to women and their participation in the activities of the church. The baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by visible signs like glossolalia, is surveyed in this chapter as the second phase. The difference between the two phases is that the first phase deals with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and is evidenced speaking in tongues, whereas the second phase is Spirit baptism but it has miracle of healing, signs and wonders. In this phase women were participants in the healing ministry and performance of signs and wonders within the church. In phase three baptism of the Holy Spirit continues to be important. The only difference is that it is followed by many subsequent ‘baptisms’ and ‘fillings’ of the Holy Spirit. These subsequent ‘baptisms’ and ‘fillings’ of the Spirit are meant for different tasks and events, that believers encounter in their lives.

Chapter four examines the leadership hierarchy in the AFM in Zimbabwe and how women are generally seen and treated with regard to leadership roles and functions.

Chapter five investigates theological approaches and understandings regarding women and leadership in the context of the AFM in Zimbabwe. It investigates the

biblical basis for the justification of the position of women in the church critically. It particularly examines the narratives where and how Jesus responded to the women in his movement, Paul's responses to women in the church as recorded in his letters, and the ideas that were prevalent in the early church with regard to the position of women.

Chapter six presents the findings of the study and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN, GENDER AND PENTECOSTALISM IN ZIMBABWE

#### 2.1 Women in the history of Zimbabwe

This chapter applies the historical cultural-materialist method to engage in an investigation of the history of the AFM in Zimbabwe regarding the place of women. It also makes use of what Richard Osmer (2008) calls the “descriptive task”, which aims to answer the question: what is going on? In this study the task is accomplished by means of what he calls “priestly listening”. The role of women in the history of Zimbabwe will be explored in this section. The discussion includes a brief overview of the pre-colonial, colonial and the colonial periods. The involvement of women in different sectors of life, as well as in the liberation war will be discussed. Ambuya Nehanda was an influential woman in the liberation struggle. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000:3) describes Nehanda as a spirit medium. She was incarcerated by the government and executed for allegedly having participated in a resistance movement at the close of the nineteenth century. Women were dominant as national figures and pursued their leadership even during the pre-colonial. Nehanda’s role as a medium influenced many religious and spiritual movements. From a phenomenological approach, women in traditional religions are often seen to be the *homwe* (pocket) of the possessing spirit. Such ideologies have shaped the way in which history has evolved over the years where women feature in religions of the world. The history of women in Zimbabwe will be discussed in three phases in order to come to a better understanding of the present situation regarding the role of women in 21<sup>st</sup> century society and religious groups, specifically Pentecostal churches. According to Robert Mugabe, if women do not participate in public service and political life and are not released from their stultifying environment, it will be impossible to build either democracy or socialism (see Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:3).

The following overview of the three phases in the history of Zimbabwe will focus on the social discourse and events that relate directly to women, their situation and participation, or lack thereof. This part of the study traces the role of women in traditional Shona/Ndebele culture in Zimbabwe.

The AFM in Zimbabwe is seen as one of the 'new religious movements' in the world (Jones 2002:75). As the literature has shown, some new religious movements have extremely conservative and others fairly open gender ideologies. Feminist scholars question how and why contemporary women find meaning in such conservative contexts and how their socialization into the larger patriarchal culture influences their choice to affiliate with such religious groups.

In general, there are still quite obvious power differences between men and women. This is also the case in religious contexts. This study aims to enquire how the AFM in Zimbabwe responds to various aspects that affect the role and status of women. It further explores the differences between this denomination's approach to women and that of Shona religion and culture.

### **2.1.1 Women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe**

During the pre-colonial period, women mainly operated behind the scenes. Pre-colonial Zimbabwe is the period before colonization. In this era, women performed certain roles in political, economic and social spheres, though they seemed to be mostly confined to private spaces. Women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe had some significant roles that enhanced their status and autonomy in their communities. Their capabilities formed the basis from which they performed their roles socially, economically and even politically. Their participation in these respective areas will now be traced.

Pre-colonial Zimbabwe was a multi-ethnic society inhabited by the Tsonga in the South-Eastern parts of the Zimbabwe Plateau, the Venda in the south, the Tonga in the north, the Kalanga and Ndebele in the South-West, the Karanga in the southern parts of the plateau, the Zezuru and Korekore in the northern and central parts and finally the Manyika and the Ndau in the East (see Beach 1977:35-6). Huge empires

emerged in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, namely the Great Zimbabwe State, the Mutapa state, the Rozvi state, the Torwa state and the Ndebele state. Great Zimbabwe was a majestic ancient stone city that flourished near the modern day town of Masvingo (Beach 1977:37). Women in all the above states contributed by means of various types of craftwork. Pottery was made for cooking and storing liquids such as drinking water and beer. Basket weaving was practised to make different types of mats and winnowing baskets (see Figure 2<sup>1</sup> and Beach 1977:36). These were made for household use and to sell, which meant that women participated in trade (see Figure 2). According to Courville (1992:31), women were doubly oppressed, namely as women under male dominance (gender oppression) and as peasants who were controlled both by the wealthy and elite in society (class oppression). One way of attempting to escape such double oppression was by using their hands to produce baskets that could be sold and bring them some financial independence (see Figure 3)<sup>2</sup>.



Figure 2

Beach (1977:37) points out that there was division of labour in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. This division of labour was based mainly on the need to diversify in the

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<sup>1</sup> Figure 2 is a picture published by BBC News, 10 October 2010. This was taken in Binga in Zimbabwe where women make a living for the family by trading these hand crafted baskets. Women would also trade these crafts externally.

<sup>2</sup> Figure 3 contains women in Northern Kenya after making their baskets they go in the streets to advertise and sell them. They have to have innovation and technic to sell them as here they have a post reading, 'We have your bag'. This is was advertised in 2018 by The Basket Room.

event of crops failing to produce desired yields. Men focused on hunting and herding in this regard.



Figure 3

Women were integrally involved in various aspects of economic activity, especially farming and mining (see Chopamba 2010:56). Commercial transactions were mainly done by women. They sold rice, which was an important export commodity as well as a staple food in their own country. Women were responsible for cultivation of the fields, for maintaining the food supply for all (see Davidoff & Hall 2002:272). They had the responsibility not only for the cultivation of the land, but they also decided what, when and how products were planted, harvested and processed. This responsibility for the food cycle from planting to cooking was recognized at a legal level. Legally, women, for instance, had the right to refuse to brew beer if their husband had not contributed to the labour in the field (see Davidoff & Hall 2002:272). Women were involved in crafts and mining, as well as trade. Shona women were central to the trade in luxury goods, fire-arms and ammunition. Lorraine Swan (1994:56) notes that the 'greater proportion of miners were women' in Zimbabwean mines, judging from the sex of the skeletons found in collapsed shafts (see also Summers and Phimister 1976:21).

Women were involved in gold mining and panning for alluvial gold during slow periods in the agricultural cycle, that is, after harvesting the old before planting the new crops (Schmidt 1988:55). The bulk of mining was done by women and on many



occasions only woman were involved in the work. It is through gold that the Shona people were able to trade and obtain luxurious goods, guns and ammunition.

The senior wife was the treasurer of the household. According to Thomas Huffman (2005:23), the senior wife was traditionally the only person with the right to the custody of a man's possessions. Thus, stockpiles of ivory tusks waiting for the trade caravan to stop by as well as carved, beaten-metal or wire bracelets the daughters no longer wore, and any surplus tools, raw iron or gold, were kept in the care of the senior wife.

The position and roles of women during pre-colonial Zimbabwe, in politics, in marriage and in the economic development, impacted on Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches. A rather ambiguous role of authority occupied by women in the pre-colonial period was that of spirit medium. The spirits who play a prominent part in the public domain, both autochthonous spirits such as Chaminuka and the Mhondoro spirits of deceased chiefs, are predominantly male (see Morkel 1930:65). But the medium who relays the spirits' message to the living was as likely to be female as male. The most famous example of such a female medium was, Charwe, who was possessed by the spirit of Nehanda. Charwe was executed during the first Chimurenga (see Campbell 2003:283-286). Her full name was Charwe Nyakasikana of the Hwata Zezuru clan, but she was popularly known as Ambuya Nehanda after the spirit that possessed her. Charwe, a priestess of the Nehanda cult, is considered to be one of the leaders who judged in her shrine for a certain white man named Pollard be killed because he ill-treated the local people (Kombo 2012:28-29). This is supposed to have taken place in the Mazoe district in Mashonaland central. The settlers avenged the death of Pollard by executing Charwe by hanging her in 1898. Kombo states that 'this early episode of political resistance to colonialism featured a woman medium who exercised political power in a society that was largely organized along a patriarchal ideology' (Kombo 2012:29). Her spirit is believed to have guided the first and the second Chimurenga from 1960 to 1979 (Campbell 2003:285). She led and advised both indunas and kings. According to S. Murungu (2004:32), Mbuya Nehanda was so influential that songs and poems were dedicated to her, such as, for example, the famous poem by Solomon Mutsvairo.

Some of the most famous examples of spirit mediums beside Charwe are Mojaji and Lozikeyi (Mararike, 2003:1). Under the leadership of Monomotapa, the powerful idea of 'The Rain Queen' emerged. Mojaji is regarded as the first Rain Queen. In 1800, she left the Great Zimbabwe under controversial and mysterious circumstances and headed south to South Africa (see Mararike 2003:1). The story goes that Queen Mojaji left the Great Zimbabwe after conflict with her brothers because her father had appointed her as his successor. To prove that she had been chosen to rule, she established her own kingdom, the Balobedi.

Another woman of high status was Lozikeyi, the wife of King Lobengula of the Ndebele state. She took care of state affairs after the king's death and under her rule everything went well socially, economically and politically (see Mararike, 2003:1-2). Lozikeyi also functioned as a judge. She settled disputes and contributed greatly to peace in society. She was named the star of the great war of 1896 as she also instructed the impis and the chiefs in state affairs (Clarke and Nyathi 2010:56). She was greatly trusted because of her role as a leader who inspired the 1896 war.

In the pre-colonial period, women were in charge of puberty rites, marriage ceremonies and other rituals of the life cycle. Women also played a crucial role in religion. They could act as spirit mediums and could be members of spirit possession cults (Murungu 2004:32). Their female sex was of no consequence in this setting where they were endowed with spiritual authority. A spirit medium had powerful influence on the people, and that influence could be for good or evil. Through claiming possession by a male spirit, women could escape their restricted female role and demand material goods and special treatment from their husbands (see Lewis 2004:23-35). Women were celebrated for having been chosen by the spirit as a medium. Society would then accord her a special position for her role as one who connects them to the divinity.

Women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe had the task of bringing up children and taking care of the household. They were largely responsible for providing for the family (see Barnes 1992:3 and Staunton 1990:27). Their role was to nurture a child from birth, through childhood, adolescence and adulthood until their death. Women were responsible for the household and had to provide for the family. They had to fetch water and firewood and did the cooking and cleaning.

In pre-colonial Africa, some power was awarded women, though in most cases this tended to be ceremonial rather than authoritative. Generally, women's place was 'in the kitchen' (Mararike 2003:1), confined to domesticity, exercising what power they had in the private domain. During the pre-colonial era, this role was expanded to also provide for men outside the home (see Mackenzie 1975:24). In this respect, the women had a special role during the pre-colonial struggle in Zimbabwe.

Elderly women such as grandmothers and aunts had the responsibility of preparing young women for marriage. In the Shona culture, the elderly women called Mbuya Nyane or Chinoni, would initiate the girls into the rite of Komba (see Mabuwa 1993:12-13). This rite was the transition from childhood (*mhandara* in Shona) to womanhood. The rite took place in bush camps during the month of June to July, which is in winter. Because women had to entertain their husbands, the young women were taught dancing and drama (Mabuwa 1993:13). According to Silveira (1990:18), women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe had played a pivotal role as farmers and gathers. As agriculturalists, women gained some power and status especially when taking part in local trade (see Cheater 1981:348). As farmers, women provided for their families.

Zimbabwean societies were fairly complicated and often not easy to be understood by people who were not from the Shona culture (see Gaidzanwa 1985, cf Murithi, T. & Mawadza (eds). 2011:84). Although politics were in the hands of men in the Shona culture, political positions largely depended on successful production, which was in the hands of women (see Dube 2013:4). Women tended the fields and increased agricultural production. Women bore the children and increased reproduction. For a man to be the head of a tribe, there had to be a measure of wealth and a sufficient number of people. Without the productive and reproductive work of women, males would lose their control.

Married women in Zimbabwe during this period would also own land through the patrilineage of their husbands and they worked on their land for subsistence. The wives of a polygamous husband worked the land together, carrying out the decisions made by the husband. Married women in both the simple and compound marriages spent the majority of their time working the fields that were allocated to their husbands by the herdsman (see Gaidzanwa 1988:4). A wife or wives could be given

a portion of land (*tseu*) by the husband which was then fully under her or their control. They would use this money to care for the family when the man has not provided. Women`s crops, such as beans, pumpkins, groundnuts and potatoes planted on her *tseu* could also be used to supplement the husband`s produce.

For the grazing of the cattle herds, women received usufruct rights to the land of their father. Women could obtain cattle in various ways: from their husbands after having completed work on the *tseu*, or from their son(s)-in-law (Cheater 1983:59). The cattle of motherhood (explained under the section, ‘Women’s authority in traditional marriage’, below) which women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe owned, was considered a sign of wealth. The cattle grazed on the land belonging to males, but remained the property of women and therefore under their control.

In pre-colonial Zimbabwe there was no formal education. Women were taught pottery and weaving by the older women in the community. When they made these for their homesteads, they would sell the surplus to add to the produce from the *tseu*. Some ethnic groups had initiation schools which were attended for a short period of time. Generally, children learned by doing. They were instructed as to the traditions of the tribe and the social behavior that was expected of the members of the communities and society (Nyerere 1967:7). One key expectation for which young persons were prepared was traditional marriage, which will now be discussed.

According to the traditional Shona worldview, marriage is an important aspect of the life of a community. It is a central feature of traditional Shona society and is generally seen as a social obligation by traditional African societies. It is seen as a goal everyone has to achieve and those who fail to do so will experience a great measure of social pressure. In Zimbabwean society, as in most of African societies, marriage is regarded as the core business of one’s life. According to Weinrich (1978: 27) unmarried women ‘not only prevent families from increasing in size but make it difficult for their bothers to marry.’ This key role played by women in Shona culture influenced the way in which they could be and function in the community. This discussion examines the roles of women in traditional marriage.

As a wife, women are expected to produce children for the male lineage and also contribute their labour towards the upkeep of the household. A woman had some

authority when it comes to the marriage of her daughters. For every girl the mother brought into the world and who got married 'in the right way' according to culture, the mother was honoured by being presented with a cow to celebrate her womanhood. In traditional Shona culture, the mother's cow was calculated as part of the bride price or 'lobola'. The cow is called *mombe yeumai* (cattle of motherhood). This is the only 'payment' given to a mother for having given birth to a girl. These cows were controlled entirely by the mother. It was taboo to kill or sell them. Transgression of this taboo was considered a bad omen for the perpetrator, who was punished. Such a perpetrator would suffer bad luck in all their endeavors. The rest of the lobola was shared between the father and his brothers. These male persons were the ones to preside over the marriage proceedings. They would be consulted in all things.

Women were used as pawns for solving political disputes by men in power positions. A woman of one tribe would, for instance, be given to a man of another tribe in marriage order to forge relationship ties between the tribes and guarantee peace. An example in Zimbabwe is the intermarriage between Shona and Ndebele people. At first the two groups fought each other for space and recognition, but due to intermarriage they have managed to settle their differences. Some women were used as spies. In pre-colonial Zimbabwe, a king would place his wives in different chieftainships in order to provide him with information on the chiefdoms. This information was necessary, since chiefs could plot a revolt against the king. According to Mazarire (2014:7) in his study of the pre-colonial Chivi society, the women who were used as spies occupied influential positions and were part of the king's council. Women of the royal classes could participate in the politics as leaders or advisors. Mantathisi of Sotho is an example of a woman who became very influential after the death of her husband (see Sweetman 1984:28-30). Women had a sometimes direct but mostly indirect influence in politics. They more often than not had little or no agency, but were used by men.

Apart from the socio-political roles of women in the pre-colonial Zimbabwe, women were also involved in the economy in various ways, among others as peasants. According to Schmidt (1988:45), 'women formed the main labor force in agriculture; they played a pivotal role in cash crop production.' In this way, women contributed to a relatively prosperous peasant economy. Women were food producers, mostly for

family consumption (see Kachingwe 1986:280). As subsistence farmers, they provided about 70% of the labour in the agricultural domain. They spent some 49% of their time on agricultural activities and were also the managers of the family and household (see Chimedza 1988:67). They played a crucial role in providing for their families in the pre-colonial Zimbabwe.

Schmidt (1988:45) further states that by 1945, married woman's right to land had deteriorated significantly. Increasingly, their fields were planted in male controlled cash crops. In pre-colonial Zimbabwe women could not own land. According to Beach (1980:13), women who could invest in livestock needed to use their husbands' land for grazing. Women were also economically active in agriculture, metallurgical and craft production and had some control over grain stores. They did not have much control over the means of production, but provided much of the labour (see Beach 1980:13; McKenzie 1975:65).

In all the ethnic groups in the pre-colonial Zimbabwean society, with one or two notable exceptions, women were systemically excluded from formal politico-jural authority which, among other functions, controlled the allocation of land. The headwomen in Manicaland and Lomagundi, and the Nehoreka (Charewa) chieftainships in the Mutoko district, are among the few recorded exceptions to this rule of female exclusion from political authority (see Berlyn 1972:56). Informally, however, according to Bourdillon (1987:72), 'it is probable that women always had more say in Shona society than was formally admitted'.

In Shona culture in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, women were also *hunters* (see Mazarire 2003:1). Men and women hunted together. Each person had a task (Schmidt 1988:54). Among the Mhari people of Masunda, the women's task was to provide the hunters with food and to help to carry the meat home (Burke 1969:162). The hunters used nets (*mambure*) to catch antelopes and wild pigs. Women were also responsible for beating the drums, dancing and ululating to make noises that scared the animals and drove them into the *mambure*. It was the duty of women to dry and preserve the meat (Mulambo 2014:113).

Female *symbolism* was present in ancient Shona cosmology (Mazarire 2014:42). Rock art predating the Mhari civilization, as recorded by Goodall (2003:42), depicts

women tending livestock. In the Dengeni Cave (Garlake 1987:82), a painting was found of female figures with aprons and sticks dancing behind a giraffe and other animals. Female imagery in art is an indication that Shona culture acknowledged women's role in sustaining humanity and in agriculture. Female fertility and that of the land were often connected. Control over these resources determined whether people would eat or starve. Therefore, control over women indirectly meant control over the environment (Schmidt 1992:61). According to Mulambo (2014:113), women were highly respected as artisans, skilled workers, predominating in such trades as the moulding and burning of pots. Women were involved in gold mining and washing for alluvial gold during slow periods in the agricultural cycle, that is, after harvesting the old before planting the new crops (Schmidt 1988:55). The bulk of mining was done by women. The mining of gold enabled women to trade for other goods. Women were also beer brewers. Among others, beer was used in ritual practices.

The role of women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe was to complement that of men. The society was highly patriarchal. This meant the female participation was limited. Their role was overshadowed by that of men and they were not seen as people of equal worth. However, since pre-colonial Zimbabwe was an agrarian society and women were the key to agriculture, they did play a crucial role in society.

### **2.1.2 Women in colonial Zimbabwe**

The people of Zimbabwe, including women, were severely affected by the colonization of the country which was from about 1890 to the early 1980. There is the liberation struggle period (late 1960s to independence in 1980) in this period which shall be included as part of the colonial period (see Barnes 1999:12). This is the time during which most European countries focused their interests on the continent of Africa, especially those countries perceived by the Europeans as owning wealth in the form of minerals and who have a good climate. Zimbabwe's two major groups, the Shona and the Ndebele, were mainly affected by colonization due to their numerical difference with other groups. Cecil Rhodes, who realized that the country possessed wealth in terms of diamonds and gold, established a private battalion of soldiers, the Pioneer Column. This was a mercenary wing which took over the land of the Shona and the Ndebele, who were promised mining

opportunities as tokens of gratitude (Kombo 2012:20). However, there were not very large quantities of gold, so the little that was there was used for commercial purposes and was not shared with the African population. The people were attacked and their land took over by the army. The settlers named their newly conquered territory *Rhodesia - Zambia* as Northern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe as Southern Rhodesia. The Zimbabwean population was subjected to land seizures, forced labour, and the expropriation of cattle (Sweetman 1984:90-91). They were forced into reserves. This was land in which the settlers had no interest because it was not favourable for agriculture. The land that was not designated as reserves, in other words good agricultural land, was allocated to the settlers who established farms. Moyo and Besada (2008:3) point out that black commercial farmers only retained a few hectares of the land they had previously owned. Zimbabwean women were, for all intents and purposes, ousted as farmers. They lost their main occupation which was to work in the field. The colonization process therefore negatively impacted on what leadership roles women had had and the societal roles they had played in pre-colonial times.

The advent of colonialism changed the way in which the role of men was enhanced and women were pushed into the background. This was an initiative of the colonizers to disarm local societies. The political mechanisms employed by white settlers dispossessed African people of their land and drove them from the produce and stock markets. A growing number of households were forced to resort to wage labour for survival (Schmidt 1988:48). Women's economic and social position was affected and deteriorated. Women's specialized tasks were threatened by the colonial intervention. European goods supplemented products made by women. Missionaries and colonial officials prohibited or discouraged a number of rituals and social practices in which women played an active role (Schmidt 1988:49).

In the 1920s and 30s, an increasing number of women escaped the difficulties of rural life by migrating to work on the farms, mines, mission stations and towns of Europeans (Schmidt 1988:49). This did not improve their lives, however. Rather it led to much suffering because good job opportunities were scarce. Beer brewing and sex work were most common among urban women. However, according to Schmidt (1988:49), European capitalists objected to female migration from rural areas into



towns as it was viewed as an extra budget to men's wages. The Europeans farmers, mine owners and administration official expected rural-based woman to bear the social costs of production, caring for the sick, disabled, retired workers and raising the next generation for labour (Schmidt 1988:49).

After the 1897 rebellion, the settlers increased their appropriation of land, taxation and the eviction of black nationals from their homesteads, relocating them to the reserves. Ranger (1968:215) recorded the resistance of the Shona people under their leader Mapondera. Another rebellion by the Shona people in 1917 was in protest against the labour demanded by the white settlers.

Women were not only active in the economy and traditional marriage, but also played a role in rural politics. Around the 1930s women were actively involved in politics. A prominent woman, Martha Ngano, travelled through rural areas in Matabeleland in order to raise political consciousness among the people (Ranger 1968:225). There were protests against the conditions of living amongst which 'trade unions, political associations and break-away Christian churches also emerged in the 1930s to lead mass protests against the oppressive conditions in Southern Rhodesia,' (Kombo, 2012:22). Since women make up the larger number of the population, involving them in the mass protests gave the protests greater impact. The greater numbers of women participating in religious activities had a similar impact. In this way, the visibility of women increased in both church and society. The women of the colonial period contributed to the liberation of Zimbabwe. Without women, the freedom fighters would have died of hunger. The women sustained them in a variety of ways and contributed to their wellbeing. Because of this, the status of women has been enhanced somewhat in the Zimbabwean society. They are no longer confined to the private domain.

During the colonial era, women's role in the military struggle was notable. According to Fay Chung (recorded in the Fingaz of 15 September 2016), 'the colonial settler regime believed that freedom fighters were only men, hence, they would arrest all males under the age of fifty, and believed women will play any role in the struggle, thus they ignored their capability.' That was how a large number of women were incorporated into the struggle in the 1970s. One of the first tasks that women

undertook was to carry arms from Zambia to Mozambique to enable the military offensive to commence and to be maintained.

Communities then came to the conclusion that if women could undertake such strenuous and dangerous work and be prepared to suffer death, they should have the support of all. Without the participation of women, success would have been far more difficult. Fay Chung (2006:26) puts it as follows: 'Women proved to be the tipping point after society became very impressed by the courage and determination of women fighters living among them.' Young women in Zimbabwe joined liberation training camps and adult women who, especially in the rural areas, would have been confined to the home, were now participating in the war. They fed the soldiers and cared for the wounded. During the liberation struggle, women as nurturers, were able to provide medical care to guerrillas (see Staunton 1990:61). During the struggle, after her husband was arrested, Maudy Muzenda for example nursed the wounds of the guerrillas. She also took care of her eight children and managed to put them through school on her own.

With regard to cities, Weiss (1986:80) estimates that 20% of African women lived in the cities during the colonial period. Some lived with husbands, but most lived there independently. Geisler (1995:195) points out that 'husbands strongly discouraged their wives from coming to live with them in the cities since they expected them to carry on the cultivation of family reserves.' In this respect, women were regarded as taking care of the family and playing the role of a 'father' in the absence of the husbands who were in the cities. The war collaborators (*chimbwidos*) were mainly women who served and cooked for the male comrades. They did so at great risk to themselves. It was they who ensured that the soldiers had sufficient food and water. During the colonial period women were not generally prominent, but some progress was made in that in some instances the role they played was valued. However, mostly women were treated as the weaker sex in the camps. According to Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000:5-6), there was no equality between men and women in the camps. Women suffered greatly at the hands of camp guards of the Protected Villages (PVs) who demanded sexual services from them.

Women's actions have been seen as the catalyst that shifted the struggle to a more militarized level. Women in colonial Zimbabwe under traditional and colonial

patriarchal rule had little control over the economy. Pre-colonial customary views of motherhood and marriage disadvantaged women in terms of agency (Schmidt 1992:10). Women could be no more than a wife under male rule and a mother who tended to children and the household. They had no access to financial resources, especially in colonial times when they had lost their land and cattle and the men were working in the towns. The absence of men resulted women doing more and different kinds of work than was traditionally the case. The involvement of women in the armed struggle ushered in a new era which broke away from female domesticity both in African and British culture (Schmidt 1992:12). During the war of liberation, women participated as fighters or as collaborators and were no longer confined to the home (see Staunton 1990:23, cf Kriger 1988:323).

According to Weiss (1996:7), during the colonial period women played a visible role in the liberation struggle to win back their country. Their activism could be seen on numerous levels. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000:1) states that the Zimbabwean news carried pictures of formidable looking women often in situations that defy traditional notions of femininity. In the first Shona and Ndebele uprising of 1896-1897, Nehanda Nyakasikana took up arms to fight colonialism and through the spirit that possessed her is said to have divinized military advice to the Shona people (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:1).

Women still fulfil the roles of midwives, diviners and healers today. The armed revolution set in motion the process of social change to emancipate women from the hegemony of patriarchal structures. In the struggle, women encountered challenges that were different from those of men. For women, their physical and sexual vulnerability made gender an observable element in how they had to cope and survive. They were, for example, raped and sexually abused in the camps. Women's suffering during the war led to a stricter penal system where stringent penalties were inflicted on those who were found guilty of rape and abuse. This abuse of women during the war also led to the formation of organizations such as The Girl Child, which advocates for the protection of women and girls (Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2001:7).

In 1961, women in the National Democratic Party organized a demonstration against the Rhodesian government which had ruled that fifteen out of sixty five parliamentary

seats were to be allocated to African people (Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2001:7). Women joined men in the protests against such white rule. After the women's strike, leading nationalists began to recognize the potential role of women in the organizational structures of the struggle.

Ruth Weiss (1986:13) states that there was a measure of emancipation for women during the colonial era. Women in ZANLA could handle guns. Reasons for this could include that the difficult circumstances brought out their strength and traditional restrictions were weakened by necessity, so that they could contribute to the nation's future. Ruvimbo, an ex-guerrilla fighter, is on record as saying that women did engage in transporting war materials (Weiss 1986:80). They demanded some training in self-protection since part of their duties exposed them to enemy attacks as they transported the ammunitions and food. It is then evident that women had a peripheral role on the battle front for lack of training but in their bid for protection they were made to stay in the camps tending the wounded freedom fighters, mostly males (see Masunungure 2016:16).

In the colonial period, Western gender stereotypes combined with patriarchal African traditions further reduced the small measure of power and autonomy that female persons still had in traditional culture. Despite women's active supporting role in the nationalist struggles, they were still restricted to their prescribed tasks. All in all decolonization has primarily been a transfer of power from one group of males to another. Many women have reacted to this by withdrawing from participation in state related matters since they were not treated equally and this was not a safe environment for them. Others have found the solution in working through influential men, joining organizations, and gaining better education and employment. Increasingly, women from all walks of life are becoming aware of and dissatisfied with gender injustice in Africa.

Many guerilla fighters were sexually active in the operational zone (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:10). Women were blamed for abusing the trust of the elders to participate in the revolutionary effort by having sex with the male freedom fighters in the bushes (Ranger 1985:207). The result was pregnancies and the males' marriages breaking up. Women were blamed if pregnancy got in the way of their performance as guerilla fighters, but on the other hand motherhood was a social role

demanded by the culture. This placed women in a double-bind position. There is no sufficient evidence with regard to sexual discrimination and abuse in the camps to ascertain how relations really were between male and female guerilla fighters (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:11). Such information would be pertinent to assessing the level of the emancipation of the women that was attained during the colonial era and the freedom struggle. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000:19) does point out, however, that women's wartime duties differed from those of the men. Mostly they were still regarded as mothers whose main task was to ensure that their 'sons', the guerrillas, did not go out to fight on an empty stomach. Even during the war, the traditional roles of women like cooking and those of men like protecting, were upheld, albeit in a different form. Many of the women who offered help and 'motherly' care to the guerillas were women from the village through which the fighters passed, rather than from the female fighters themselves (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:19).

During the freedom struggle women's role expanded from beyond the domestic to more sphere. The chanting of slogans such as 'forward with the cooking stick', attests to that (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:19). This slogan both put the woman back in the kitchen and looks forward to a larger role for women in a troubled society. It can also express positive appreciation of women's role as those who feed and those who reproduce, while demeaning women as inferior and weak, and only fit for the duties of the home now extended to include providing for the guerilla fighters with warm bathing water and doing their laundry.

During the colonial era, young women in Zimbabwe joined liberation training camps for various reasons while adult women who remained in their homes, especially in the rural areas, also became involved in the war effort in various ways. Women were also actively involved in the urban politics. An example was when the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress which was led by Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo (1957 to 1959) was banned (see Stott 1990:14).

While in prison, the protest did not stop as they refused to pay fines or clean their prison quarters (Kombo 2012:62-63). In this way, women made their presence felt in national politics as well. They did not accept being confined to the family domain alone. They took part in the national struggle and were ready to face the challenges this entailed. This struggle for power by women included those from the rural areas

who rebelled against the requirements of the settlers. Their resistance showed that also in rural areas women stood up for their citizenship and human rights. In this regard, Scott (1990:15) states that 'they also refused to have their cattle dipped or counted.' Many women engaged in anti-colonial protests against cattle culling, dipping and counting and were politically conscious (Kombo 2012:64).

The most fundamental reasons for the women`s involvement in the liberation struggle included poor living conditions, disintegration of the family unit which was mostly caused by poverty, lack of ownership of land and poor quality of available land as the settlers took fertile land for themselves. Women also had a burden of farming their families arid lands with their children. Women living in the rural areas could identify with the guerrilla freedom fighters very well since many of their own children left home to join the liberation movement. As such when they would come in contact with the guerillas, they would treat them as their own sons and daughters such that they would give them shelter, food and even the information they sought (Maria Gamanya 2016, *interview*, Harare). Psychological torture, physical abuse and the cruel treatment women faced under the rule of the colonizers motivated them to strongly support the guerilla forces. The guerrillas, referred to adult women as 'mothers' who in turn reciprocated in calling them 'sons' or 'daughters'. The guerillas' perception of women, like addressing them with respect, was rooted in the traditionally stereotypical roles: where mothers cooked, washed the guerrillas' clothes, and protected them from the settlers' army. With regard to the how guerrillas were viewed by women in search of their freedom, Urdang (1979:125) stated that 'on their part the women saw the guerrillas and the liberation war both as an avenue to free themselves from colonial oppression, and also as a way to effect change in the traditional environment of rural life.'

Women had suffered many abuses under the colonial regime. They, along with all other Zimbabweans, desired freedom and a life of human dignity. When they approached the ruling oppressive leadership of the time to cease the violence and change the unjust gender relations, they were supported by the guerilla fighters who promised to attend to the women's issues. However, the violence was not only perpetrated by the white ruling regime. The local African men were also abusive toward women, most likely because of their traditional patriarchal background.

According to Kombo (2012:66), 'the guerrillas were not educated to challenge traditional structures that worked to the disadvantage of women.'

Women were recruited during the war-time when men went out to loot cattle on the farms and homesteads. They would coerce young men and girls to join the struggle. These young people were commandeered to help the raiders drive the looted cattle quickly to the relative safety of the surrounding villages (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:19). Though driving livestock is not traditionally the role of women and girls, it was common in rural areas where there was no male child to help with the flock. Another role of women in the raids was to ululate as part of the victory celebration.

Girls are taught from an early age what their traditional roles and duties are. They are traditionally taught this by the paternal aunts. Girls are therefore able to cook meals for the family, take care of siblings and perform other household chores. The family's honour depends on a girl being able to fulfil her role well in the family of her future husband. The war forced girl children to perform certain roles prematurely. They were also used as spies in the colonial times in order to gather information from the settlers. According to Lyons (2004:22-24) women played a significant role in the armed struggle against the colonial regime. Not only were they used as spies, but they were also used to seduce white soldiers. Today some men dismiss the role women and girls played in the liberation struggle as if it was of no importance.

Another important task of women during the liberation struggle was to carry war materials to the battle front (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:40). The women helped to solve the problem of the supply of weapons and food at the front. By 1972 ZANLA (Zimbabwe Africa National Liberation Army) had started recruiting women to meet that need. ZANLA acknowledge that women's part in the struggle was valuable. When the struggle began the soldiers had to walk many kilometers in places where there were no roads and no transport. Weapons were carried by women on their heads. According to a member of high command, Urimbo, 'the women's task was to mobilize the masses, carry specific weapons to the front, and prepare food and feed the comrades' (see Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000:43).

Women provided medical services. Maudy Muzenda, for example, provided medication to the comrades. Women such as Rhoda Khumalo cooked for the

freedom fighters, washed their clothes and protected them by giving them useful information which helped to secure their forces (Staunton 1990:72). Themba Khumalo, a woman who experienced the liberation struggle first-hand, was interviewed by Staunton. According to her, the women worked on the land, ploughed, and tended the cattle whilst the men were away. Women would source food for the *vakomana* (boys). As the bases were far away, there was the danger of being detected by the airplanes. The women carried the food on their backs as if they were carrying a baby (see Staunton 1990:72). Sometimes when the planes would fly low, they would take cover and the hot food would burn their backs, but they could not cry out for fear of exposing the whole army. These women were resilient, courageous and determined to deliver the food to the freedom fighters so that they could continue with their task. The women bought other provisions such as soap and clothes. The freedom fighters had no money to pay for the provisions. The women sponsored them out of their own pockets (Staunton 1990:75).

Some women were used by colonial leaders to work in their homes as domestic workers or to tend to their children. They were also used for sex. According to Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000:77), women were expected to provide men with sex to relieve the stresses of military life. This form of abuse was justified by calling it women's 'contribution to the struggle', while at the same time they were labeled prostitutes. Men regarded sexually transmitted diseases as women's disease. Though it seemed as though women gained some agency and a measure of freedom during the liberation struggle, in effect they were still treated as objects and were just victimised in a different way. The liberation struggle brought no liberation for women.

### **2.1.3 Women in post-colonial Zimbabwe**

Women in the post-colonial Zimbabwe returned to roles similar to how things were in pre-colonial and colonial times, though there were also differences because times and the environment had changed. Women in post-colonial Zimbabwe (from 1980 to present) preside over religious ceremonies as prophetesses such as, for example, Ruth Makandiwa and Florence Kanyati. Furthermore women in post-colonial era play a pivotal role as teachers and lecturers, for example B. Mahamba, K. Biri, J. Gwara and T.P. Mapuranga at the University of Zimbabwe. They have found themselves in



lectureship, a formerly male zone. These changes bear witness to how new and different roles are occupied by women in the post-independence Zimbabwe (cf Seidman 1984:430). Different roles in society also enhance the status of woman in the family and in communities. Independence also changed things for women. There is a new way of seeing and doing things.

The government in post-independent Zimbabwe has shown some commitment with regard to the empowerment of women. Some regional and international conventions and protocols that aim to promote and acknowledge the rights of women and gender equality, have been signed (see Becker 2002:64-68). Some laws have been passed and policies implemented. These include the Domestic Violence Act 1998, the Sexual Offences Act 2001, and the Labour Relations Act 1984. At present Zimbabwean women are fighting for equal rights. The bonds of patriarchy are being challenged. There is an initiative to conscientize men and women to respect each other and the variety of roles that can be played by people of both sexes. There has also been a backlash of increased violence and abuse of women. This led to the Domestic Violence Act 1998, a measure taken to prevent (mostly) women from being abused.

Economically, many women in Zimbabwe run small scale informal ventures, including cross-border trade, vending, hairdressing, subsistence farming and care-work, among others. However, mainstream economic activities such as mining, construction, banking, manufacturing and retail have largely remained under male control due to the prevailing patriarchal ideology. Women are mentioned particularly in the indigenization drive, which stipulates that foreign-owned companies operating in Zimbabwe should cede 51% shareholding to local people. Part of the Act reads: 'The objectives or measures specified in sub-section (1) may be implemented by the government specifically on behalf of any one or more of the following groups of indigenous Zimbabweans; (a) women and (b) young persons under a prescribed age and (c) disabled persons as defined in the Disabled Persons Act 1992.

In 1982, the Legal Age of Majority Act granted women full adult status for the first time. The 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) recognized the importance of women in nation building, though in practice they remained marginalized. According to Mbayiwa, a reporter of The News Daily (2015), about 7,4 billion US dollars was

circulating in the internal economy and government to formalize operations in fulfillment of the Zimbabwe Agenda of Sustainable Socio-economic Transformation initially targeting to give women to do small scale businesses.

Women are no longer confined to the domestic sphere alone, but can be seen to some extent in the public sector. In the post-colonial era, women play a pivotal role in society as councilors, teachers, vice presidents and so on. Women can now also be pastors, a role which had previously been reserved for men only. This was due both to the education of the missionaries which was male-oriented and the patriarchal mindset of the indigenous culture. The role of women in post-independent Zimbabwe is becoming increasingly prominent, albeit at a slow pace. Companies in Europe and elsewhere now target women as a market for purchasing their goods, advertising on the radio, on posters and through direct marketing. The Zimbabwean women are also targeted as a market. An effective way to reach them is through church groups and women clubs. Women's meetings in their churches are used for marketing. This makes the church a strategic platform for advertising.

Since independence it is no longer possible for men to relegate women to the private sphere of the home. Post-colonial Zimbabwe marked the beginning of women's participation in public life and politics. Women in post-colonial Zimbabwe held or hold influential positions, for example, former Vice-president Joyce Teurairopa Muzuru, Margret Dongo, Sally Mugabe, Vivian Mwashita, Oppah Muchinguri. In parliament, a few of the ministers are female. Zimbabwe is now initiating policies aimed at increasing the participation of woman in politics and at the emancipation of women in general. The question is whether this mindset is filtering through also to the religious sphere, and in particular to the Pentecostal churches and the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe.

## **2.2 Gender roles and challenges**

In order to better understand the situation of women in Pentecostal churches, the history of women and perspectives on gender in Zimbabwe should be taken in to account. The question is whether what happened in the history of Zimbabwe is

mirrored in the history of women and gender attitudes in Pentecostal churches. This chapter traces the history of women from pre-colonial to colonial to post-colonial times. It also gives an overview of the history of women in Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe in order to ascertain to what extent the country history has influenced attitudes and practices with regard to women. The question whether the AFM was able to find its own cultural and traditional identity after the missionaries handed over the management of the church to the indigenous people will be investigated. The AFM has generally been theologically conservative and grappled much with the issue of the ordination of women.

Several roles are ascribed to women in Zimbabwean society. These include leadership. Among others women fulfil gender roles, domestic roles, and religious roles. Iqibal and Atia (2002:49) point out that women's roles are multi-dimensional, for example a woman is 'a mother, sister and wife who socializes, educates, feeds, and supports family with devotion, affection, love, sincerity, obedience ...' In this description the word 'obedience' presents a problem. This kind of language endorses masculine superiority which, from a pastoral perspective, presents a danger not only for women, but also for society at large. If one group is declared subservient, that gives rise to a multitude of abuses. 'Obedience', defined as a willingness 'to comply with the commands, orders, or instructions of those in authority' (Allen 1990:816), demonstrates a kind of discourse that locates women as subjects of obedience to men and, consequently, as oppressed people who must submit to men who are located on a higher level, a class superior to women.

Through the social discourse of male superiority and female inferiority men and women are separated from each other by a patriarchal social mindset. Society expects of women to perform supportive tasks and assume posture of servitude. A term such as 'obedience' suggests hegemony on the part of males and the oppression of female persons. In many societies, even in the twenty-first century, including the Zimbabwean society, women are traditionally allocated a lower social status than men. They are consequently excluded from lucrative socio-economic activities, such as running a business. They play a largely passive role in society. Male persons have the social power to allocate these roles to women and to enforce and perpetuate this ordering of society. Against the backdrop of these general

attitudes, in particular contexts the roles allocated to women in different cultures and ethnic groups in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa, differ. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:28) identifies six major challenges facing African women. She explains this as follows: 'The first one is oppression from outside (colonialism and neo-colonialism). She may have self-motivation and great affirmation about her life but her hindrance would be the outside perception about her; the second one is from traditional structures; the third one is her backwardness; the fourth is man; the fifth is her color, her race; and the sixth is herself.'

The concept of gender is relevant to this study. Benedik, Kisaaye and Oberteither (2002:33) describe gender as follows: 'Gender roles are contingent on the socio-economic, political and cultural context and are thus usually specific to a given time and space.' Applied to this study, the roles allocated to women are socio-economic, political and cultural. These roles play out in a given space and time, and in a certain society. Gender roles are demarcated by cultural norms and values since gender roles are applied in culture (Reardon 2001:77). This applies also to the Zimbabwean society. For example, women have certain chores they perform as part of their role. When female children are growing up, adult women teach them how to perform these tasks well, as required by culture. It is a cultural expectation that women are responsible for cooking. As girls grow up, they play out the roles of their mothers. They emulate activities such as cooking, nursing and bathing children.

Cultural roles are imparted as well as taught, not only by words but also by actions. Mbilinyi (1992:65) points out that, like culture, 'gender roles are historical, changeable, subject to abolition and transformation through everyday happenings as well as periodic moments of crisis.' Gender roles are the socially constructed and defined responsibilities allocated to people of a specific sex by society. Rutoro (2012:23) explains the consequence of this: a social construct can also be socially deconstructed. For example, the raising up of a child, as a gender role can be performed equally by men or women. Sex roles, on the other hand, arise from the realities of biological sex. They directly have to do with the body and its capabilities. Pregnancy and giving birth to a child, for instance, are functions of a female body. Eitzen (2003:249) describes gender roles as the 'rights, responsibilities, expectations and relationship of men and women'. Unlike sex roles, gender roles are not

universal. They differ in different contexts and cultures and in different eras. They are also changeable and interchangeable.

Roles in general, are culture specific as each culture emphasizes different gender roles and expectations. There are some cultural perceptions of difference among the sexes which have led to the misconceptions regarding the meaning of the term 'gender'. Some scholars argue that gender studies, as a discipline, seek to strip males of their authority and transfer it to women (see Harawa-Katumbi 2012:106). Some men refuse change because they enjoy the benefits of the social order which places them in a position of privilege and authority and relegates women largely to a domestic environment. Ayanga (2012:85) explains how the term 'gender' is often misconstrued:

Gender ... for men in particular ... conjures up images of militant women who forcefully and emotionally want to become like men ... For women, the term 'gender' calls up images of their fellow women who have lost direction and who want to destroy the God-given mandate to be submissive and indeed only follow their husbands' direction.

The phrase 'God-given mandate' in Ayanga's statement above suggests that the Bible as the word of God supports the oppression of women. According to Vissier (2012:15-16), anything that seems to oppose biblical patriarchy is perceived as hostility towards God who, in some religious circles, is regarded as 'the author' of the Bible. Haslanger (2000:33) identifies several dimensions of gender which I apply to the context which is the focus of this study:

- **Gender roles**

The term 'gender roles' is explained by Haslanger (2000:33) as follows: 'This is where men and women are assigned distinct social roles based on the perceived abilities of their sex'. The allocation of the roles is based on ideas of how men and women perform tasks differently. Though the tasks may be similar, their anatomy and build, as well as their innate abilities, will make some tasks more appropriate for men and others for women. Role constructs are based on these perceptions. The

perceptions and the constructs with regard to roles have often been applied to the religious roles men and women 'ought to' perform. Men see themselves as more able than women to perform ecclesiastical roles, though there is no physical reason for such roles to be more appropriate for men than for women. Against this backdrop women are not 'weaker vessels' in physical terms. There is a need for a responsible hermeneutical approach to exegetical methods that do not result in a sexist interpretation and a direct application of ancient cultural mores to today. If such ideas are generally regarded as 'true' in society and the church, they serve as justification for oppressing people and discriminating against them with general social approval.

- **Gender norms**

Gender norms apply where 'men and women are expected to comply with different norms of behaviour and bodily comportment' (Haslanger 2000:33). Interestingly, the behaviour that is expected of men and women, or gender norms, differs according to the culture and location. In some cultures the norms are extremely oppressive to the women and men are the uncontested 'lords and masters'. Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches regard the social and cultural norms regarding gender as based on the Bible. This manifests in how certain biblical texts are interpreted.

- **Gendered traits and virtues**

With regard to gendered traits and virtues, Haslanger (2000:33) explains that in most cultures, 'certain psychological traits are considered *masculine* or *feminine*'. Masculine traits are considered to be a virtue in men and at the same time a vice in women and the other way around. This means that when women exhibit independent agency in cultures where this is considered a male trait, they are seen as deviating from societal expectations which position them as the followers and males as the leaders.

- **Gendered behaviour**

Gendered behaviour is the behaviour that society deems 'acceptable to men, but not necessarily for women and the other way around' (Haslanger 2000:33). In this regard, the AFM in Zimbabwe expects of women to behave in a certain way which is different to men. Gendered behaviour contributes to the challenges that men and

women face in the church and in society. Roles of men and women tend to be influenced by gender stereotypes. When such stereotypes are regarded as ‘the truth’ about men and women and the gendered roles as they way in which they should behave, this becomes the voice of that society to the world.

- **Gender identity**

Gender identity is ‘the way in which one understands oneself to be a man or a woman’ (Haslanger 2000:33). How people understand their identity forms the basis of how they relate to the world around them. They can either have a healthy and strong sense of identity and their lives and behaviour can be true to that understanding of themselves, or they can have a distorted sense of self which will lead to unhealthy relationships and behaviour in the world.

In specific cultures people’s identity formation is affected positively or negatively by the traditions of those cultures. This is also the case in the specific culture of the AFM in the specific context of Zimbabwe. People’s identity formation is affected by the traditions that are perpetuated by the leaders. If in this tradition men claim respect and honour for themselves as the head of the church and the family and designate a submissive role to women, this artificial construct denies women the liberty and opportunity to serve God according to their God-given gifts and talents and according to their calling as they understand it.

- **Gender symbolism**

Symbols play a central role in governing the positions in which men and women function and in how they fulfill their respective roles. Some inanimate objects are associated with a gendered field of representation. These objects are connected with a certain sex. For example, a garage is associated with males and a kitchen with females. In certain cultures, trousers were worn by men and dresses and skirts by women. This, for example, typifies the female images in public places that indicate which restrooms are for which sex. This also means that skirts and dresses symbolize being weak whereas trousers symbolize strength and power. An example is the expression in language of ‘wearing the pants in the home’. What distinguishes characteristics as either ‘male’ or ‘female’ depends on the context which defines

what is appropriate to men or women. It also determines their access to rights, resources and power.

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) (2003:101-102) developed a theoretical framework for dealing with gender roles because of the disempowerment of women that is the consequence of such gender constructs. The disempowerment of women is not only a concern of women, but also of men and the larger society. Traditional expectations of men and women's roles have had an impact on human rights, access to opportunities and participation in decision making at all levels. According to Anne Munro (2001:455) 'attitudes, prejudices, assumptions and expectations held by individuals and society about men and women's roles continue to be obstacles to the achievement of gender equality'. It is difficult to change gender roles as they are often part of people's cosmology and are approached in an essentialist way. These ideas are deeply ingrained in people's mindset, which makes it difficult to glean sufficient support for changing laws, policies and legislation.

Gender role socialization is described by Dekker and Lemmer (1998:9) as 'the means by which social expectations regarding gender appropriate characteristics are conveyed to the child'. Gender role socialization provides one with a model for behaviour. In line with gender roles and choices, in Zimbabwe, as in any other society, the choices available to a person from birth, depend on their gender (see UNICEF: 1994). The socialization process is the root of the gender based challenges that societies are facing today. Due to this, girls are socialized to accept a low status in life and boys are socialized to feel entitled to a higher status. In most cases this is done 'through restricting girls' activities to such an extent that their social development and exploration instincts are curtailed' (NAPH 1998:3). This affects girls' choices later in life when they become adults. It impacts on their career possibilities. Their low status leaves them disempowered and lacking confidence. The consequence of such low self-esteem is often that they do not believe that they can perform tasks adequately and that they can develop their full potential. Not only are their opportunities generally restricted, but even when they are presented with opportunities, because of socialization and low self-esteem they often do not have the courage to pursue these.



Girls are often overprotected by fathers and brothers because they are regarded as the male's property and because they are seen as weak and in need of protection. Often the males use harsh measures to 'protect' girls, which in no way benefits them. Their 'protective' behaviour caters more to the males' ego and chauvinism than that it expresses love for their womenfolk. The irony of such 'beating to protect' behaviour is lost on the cultures in which these practices occur. Boys and men, on the other hand, are encouraged to be adventurous. Where they have freedom of movement, the socialization of women restricts their horizon and freedom of movement.

Femaleness is stigmatized from birth. Boy children are preferred and a having a female child is often a disappointment. Women enter into a world and a household where they are treated as unwelcome persons. Males, on the other hand, from the beginning of their lives are made to feel that they are wanted and regarded as worthy. In many communities in the Zimbabwean context, this kind of approach towards children places the girl child in the position of a stranger in her own society. Her only value lies in being a candidate for marriage which will benefit all the male persons involved – the father, the brothers and the husband-to-be.

A very traditional lifestyle which is highly restrictive of women's roles and movement is often found in rural areas. Education in urban contexts exposes young males to a different point of view. In most marriage proceedings in Zimbabwe, the brother(s) of the bride-to-be determine an exorbitant bride price or *lobola* for their sister. The woman who is to be married has no say in the matter. Brothers in the Zezuru tribe of Zimbabwe use their sister's bride wealth to pay their own bride prices.

Young men are generally allowed to move around freely and can even go out at night, which is a taboo for young women. This type of socialization restricts women's horizons while opening up great possibilities for the males. Women in Harare who want to employ domestic help, tend to look for a young woman from the rural areas who has not been exposed to an urban lifestyle with its different morals in order to train them their way. Young women from urban environments are deemed 'too clever' to be educated in good morals.

Rodgers (1983:120) points out that 'men are socialized to tackle problems, overcome obstacles and difficulties, and to always take the offensive'. Women are

socialized to be silent, even when suffering. Kenyan theologian Njambura Njoroge (2000:78) uses the example of her grandmother to illustrate this: 'Because she was silent over her trials and tribulations, my grandmother was praised as a good woman.' What is true for the Kenyan society is also true for the Zimbabwean one, where women are socialized to be silent, submissive and confined to the domestic sphere. Not only is this passivity expected and endorsed, it is also reinforced and affirmed so that most women expect it of themselves (Njoroge and Dube 2001:245). The gender roles into which women are socialized are the main reason why women's position in society and in the employment market continues to be of a lower order than that of men. On the other hand, the role and position of men continue to be upheld in almost every society in the world. Had there been more women in the workplace there could have been a greater demand for gender inclusivity, especially where patriarchal structures still dominate. For example, in the leadership of the ruling political party in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) only one woman out of the six was elected in 2017. In the Zimbabwean parliamentary leadership less than 5% are women.

Women are designated a variety of roles by society. These will now be briefly discussed:

- **Domestic roles and duties**

Domestic duties are those tasks performed in a household. In most societies in the world and over the ages, and also in Zimbabwe, domestic duties have generally been associated with females. Cheater (1981:357) describes some roles performed by Shona women that are not purely domestic. One such example is the role of the paternal aunt (*vatete*) who oversees the education of her brothers' children. Female ancestors are seen as having authority over the reproductive capacity of their female descendants. Women with special skills such as pottery or healing, for example, can contribute to production in society (see Milingo 1984:36). These roles indicate some authority on the part of the women who exercise leadership to some extent.

However, Shona women have more difficulty than men in procuring property. Men also have a greater measure of freedom than women. Both female and male authority increase as they get older. Whereas newly-married women have almost no

authority in the husband's home, by the time a woman has grandchildren, she has a measure of authority in both her natal family (as *tete*) and in her husband's family (as mother-in-law). Commonly, post-menopausal women are regarded as a type of 'honorary male' in the village. Their life experience is valued when it comes to educating the younger women. In the context of Zimbabwe this would include giving the younger women instruction as to how they can work to acquire their own property.

The prevailing customs and social attitudes relegate women to position and roles that are subservient to those of men because Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society (see Tichagwa 1992:26). In addition to this view, Gwanzura-Ottmoller and Kesby (2005:201) point out that 'customary rules in Zimbabwe were designed and defined by men even though they affected women and children'. These customary attitudes and beliefs put women in a position subordinate to the husband who is seen as the 'head of household'. Women carry the domestic burden of house management, agriculture, child care and serving their husbands. Women were, and are still responsible for cooking, gathering firewood, cleaning, doing the laundry, fetching water, making clothing, and caring for children.

- **Religious roles**

The number of women who participate in religious practices are high in Africa in general and in Zimbabwe specifically. Leadership roles are, however, mostly reserved for men. Religious roles are not limited to the church. They also extend to traditional and social practices. Women in leadership positions represent a large constituency of women from various social backgrounds and their concerns. Women's religious roles will now be discussed briefly.

Women participate actively in most religions in Africa. Even where males are dominant, women participate in greater numbers than men and perform a variety of roles. In traditional belief systems women have some authority and freedom. The AFM in Zimbabwe seems to largely ignore this traditional heritage and uses the Bible to downplay the possibility of women taking a leadership role. There is resistance to the creation of space for women to also occupy top leadership positions. Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe are not free to adopt the religious leadership roles to which

they feel called by God. Though the church provides women with theological education, they are hindered from performing a leadership role. These are occupied exclusively by men.

One of the roles open to a woman both in the church and society was that of a mediator (or intercessor in church). In traditional society, Nehanda Nyakasikana, for example, was a channel between the living-dead and the living (see Neusu 1983:67, Mbiti 1995:18). According to Murungu (2004:32), Nehanda played an influential role to the extent that songs and poems were composed in her name as an inspiration to the soldiers. An example of such is the famous poem by Solomon Mutsvairo (Mutsvairo 1956:28) titled '*Nehanda Nyakasikana*' where one of the lyrics says '*zvinhu zvose ndezvaMbuya Nehanda*' meaning 'everything belongs to Mbuya Nehanda'. Nehanda also presided over some religious ceremonies such as rainmaking (*mukwerera*). A woman named Lozikeyi functioned as a judge. She would settle disputes in the interest of peace in society.

- **Political role**

The role of women in the political sector has an influence on how women view their rights also in the church. Women in the church, however, generally do not campaign as publicly for equal rights and leadership roles as they do in the world of politics. It is inordinately demanding for women to hold their own in the male world of politics which is not a safe or friendly space for them (see Tripp 2000:38). Zimbabwe has produced some extraordinary female politicians since pre-colonial times who have become powerful role models for young women (see Mackenzie 1975:28).

The history of Zimbabwe regarding women's record of their involvement in politics can be traced as far back as 1400 when the country was thriving under the Monomotapa kingdom, occupied by the Shona people. During this reign a highly respected woman, '*Ambuya*' or '*Mbuya*' (granny) Nehanda, led a revolt against the British in 1896. She was a defiant fighter and fierce heroine of the first Chimurenga (Murungu 2004:32). Females led resistance against the early European intruders into the African countries including Zimbabwe and showed their initiative and power in defending their nation. Women also played a prominent role in the nationalist struggles as they fought alongside men in the liberation war that gave independence

to Zimbabwe. By the end of the war one quarter of the 30 000 patriotic front guerrillas were women. They also carried arms (see Murungu 2004:33-34). Leaders from the different factions declared woman's liberation an explicit and integral part of the overall revolution (see Lyons 1997:65). Though African societies generally severely constrained woman's freedom and limited their political power, some did award women clearly defined and acceptable political roles which permitted them to wield some power, despite their limited authority.

As is the case in most of Africa, Zimbabwean women also lost significant power and authority during the colonial period. Colonial officials propagated Western gender stereotypes which assigned women to the domestic domain, leaving political matters only to men (Dekker and Lemmer 1998:9-10). Colonial officials largely overlooked female persons when identifying candidates for chieftainships, scholarships or other benefits.

After independence, some women were appointed in different ministries and held prominent positions (see Mushangwa 2016:54). In 2015 the then president, Robert Mugabe appointed four women in his 30-seat Cabinet and in 2017 they retained their offices. The democratization and proliferation of multi-party elections in the past years opened opportunities for women to be included in deliberative and legislative governance bodies. Some women in Zimbabwe are now heads of a political party. Recently, Margret Dongo was an independent candidate in national elections and Joyce Mujuru, an appointee for the position of Vice-president by former president Mugabe, is now the leader of People First Party.

### **2.3 Women in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism**

In tracing the history of women in Pentecostalism in a Zimbabwean context, Peters (1998:45) describes the plight of women as follows: 'Imagine yourself trying to accomplish a task where you can see the goal, but an invisible force field prevents you from reaching it.' For many women in Zimbabwe and across the globe, trying to climb the social ladder and be compensated fairly for their work has remained a goal which, though visible, is still unreachable. Mapuranga (2013:77), for her study on the

position of women in Zimbabwean Pentecostal leadership, aimed to select female leaders in the Pentecostal tradition to interview. In her attempt at 'purposeful sampling' (see Patton 1990:106), however, she could find no female leaders in the AFM in Zimbabwe. This research also used the purposive sampling in a bid to harness first hand information from the key and mainly affected people, namely women. The latter is important with regards to the reliability of the study and should be added in the revised version of the thesis She interviewed some members of the church who are not officially in the leadership, but could give account of the activities of the church from an insider perspective and from a female perspective. This study, in which women's own voices were heard, has identified some particular issues with the church regarding the role of women. Since she could not interview female leaders of the AFM, the particular issues of that denomination were not brought to light by Mapuranga's study. Mapuranga's study concluded that, what affects the particular interviewees can also be found in society at large among other women who are in leadership positions in a 'male dominated field' (2013:77). Their stories are representative of those many women who are in the same situation (see Vambe 2008:75).

The silencing and sidelining of women is found in most spheres and disciplines, in the church and in secular institutions. The special treatment accorded to male children over female children in the African culture socializes both sexes into an unequal reality, which they then perpetuate by their attitudes and behaviours. Male children and youth have greater access to formal education and training than female children and youth. In the church men are ordained much more readily than women and there is no impediment to their taking up top leadership positions. Women remain fairly invisible in the AFM system. From missionary times there has been little or no space for women in the church's leadership positions. According to Lagerwerf (1990:43), 'women in Africa are the backbone of the church financially, spiritually and socially.' However, this is not reflected in the official structures of the church. This means that women do not participate in decision making. Chimhanda (2010:5) points out that the patriarchal church distinguishes between a male person's vocation which is styled on the biblical Petrine symbol of priesthood and a female person's vocation which is styled on the Marian symbol of motherhood. This relegates women to the

biological role of reproduction and negates the possibility of her fulfilling other roles like decision making.

The missionary emphasis was on developing 'respectable and responsible women' who stayed at home (see Hinfelaar 2001:56). While women were confined to the household, men were to go out to be the 'breadwinner.' This was contrary to traditional cultures where both men and women had the responsibility 'to go out and win bread' (Lindsay 2007:71). The combination of church teachings and the colonial economy biased gender relations in favour of men. Women have therefore struggled to gain access to leadership roles in the church and in society.

Pentecostal churches represent the fastest growing section of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa (Kalu 2008:148). In Zimbabwe, Pentecostal churches tend to attract upwardly mobile young people. Togarasei (2010:20) poses the question whether Pentecostal churches are now for the elite. Maxwell's (2006:45), study on the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM), has shown how the church strives to meet the spiritual and material needs of its members, but without much success. The exclusion of women from leadership positions in the church is one such area in which the needs of the people are not met. In the AFM in Zimbabwe, as in most Pentecostal churches, women constitute the majority of the members of the church, but men dominate in positions of power and influence. Historically, men were the founders and leaders of Pentecostal churches. From the 1960s to the 1990s, men have had exclusive access to power, influence and authority. However, after 2000, a number of women emerged as leaders within the Pentecostal movement. Whereas men dominate in formal leadership positions, women tend to lead women's groups or women's ministries in Pentecostal churches. Lagerwerf (1990:44) points out that these 'women for women ministries' are to be found in various parts of the African continent. In accordance with her findings, this study identifies some 'women-only' ministries that women are leading in the church. Examples of the women ministers with their ministries include the following: Florence Kanyati, Patience Hove, Chipo Bhasera and Petunia Chiriseri.

The question is why Pentecostal ministries do not have women in the top executive leadership except in 'women for women' ministries. Is it because the women are not able to lead? It is about the patriarchal nature of both the churches and African

cultures. In his evaluation of patriarchy in the Pentecostal movement in Zimbabwe, Chitando (2007:56) finds that, while some progress has been made, there is still a great need for radical change if women are to experience equality. Some women are heading churches with both sexes as their congregants. In this regards women's leadership in the church is not totally absent. They have broken into the male dominated environment of leadership. However, it is not a welcoming or easy environment for them in which to survive. They are still struggling with patriarchal boundaries and the politics (power play) of the church. Also, it is only the lower leadership positions that are now somewhat accessible to women. The higher it goes, the more male dominated it becomes.



## CHAPTER THREE

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THE AFM IN ZIMBABWE

#### 3.1 Introduction

In order to examine the development of the leadership roles of women in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe the activities or lack thereof and the inclusion or exclusion of women through the different phases of the development of the Pentecostal heritage will now be traced. The roles of women in the AFM will be examined through the three phases of the church's development. First a brief overview of the history of women in Pentecostalism in general will be given and then the focus will be particularly on the AFM in Zimbabwe. One of the central tenets of Pentecostalism which will be examined is baptism in the Holy Spirit and the signs that accompany it. The text on which the views of the AFM in this regard is largely based, is: Acts 2:4: '... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.' Pentecostalism is characterised by the centrality of the Holy Spirit in its beliefs, teachings and practices. Part of the Pentecostal heritage in Africa are the Zionist Church and African Independent Churches, though according to Biri (2013:28) there is need to qualify them if these churches are to be included within the rubric of Pentecostalism.

The phases in the development of the AFM are distinguished in terms of certain periods of events that mark the progression of thought, especially with regard to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The chapter explores how women functioned in the various phases – a how women behaved and presented themselves in terms of how their roles were understood. The phases followed by this study were identified by Benny Hwata (2005). Out of a great variety of possible phases that mark the progress of development in the AFM in Zimbabwe three stand out. These are also particularly relevant to the topic of this study.

The three that will be investigated in this study are:

- Pentecostalism and baptism of the Holy Spirit;
- baptism of the Holy Spirit and the signs that follow such baptism of the Holy Spirit as understood in the AFM;
- women and baptism of the Holy Spirit in the AFM in Zimbabwe.

Through these phases women's rise into leadership and the challenges that go with it, will be traced. Throughout the phases of the history of the church, several schools of thought can be identified, for example that of Burger (2008), Burgess (1988,1996), Lindsay (1983, 2007) and Maxwell (2006). The chapter begins by discussing the history of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe before applying and connecting the history to the phases in Pentecostal perspectives. The phases are conceptual and cannot be pinned to a specific time period. They will be discussed in the following sequence:

- **Phase One**

Phase One encapsulates 'classical Pentecostalism', a particular style of Pentecostalism where speaking in tongues was seen as a priority. Classical refers to some established principles in the way things were done in the Pentecostalist tradition. Charles F. Parham who was an American preacher and evangelist is said to have been the one who associated glossolalia with baptism in the Holy Spirit (Burger 2008:4). In this 'classical phase' women were also recipients of 'the other language' in sphere of prayer. During this phase a Miss Ozman was a pioneering woman (even influential in comparison to men) who was baptized by the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues as evidence of the Spirit baptism (cf McGee 1991:68). Miss McPherson also features as a founder of the Pentecostal ministry that saw speaking tongues as a sign of baptism with the Spirit. William Joseph Seymour a black man who was instrumental and central to the Azusa street revival in Illinois from 1906 onwards. He learnt his Bible college in the school of Parham while sitting in the passage and peeping through the door due to racism at that time (see Burger and Nel 2008:18-22). He valued Miss McPherson's contribution and in his own ministry understood the importance of women in ministry.

William Joseph Seymour (1870-1922) was exposed to the teachings of Parham about Spirit baptism which was followed by the sign of speaking in tongues (Hyatt 2002:153). In spite of the mostly white church in the United States he, a black man whose left eye was blinded by chicken pox, at the age of 25 received the rare opportunity to preach in a small Holiness Assembly, led by a woman called Sister Ferrar (Burger and Nel 2008:18). One of the services where he preached was attended by a visitor, a Miss Neeley Terry, who convinced the elders and leaders of her home church in Los Angeles to invite Seymour to preach at their church. Seymour preached the new Pentecostal doctrine using Acts 2:4 as his text. His teaching on tongues was not acceptable to the Los Angeles congregation. He was rejected, the door padlocked and he was asked to leave the church (see Burger and Nel 2008:20). He could not afford the journey home and found refuge in the house of a certain Brother Lee.

Spirit baptism was generally in vogue in the Pentecostal churches. It would normally have been men as spiritual leaders who received this blessing, but the two well-known and respected women who spoke in tongues made the presence of women in the new dispensation visible. This formed the basis on which further female participation and inclusion could be built. In this first phase already the participation of women was a particular development in the history of Pentecostal churches.

- **Phase Two**

In Phase Two not only speaking in tongues was deemed important, but there was the further requirement that signs should follow if someone was baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is therefore a phase of: baptism of the Spirit *with signs to follow* the baptism. These signs, that were in essence miracles, were deemed the fruit of the power that a person received when baptised in the Holy Spirit. In this phase women too were gifted by the Holy Spirit to perform miracles, signs and wonders.

- **Phase Three**

Phase Three is when the subsequent infillings of the Holy Spirit cause a person to 'cease to be human'. The Spirit becomes dominant in the person's life and completely directs the person's lifestyle.

### **3.2 Women in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM)**

The Apostolic Faith Mission is a Pentecostal church which originated from the Pentecostal revival which began in 1901 at the Bethel Bible School in Houston, Texas and was led by Charles Fox Parham. However, leading South African theologians of the AFM, Isak Burger and Marius Nel (2008:18), do not regard Parham the father of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Pentecostal revival, because it was his student who ignited the movement with his emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Parham does, however, generally get the credit for formulating the Pentecostal dogma. He also played a leading role in spreading the message. His students prayed for the fulfilment of the promise. Hyatt (2002:153) relates the history as follows: 'At the time when Parham opened a short-term bible school in Houston, Texas, Seymour also joined the Bible School. Parham skirted laws and local customs and allowed Seymour to attend the Houston Bible School. Because of the segregation laws and customs, Seymour could only attend lessons using an adjoining room where through an open door he was able to listen to lectures'. Parham is said to have promoted the black woman, Ms Lucy F. Farrow, to a minister at his Houston camp meeting. For Hoel (1964:37), 'Ms Farrow was equipped with an extraordinary power of laying hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit.'

More people joined the prayer group which grew until the house was too small to accommodate all the people. They moved to a bigger house, that of a Mr Richard Ashbury, who himself was a Baptist. In his house six people began to speak in tongues. Seymour was at the helm of a big revival which later moved to 312 Azusa Street. Parham did not want to start a church but called the movement 'The Apostolic Faith Movement' or 'The Apostolic Faith Mission' (Burger and Nel 2008: 23). The revival was characterized by interracial interaction. It was at the Azusa building that Seymour called it the 'Apostolic Faith Movement/Mission' (see McClung 2012:28).

It is against this backdrop that one can also identify the role that women played in the Pentecostal revival from which the AFM in Zimbabwe was born. When the movement was founded in South Africa in 1908 it was called the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. From this the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe branched off around 1915 (Burger and Nel 2008:24).

The history of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe has generally been theologically conservative. The church became a fairly closed community. Since women's history has not been well documented, access to this history is limited. Women and the sensitive matters that are women's special concerns, did not receive adequate attention. This resulted in women being marginalised in an unjust community and lacking the agency to bring about change. On a theological level women believed that the status quo was 'God's will'. In this regard, every human community is characterised by the basic structural injustice of a distorted relationality between the sexes which means that men as a group have power over women as a group (Slee, 2003:18). Slee (2003:18) points out that this basic inequality has characterized all known history and is universal and is enshrined in language, culture, social relations, mythology and even religion. This is true in many sectors where both sexes work together. In the AFM women work alongside the men to a certain level. From then on, in the higher leadership positions, it is men only. This study investigates the leadership opportunities rendered to women by the AFM structure of ministerial service in which they are involved.

### **3.3 Social discourse and women's roles**

The differential treatment of men and women has been internalized through cultures over centuries, regardless of attempts at social and political reform. Munroe (2001:23) points out that, even if the law says women and men are equal, this does not mean that people think it is so. Women in society are increasingly becoming frustrated and feel manipulated. According to Hadebe and Chitando (2009:10), 'culture and religion are the key factors in defining and regulating gender relations in most communities in Africa'. Questions regarding the welfare and status of women in Africa can be largely explained within the framework of culture.

The AFM is also part of culture and has absorbed cultural understandings of the roles of men and women. This spills over to the roles allocated to women by the church. African cultures are expressions of an African worldview. Any form of liberation will first have to come to terms with culture (see Hadebe and Chitando 2009:10). It is essential that African people learn how to question, examine and

scrutinize culture. Such a process has the potential of opening the way for the critique of other systems as well – social, religious, economic and political systems, all of which harbour aspects of injustice.

Culture is a social construct, so it can also be socially deconstructed. The formation of culture is described as follows by Perry and Perry (1991:23): 'Culture was established by generations of humans for their descendants to live by, so each generation can add, delete, change and modify some aspects of culture which are no longer relevant'. In this study a holistic approach to culture will be taken in an attempt to ascertain how socio-cultural factors affect the implementation of gender sensitive policies. The study examines ideas of morality and gender based on cultural beliefs, behaviour, knowledge, sanctions and values. Communitarian ethos and language and discourse are examined from a historical perspective with the emphasis on traditions and social heritage (Hadebe and Chitando 2009:12). In this respect, culture is seen as that which contains beliefs, knowledge, sanctions, values, language, traditions and social heritage.

The relationship between gender and culture forms the backbone of this study. This relationship has implications for the implementation of gender policies. The AFM is now a juncture where male leadership should be ready to share power with women also at national level, in other words at the top of the hierarchy of this oldest Pentecostal church. The AFM leadership from provincial to national level has not yet been ready for a sharing of power with women who, like male people, also know that God has called them into ministry. The male leaders who usurp all the power for themselves deter women from participating in leadership on the highest level and contributing to policy making with their unique God-given gifts. Women, also called by God, should be able to fulfil the same ministry roles as males who see themselves as called by God to ministry and leadership.

Pentecostalism is mainly characterised by the centrality of the Holy Spirit. This should then also be seen in its doctrinal position and in its practical activities. The question is whether, and if so to what extent, this central aspect of Pentecostalism influences the AFM in Zimbabwe and the way in which the church functions in practice. In practice men dominate the activities of top leadership from their own understanding of 'how things ought to be'. Consequently, men have been directing

the events of the church from that understanding. However, if the AFM in Zimbabwe believes in the centrality, function and baptism of the Holy Spirit as ascribed in statement of faith, then this should be seen in the attitudes of people and especially of leaders. Baptism is considered to be one of the main sacraments of the church. In each of the phases in history a different focus with regard to baptism of the Holy Spirit is evident. The need to provide evidence of the Holy Spirit in order to be considered a leader applied equally to men and women. This is evidenced in how women participated since the inception of the church, beginning from Azusa Street to how it operates today.

In the different phases of the historical development of the church it was explained in a variety of ways how the Holy Spirit equipped people in the church with spiritual gifts and how they performed signs and wonders by the same gifts. In each phase there are/were women who are identified by their unique roles in the church. They fulfilled these roles because they were baptized by the Holy Spirit.

The Constitution of the church is also relevant when it comes to aligning biblical evidence on the role of women and the church's practices. Women's historical participation in all facets of church life as people baptised by the Holy Spirit, provides an incentive to the AFM in Zimbabwe to re-consider their current position on the role and place of women in their leadership and to be held accountable for attitudes and practices. Certain norms that are applied by male leaders who claim these to be based on scripture, will be evaluated. This study will enter into a theological discussion with the views and practices of church leaders in the AFM in Zimbabwe today. The three main phases of the historical development of the church and the role of women in each of the phases, will now be discussed.

### **3.4 Phase One: Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Burgess (1988: 220; see Hwata 2005:114) distinguishes between classical Pentecostalism and 'neo- Pentecostalism' where classical Pentecostalism is where glossolalia is seen as the authentic sign of being Spirit-filled. Baptism of the Holy Spirit has been present from the time of the earliest Christian churches. The

phenomenon was described in the book of Acts of the Apostles 2:8. On account of that description the first Pentecostals became deeply intrigued by the idea of the Holy Spirit the power intrinsic to all things (see Marshall 1980:82). In this strain of Pentecostalism there was a differentiation between speaking in tongues and other gifts of the Holy Spirit. All the gifts of the Spirit, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, were recognised, but glossolalia was ranked particularly highly.

This interpretation incited criticism from scholars, including New Testament scholar, J. D. Dunn (1970:243), who argued that Paul ranks speaking in tongues the least of the gifts of the Spirit. Also it was branded by Paul as a childish gift (1 Cor 14:20) which appeals to children more than to mature people (1 Cor 14:19). Dunn (1970:191; see Hwata 2005:114-115) does not see the Lukan narratives in Acts of the Apostles as the model for Spirit baptism (Kadhani 2003:48). He puts it as follows (Dunn 1970:191):

If anyone continues to insist on taking Luke's account of the outpouring of the Spirit as a normative for the experience of the Spirit today, baptism in the Spirit or whatever, he must go all the way with Luke. The speaking in tongues which manifest the coming of the Spirit in Acts is ecstatic speech, a veritable torrent of utterance. It will not do to trim down the necessary physical sighs to a few words in an unknown language forming in the mind or on the tongue – to such casuistry has Pentecostal doctrine too often descended in practice. Luke does not admit even that diversity. Pentecostals therefore must surely cut their doctrinal coat according to the Lukan cloth, or else make use of a greater diversity of materials than those provided by Luke alone.

To term the speaking in tongues as just an 'ecstatic speech' or 'a veritable torrent of utterance' as Dunn does, would mean that people in the Pentecostal tradition would be mumbling in foreign tongues. However, some Pentecostals do not speak in tongues even though they believe that they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Evidence of Spirit baptism is not universal, but selective. Other gifts of the Spirit are also mentioned by Paul.



In Hwata's (2005:115) view, 'the basic argument by the classical Pentecostals is that because baptisms in the early days of the church were often accompanied by glossolalia, it does not follow that other manifestations of the Spirit are less appropriate or "speaking in tongues" is more normative for later centuries'. This is true, since as Pentecostalism developed and advanced new forms could be seen within the movement. Pentecostals are not only identified by speaking in tongues, but also by mass prayer, loud services, and indications of ecstasy. According to Burger (2008:19), Charles Fox Parham did see speaking in tongues as the biblical evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit. In classical Pentecostalism 'speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of Spirit baptism'. The term 'initial' suggests that there is more expected. Further, gifts that may follow after baptism, but speaking in tongues is seen as the first sign that precedes the rest (Hwata 2005:115).

In his early years Parham found speaking in tongues to be the only biblical sign of baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to Burger and Nel (2008:17), when Parham opened the Bethel Bible School in October 1900, he urged his students to search for objective biblical evidence whereby a person could know for certain that he or she had truly received baptism of the Spirit. In this regard Hwata (2005:115) states that:

On the New Year's Eve, when Parham enquired on the result of their study they all came to the same conclusion that the indisputable proof which occurred when the Pentecostal blessing fell was that the recipients spoke in other tongues. This, to the Pentecostals, is a demonstration of supernatural power and activity focusing not merely on God who is, but also upon God who does. It is during this Pentecostal era that appears a Miss Agnes Ozman being baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

Ms Ozman reportedly was the first of the students who was filled by the Holy Spirit. She had asked Parham to lay his hands on her head and pray for her. She described her experience as follows: 'It was as though rivers of living water were proceeding from my innermost being' (Burger and Nel 2008:17). According to Hwata (2005:14), if this can be regarded as the beginning of Pentecostalism, then the birth of the movement was not a result of the *doctrine* of speaking in tongues, but of the *event* of speaking in tongues. In this founding event a woman was a prominent figure.

Aimee Semple McPherson is another prominent woman of this phase in the development of the AFM. She founded the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, an idea she conceived in 1912 after having been baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1907. She describes the Foursquare Gospel as follows (Dayton 1987:21):

Firstly, that Jesus provides salvation according to John 3:16 (For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life). Secondly, that Jesus is the baptizer of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4 (And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance). Thirdly, that Jesus is the healer of our bodies according to James 5:14-15 (Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.) and, finally, that Jesus is coming again to receive us to Himself 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord).

McPherson's (1921:47) experience of Spirit baptism was ecstatic and highly emotional:

The cords of my throat began to twitch my chin began to quiver, and then to shake violently, but oh, so sweetly. My tongue began to move up and down and sideways in my mouth. Unintelligible sounds as of stammering lips and another tongue, spoken of in Isaiah 28:11 (For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people), began to issue from my lips. This

stammering of different syllables, then words, then connected sentences, was continued for some time as the Spirit was teaching me to yield to Him. Then suddenly out of my innermost being flowed rivers of praise in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance.

Langerman (1983:83-84) and Hollenweger (1972:142) agree in principle that as early as 1909 the Pentecostal missionaries accepted the consequence of Pentecostal doctrine, namely that the most important qualification for the office of a pastor was baptism in the Holy Spirit. This qualification was acquired with extraordinary speed by black converts. It did not exclude the women. In an African context women constitute the larger percentage of members of the AFM (Chitando 2012:279) and also of other churches. Many women acquire Spirit baptism in the AFM in Zimbabwe which is a fully African church with an African socio-religious character and form, which draws on the traditional way of life. Ecstasy is highly prevalent in the AFM in Zimbabwe and is exhibited more in women than in men. Yet women 'are not allowed' into the top leadership positions as overseers. However, it is often argued that ecstasy does not necessarily make a good leader. It is just a sign of Spirit baptism. This position is taken also on account of the Church's constitution on the composition of the local, provincial and national women's departments are read. Beginning with the local assembly board, the AFM Constitution states that, 'a woman's department will be established in each assembly ... consisting of all women members of the assembly' (AFM in Zimbabwe Constitution, point 2.1.2, page 48). The following language indicates patriarchal dominance and the segregation of women:

Clause 5(a) states that, '... the local women's department committee will consist of at least seven members, the wife of the pastor being the chairperson ... ' (page 48).

Clause 9.1.1b:

the wife of the Chairman of the Province ... (page 49); Clause 10.1, The wife of the Chairman of the Province will be the Chairperson of this Committee.. (page 50). Clause 15.1a, The wife of the President shall be the Chairperson of the national ... (page 50). Clause 16.1, The Women's council shall consist of the President's wife who is

the chairperson ... (page 51). Chapter 9 of the constitution;  
'Provincial workers' council, ... he must have ...

The masculine language when talking about all high offices indicates the church's stance regarding the gender of the candidates for higher offices. Such statements are suggestive of the fact that those who compiled this constitution intended that the church would not have women as ordained pastors who could then chair the committees.

### **3.5 Phase Two: Baptism of the Holy Spirit and signs**

The utterance of tongues is taken to be the key evidence that one is baptized by the Holy Spirit. In the AFM in Zimbabwe, women are not excluded from this and participate in various ways, such as for example intercession. Phase Two of the development of the church maintains baptism of the Holy Spirit as a crucial aspect, but differs from Phase One in how the baptism manifests. There should namely be evidence of signs. For the purposes of this study the role of women in this second phase of the development of Pentecostal churches in general and the AFM in Zimbabwe, in particular is of interest.

Those who were baptized by the Holy Spirit gave direction to the church's Pentecostal heritage. Most of those who practiced this kind of spirituality were women. Hastings (1994:521) and Sundkler (1976:225) concur that the AFM originated from the earlier influence of Zionist movement. There was a close relationship between Zionism and AFM which helped to pave way for swift development of Pentecostal life of the latter (Maxwell 2006:43). This is because the Zionist movement was African and underpinned by ecstasy (cf Anderson 2000:16). This relationship, one could say, became a catalyst to the founding of other churches. In the AFM in Zimbabwe some women left the church to found their own churches in search of the freedom to serve God as they felt called to do and to no longer be invisible in the church. A good example of women who left the AFM is Pastor Chipu Ravu Bhasera, Florence Kanyati, Patience Itai Hove. In their new ministries, they function as the highest voice of God and authority in the ministry.

The resistance of women against their invisibility and limited roles in the AFM in Zimbabwe and their life outside the church has catapulted some women to roles they could not have played in the restrictive church from which they came. Maxwell (2006:43) describes how some used their connection with the AFM to cultivate their own following and found their own church. Once free from masculine supervision and limitations the women would then develop their version of Pentecostalism from a feminist perspective and with the emphasis on the equality of all human beings before God. Women in ordained ministry in AFM had nowhere to go, since they were confined to what was called the 'biblical mandate for women', which limited their participation in church ministry (Kwaramba 2004:1). Yet, in spite of this, April 1999 saw the ordination of women in ministry within the AFM. They were empowered to work in full-time ministry. This was said to have been done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The ordained women were Scholastic Sekai Kwaramba, Eneah Hove and Pauline Nyembesi.

The power of the Holy Spirit goes beyond baptizing and speaking in tongues. Maxwell (2006:2) points out that a person can speak in tongues, yet be lying against the Holy Spirit. In Azusa Street there were various ecstatic phenomena, such as glossolalia, 'holy laughter', shaking and prostration under the power of the Spirit, and a public confession of sin. Speaking in tongues alone cannot make a person holy and is not necessarily a sign of high levels of spirituality. It is evidence of having been baptized in the Spirit. Many people who are baptized in the Holy Spirit brand themselves 'born-again' and differentiate themselves from mainline churches who do not have this baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Kwaramba (2018:68) puts it as follows: 'Within Pentecostal church services the minister often encourages the convert to seek spiritual gifts that are said to intensify religious experiences. Some of the favoured Pentecostal spiritual gifts, which are not necessarily prominent within mainstream Christian churches, include "baptism in the Holy Spirit".' This baptism is evidenced in speaking in tongues. In the Pentecostal tradition what is spoken is seen as a language that is only recognized and understood by God (i.e. glossolalia) or, a foreign language, which is not known or understood by the speaker (see 1 Cor 14:4). Men in the AFM in Zimbabwe are baptized by the same Holy Spirit that has baptized the men in AFM of South Africa, who provide space for women to rise to whatever level of leadership they are called

to. These are Charismatics and Pentecostals who have the gift of the Holy Spirit and possess the glossolalia, divine healing, prophecy and exorcism (Maxwell 2006:3).

Spirit baptism is central to the AFM in Zimbabwe but in everyday life the work the Spirit can be obscured. For R. A. Torrey (1985:76) the purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit is to empower for service. Both men and women are baptized. This brings about a very definite experience that any believer so baptized could attest to. This could edify women to serve God with the knowledge they are doing it for God. Men should accept and understand that God can raise women equally as God baptizes them equally. When both men and women are baptized in the Spirit, they both speak in tongues. Torrey (1985:76) poses the question whether some people can be Spirit baptized yet fail to speak in tongues. Paul also asks (1 Cor 12) whether it is possible to be Spirit baptized but yet live a life that is opposite to this baptism.

In its initial stages the AFM was aligned to an extent with the Zionist movement (Maxwell 2006:43-4) which practiced confession before services or prayers. This allowed the Spirit of God to move and use people in the church with signs. Speaking in tongues was a critical sign that showed someone to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Maxwell (2006:45) maintains that Spirit baptism is the impartation of supernatural power of gifts in service (see Hyatt 2002:141; cf Hwata 2005:134).

Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe who are great in number, often exhibit the presence of the Holy Spirit with signs such as speaking in tongues and being gifted with various gifts as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Their function in different departments of the church is an additional sign of the virtues the Holy Spirit has given them. As Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, the presence of the Holy Spirit helps those in the church to function in service of God, irrespective of their gender:

<sup>7</sup> But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup> To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; <sup>10</sup> To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: <sup>11</sup> But all these worketh

that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit not only causes a person to speak in tongues, but also to have strength of faith and many are gifted in various ways by the Holy Spirit. However, Suenens (1975:101) strongly rejects the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit with speaking in tongues (cf Alexander 2009:16). He cites Titus 3:5-7;

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

According to Suenens (1975:101), the one (sacramental) baptism is at the same time Paschal and Pentecostal. He proposes that the term 'baptism in the Spirit' no longer be used in order to avoid ambiguity. He describes the initial experience of the Holy Spirit more clearly. The Spirit is given in sacramental baptism. There is, however, a new coming of the Holy Spirit who is already present; an outpouring which springs from within. He further quotes John 7:37-38:

In the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

This points to an action of the Spirit which releases latent interior energies, that is, an extra energy from within that is not usual. He puts it as follows (Suenens 1975:101): 'It is a question of a deeper awareness of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The importance of speaking in tongues is not minimized if we situate it on a natural place, which can assume a supernatural character through the intention which animates it'. Suenens juxtaposes two main areas in Spirit baptism: the natural gifts of tears and the gift of tongues. He explains the gift of tears as follows: 'If a person feels a strong emotion she or he is able to cry. Crying is a profound religious experience in which a person gives expression to the inexpressible, when moved by

a sense of adoration or gratitude before God' (Suenens 1975:101). Tears mean many things, hence their religious significance may go further than what people often understand. Suenens (1975:101) himself experienced the gift of speaking in tongues which he says brings freedom from spiritually inhibiting bonds which block our relationship with God and our neighbour. Through praying in tongues one finds a new sense of liberation (Hwata 2005:136). Women generally are comfortable with both emotions and tears since they have been socialised that these are not taboo for women. They can cry either for joy or in sorrow. At funeral services in Zimbabwe, women they are the ones who cry vigorously and loudly. Women also give evidence to the Holy Spirit in them by means of loud cries as expression of emotion. Speaking in tongues then, 'is a mode of prayer that transcends words and human reasoning, and brings great peace and openness to spiritual communication with others through' (Hwata 2005:136). Suenens (1975:101-102) explains that 'it can be practiced alone or in a group. When a prayer meeting takes the form of an improvised chant in tongues it can assume in musical terms a rare beauty as well as a religious depth by which no one who listens without prejudice can fail to be impressed.'

In the Pentecostal understanding of Paul's discussion on the gifts of the Spirit, the gift of tongues can be seen as the basis of the other gifts. In a way it is the gift that leads to other gifts. Speaking in tongues, then, helps one to cross a threshold and attain a new freedom as body and soul are surrendered to the action of the Holy Spirit. It is the initial stage of learning how to yield to other gifts of the Holy Spirit (Hwata 2005:137). As one prays in tongues there is a union with the mysterious takes place. The Spirit prays for people, and worships and thanks God on their behalf. Paul then points out the following with regard to the power of speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:4-5):

He that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater [is] he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying ...



Speaking in tongues can have healing power for people with psychological wounds that hinder their full development, for example. The AFM in Zimbabwe emphasises the gifts of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Those who speak in tongues edify themselves. There should also be those with the gift of interpreting the tongues. This could be any of the congregants, irrespective of gender. According to Suenens (1975:103), a complication occurs when Christians want to express their deep religious feelings before God and in front of others. Speaking in tongues is a new dimension of bodily expression and communication with one another and with God. An experience of spiritual revival can help people to praise, glorify and love God with all means at their disposal. This is not foreign to authentic religious tradition (Hwata 2005:137). Speaking in tongues then becomes an integral factor to those who have received the grace from the Holy Spirit. Suenens (1975:104) explains it as follows: 'Speaking in tongues thus conceived, is spiritual enrichment; far from being archaism; it is a factor of renewal on more than one level: that is why I do not hesitate to count it among the fruits of grace. But it is the task of theologians to study this question more deeply, not only in texts, but by experiencing it in prayer groups'. Judging by his presentation and language on speaking in tongues, Suenens seems to be a phase two Pentecostal where the signs accompany the speaking in tongues. He is convinced that speaking in tongues is good because it helps to equalise all people in the church, irrespective of gender. From such a vantage point women's participation in the AFM in Zimbabwe should be celebrated and respected.

From another angle, Tugwell (1972:40) concludes that 'baptism in the Spirit is the most distinctive and disputed doctrine of Pentecostalism; it was the hallmark of the original Pentecostal movement, and it still is the hallmark of all Pentecostal-inspired renewal in all the churches, including now the Roman Catholic.' It is a matter of how the spirituality of the AFM in Zimbabwe is understood. 'Pentecostal' is automatically associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. New tongues do not, however, always authenticate the presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer. Other signs that accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit include the ecstatic convulsions. The AFM in Zimbabwe believes that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is hallmark of the church's statement of faith and outstanding evidence that one is a Pentecostal believer. This is evidenced by the church's constitution which states the following:

In chapter one of the AFM in Zimbabwe constitution, the church believes and humbly professes that:

It is the church of Christ governed by God as Head according to Holy Scriptures, the working of the Holy Spirit and the ministrations instituted by Him. (Clause 1.2.2)

In this clause the church states that the working of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by signs and wonders. According to this principle, the church should be governed by people who are called by God and filled by the Holy Spirit, *equally*.

Furthermore, in the confession of faith the AFM in Zimbabwe confesses *the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the manifestations of His fruits, gifts and grace*. (Clause 1.3.7: page 2). Hence, the AFM in Zimbabwe submits itself to the baptism and work of the Holy Spirit. This becomes the basis of the church's activities in which all members who confess the same faith, be they male or female, should be included. This means that the even the roles of the women are governed by this pronouncement of faith in the Holy Spirit. In order to avoid misrepresenting the guidance of the Holy Spirit it is necessary to understand the way in which the Holy Spirit directs people. It is difficult to distinguish a spiritual entity from a physical entity. Hence even Scripture warns: 'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (1 John 4:1). One would then wonder which spirit spoke to the AFM leadership not to ordain and accept women into high leadership offices, like the overseers. Tugwell (1972:40) puts it as follows: 'The experiential phenomenon of Pentecostalism should be subjected to a thorough scrutiny in light of scriptural teaching and church tradition. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is connected with the sacrament of baptism. Pentecostal theology takes water baptism as a human act of attesting faith in God while the second blessing is God's work alone'. 'A matter of spirituality' is not always evidenced externally. During critical moments people responds according to their internal spiritual growth. In this regard women should be able to contribute the benefits of the internal spiritual growth to the faith community and the faith community should not be deprived of such gifts. Women are available and should not miss the opportunity to serve the AFM in Zimbabwe also in the highest church leadership if those are their gifts and if that is their calling.

According to practical theologian, Denise Ackermann (2000:171), it is the spirituality that comes from a combination of risk, struggle and hope that sustains believers through life, in times both good and bad. For women who are often regarded as unworthy to preach God's word and do God's work, this struggle can be the moment when they realise that spirituality transcends gender. Spirituality is that which touches upon 'the deepest parts of our being where our feelings, thoughts, beliefs and praxis reach out in faith for the wholeness imaged in us by God in Jesus Christ' and which 'enables us to truly love God, ourselves and one another' (Ackermann 1994:125). A woman can serve God equally because the ability to do so comes from God. The Spirit baptism confirms a person's level of spirituality. Spirituality, Ackermann (2009:276) describes as 'a journey of self-discovery and God-discovery – of knowing yourself and knowing God'. This blessing come upon people, including women, irrespective of the status that society and dominant groups allocate to them. For believers, including women, blessing means (1) holding onto Jesus' promise of abundant life, and (2) hearing and obeying Jesus' commands (Ackermann 2014:26-27).

For Tugwell (1972:43-44) 'the experience of the Spirit is not subsequent to that of conversion and faith; the experience of Pentecost is identical with baptismal confession that 'Jesus is Lord''. For him, being a Christian is being baptised in the Spirit, after which the gifts of the Spirit will function in such a person. Speaking in tongues is strongly supported by Tugwell (1972:64). He points out that 'tongues' is a gift necessary for the person's own up-building. It provides substance to that step of faith that attests to and initiates the experience of the Spirit. It is the way in which the Holy Spirit first manifested itself in the church. For Tugwell the combination of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues is a vital component of the growth of the church. This will manifest in the practical activities of believers in areas such as preaching and prayer, in which women are equally competent and active. In the context of the speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, 'tongues are a gift of God given to help us to praise him and they should ultimately lead to a human wholeness in which one is entirely open at every level to be used and led by God' (Hwata 2005:139). Women have shown themselves to be available to be used by God in the Biblical history and at Pentecost. In the early church women were active participants. Women were part of the hundred and twenty that experienced the

baptism of the Holy Spirit in the upper room. Tugwell (1972:39) identifies praise and prophecy (with or without tongues) as a characteristic of the Spirit's presence (see Hwata 2005:140). Tugwell's stands out in Pentecostal circles in that he has not given much prominence to the gift of speaking in tongues as evidence of Spirit baptism.

The AFM in Zimbabwe does not dispute the new freedom and role of women in Christ as empowered by baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is clear from the writings of the early church. The book of Acts frequently mentions the presence and activity of women in the founding of the church. From praying in the upper room (Acts 1:14) to the persecution by Saul (Acts 8:3) to the reception of the Gospel by Greeks (Acts 17:12) women were involved. Similarly, in the AFM in Zimbabwe women are involved in, for instance, intercession and preparation of the conferences, either provincial or national. They believe that the Holy Spirit is using and leading them. However when these same women could be elected into key positions in the church leadership, they are excluded, for no apparent reason. Their faith and the guidance of the Spirit in their lives have not suddenly diminished when it comes to leadership. According to Burger and Nel (2008:375), the church's Executive Council determined that the rebirth and baptism in the Holy Spirit were not the same. The church could never be sure that a person was baptized in the Spirit until she or he has spoken in tongues. They also find that personal witness should be tested against biblical evidence (see Acts 2:4; 10:44; 19:6). Although there was an argument that glossolalia was not the only evidence of the baptism in the Spirit, the AFM was of the opinion that the New Testament required a person to speak in tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Spirit (Burger and Nel 2008:378).

Divine healing was a distinctive feature of the South African Pentecostal movements (Lindsay 1983:123), from which the AFM in Zimbabwe originated. Initially believers in the AFM in Zimbabwe were opposed to believers receiving medical treatment. They had faith in the divine healing of God. This was in alignment with the Zionist movement. Both faith groups believed in the laying on of hands (see Mark 16:17). Today, the church still believes in the supernatural healing by the laying on of hands by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, the rigid resistance against hospital treatment has decreased.

All gifts are given for the guidance, exhortation and edification of the church and the community in general. The teachings of Paul in the Letters to the Corinthians attest to that. Women in the AFM who show faith in the signs and the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be identified and treated with the same respect as men who exhibit such faith. These gifts cannot be ranked in order of importance. Any such ranking would be subjective and therefore biased, especially when they exclude women for no other reason than their sex. In this early phase of the development of the AFM emphasis was placed on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that signs would follow as evidence of the baptism. For Pache (1954:194), in his work *The Person and work of the Holy Spirit*, the gift of tongues is not a sign of the baptism of the Spirit. Paul declares that not everyone shall speak in tongues but all are baptized in the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 12:10, 13, 30). For him, speaking in tongues is not necessarily a sign of the baptism of the Spirit. If this were the case, all would have to receive tongues since all believers without exception are baptized in the Spirit (see Pache 1954:194).

According to Suenens (1975:83) the Holy Spirit is linked to the charisma. The manifestations of the Spirit are the Holy Spirit at work and the Spirit must not be separated from its gifts. Therefore, no gift is greater than another. Paul does seem to emphasize the gift of prophecy. A baptized Christian has already received the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Hwata 2005:135). Manifestations of the gifts *reveal* the presence of the gifts in individuals but these manifestations do *not create* the gifts. These gifts include (1 Cor 12:8-11):

the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another [*divers*] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

In the early phase of the establishment of the AFM there was visible evidence of women who were baptized by the Holy Spirit and were 'gifted' to perform signs and wonders. The sign that the Holy Spirit was at work in the AFM in Zimbabwe became evident through the performance of the miracles by the few notable women.

In September 1945 the Overseer J.D. Johnstone applied for a permit to build a church at Murape in Domboshawa under Samson (Gutsa) Gwanzura (see Hwata 2005:25). At this point in time J.D. Johnstone was overseer, Enock Gwanzura was the head minister, and Johan Gwanzura and Samson Gutsa Gwanzura were area ministers. They were followed by a large number of 'evangelists'. Church leadership acknowledged a woman, Kerina Murape, who was believed to have been gifted with the gift of healing. Many people visited her rural home for healing as well as spiritual advice for ministry. This included the men who lead the church. Mavhunga (2017) explains it as follows in an interview: 'She passed on but her legacy is still within the minds of the AFM as she was a uniquely gifted woman.' This woman became part of the spiritual leadership in the second Pentecostal phase. The concept and role of spiritual leadership had to precede the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Ngungi 2010:45).

Mbuya (*granny*) Murape died in 2015. She was a renowned Pentecostal woman who strongly believed in divine healing. Until her death she insisted that members of AFM should not take any form of medicine for healing. She put it as follows: 'We never used to take medicine in this church. The problem is that people today do not want to confess their sins' (Murape 2012). After she got married she could not get pregnant for over eighteen months. She joined AFM in Zimbabwe and was born again the day the Mbare AFM Church was officially opened, possibly around 1939. She presented her problem, but the ministers refused to pray for her until she had brought her husband. When Mr. Murape came, the couple was prayed for by the laying on of hands. John Gwanzura gave a word of prophecy that after eight days God would give her a son. For the eight days she was in constant prayer with the help of the local minister Samson Gwanzura. Indeed after eight days she conceived a son. The midwives who delivered the baby were Gabriel Chipoyera's wife and Amon Chinyemba's wife. Mrs Murape maintained that the child was never treated with medicine or any medical treatment. She herself was used by God in the area of

divine healing and praying for those who have had problems with child bearing (information provided through Interviewing Mrs Kerina Murape before her death in January 2015 narrated by Mr Mavhunga 2017).

Mrs Murape's central role as a woman of standing in the AFM in Zimbabwe can be compared to that of Mbuya Nehanda in the liberation struggle. Nehanda advised the church leadership of the visions she had regarding the church and people's lives. Church leaders visited her to hear God's word prior to the election of new leadership. This was similar to the role played by Miss Aimee Semple McPherson in shaping the Pentecostal heritage (see Burger 2005:16). Unlike McPherson, Mbuya Murape did not start a ministry. She functioned within the church with her unique spiritual gift. Great numbers of people would visit her rural home for help. Her lack of initiating to found her own ministry because of the spiritual gifts in her made the people in the church to visit her despite their location. Mrs Mupariwa (*Interview*, 15 January 2015) attests as follows about Mrs Murape: 'She taught all that came to her how to pray and ministered to them. She also ministered to me and I got a miracle baby.' Initially the AFM in Zimbabwe church did not make public the role that women in fact did play in the church. In time a shift has taken place and this issue can now be addressed more freely.

In a Pentecostal context, Mbuya Murape's gift would have been those expected of a pastor. However the church only started to ordain women for pastoral ministry in 1999. Murape therefore played a pastoral role, but was not recognized or acknowledged as a pastor in public or in the church. At Murape's funeral service on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 Pastor Choto spoke as follows: 'Though not a pastor, her impact was amazing because of her spiritual gifts. Her ministry reached and transformed many lives.' After ordination for women had been approved, women could play a more prominent role in the church.

Women today are finding it increasingly unacceptable to have play the traditional spiritual and religious roles that are allocated to them by the men in the church. They are questioning the church's teachings in light of their reading of the New Testament and in light of their full and equal humanity (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1990:57). They see themselves as full partners of the men in the church. Both male and female persons are called by Christ and should be able to respond fully to Christ's call. Theologians,

male and female, are rediscovering images in the Bible of how men and women can serve together in ministry.

The revered position of Mbuya Murape in the AFM in Zimbabwe has provided some impetus to the Sisters' Union (S.U.) and women pastors in the church. Women are gifted, able and qualified to also reach the highest ranks of church leadership. On Murape's funeral Mrs Mukwasha (15 January 2015) spoke about the character and attitude of the deceased as follows: 'Gogo Kerina Murape was full of shocking meekness considering the unique spiritual gifts that were upon her. People would visit her daily but she never changed her attitude towards each of them. May God grant women such generous love that she showed. She was a true Pentecostal Apostolic believer. The church leaders should allow more women with such charisma as Gogo to practice their gifts from God.' For a church that adheres to biblical foundations the question of Old and New Testament views on women can be a challenge and can seem contradictory at times. The question is whether women function on an equal footing with men in ordained ministry and whether that would be 'biblical'? Pastor Augustine Bura attested as follows to the life of Kerina Murape (15 January 2015): 'She left a legacy which the AFM in Zimbabwe must learn from and pick up from where she left so that we can be like her imitating the acts she did. It is very vital to explore the relationship women had with the Holy Spirit.' These testimonies on the life and work of a woman from an earlier era in the history of the AFM are useful for understanding the transition to the second phase and understanding that legacy for the new Pentecostal era in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **3.6 Phase Three: The Holy Spirit and women's abilities**

In Phase Three the baptism of the Spirit is followed by subsequent 'baptisms' and 'fillings' of the Spirit for the purposes of fulfilling specific tasks and for special events that believers encounter in their lives. In the Old Testament there are examples of how the Spirit of God provided direction to people. One such example is where Moses facilitates the Spirit coming on the seventy elders who had to help him in the ministering God's people (Numbers 11:16-17):



And the Lord said unto Moses, gather unto me seventy men of these elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you to carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.

In Joshua 10:5-10, under the influence of the Spirit during a battle with the Amorites, Joshua asked for the sun to stop moving so that he could complete the battle and win a victory (see Scotuhu 2008:146). The Spirit gave the army the strength to persevere for longer than would usually have been possible for people. The text speaks of the sun and moon coming to a halt. The description evokes the idea of the mythical mill wheel from Mesopotamian mythology which represents the rotation of the starry sky. Should it come to a standstill, disaster would follow (Kruger 1999:1085). The millwheel is a well-known image also in the Old Testament (see Deut. 24:6, 10-13, 17). What for Joshua and Israel was a divine intervention and miracle would have been disastrous in the Mesopotamian mind-set.

In Judges 13-16, Samson was empowered by the Spirit for a given task. However, in his relationship with Delilah he neglected to acknowledge the source of his power and became a disempowered prisoner. Samson could again break the chains when the Spirit came upon him. The work of the Spirit did not only begin at Pentecost, as is attested in the Acts of the Apostles, but is evidenced already in Judges where the gifts of the Spirit were at work. Martin (2008:22) submits that 'the Spirit of Yahweh in Judges functions primarily as the dynamic presence of Yahweh that compels and empowers the judges to effectuate Yahweh's salvation of his covenant people'. From such functioning of the Spirit of God, Pentecost in the New Testament escalated the manifestation of the Spirit in different ways to different people. A 2018 constitutional court hearing in Zimbabwe on the presidential election three of the top judges were women. This was a signal to the Zimbabwean church leadership that women do have the capacity to effectively participate in leadership on the highest levels. These women judges preside over national issues that would include the church.

When the same Spirit comes upon women who equally manifest the image of God, they should not be held back from serving God according to their gifts. In the third phase of the development of the history of the AFM, women who bore evidence of being gifted by the Spirit were not excluded from participation, though their participation was limited. With regard to the roles allocated to women and the role restrictions placed on women, the AFM in Zimbabwe has become more political than spiritual. Women face many impediments. Only those who are determined to challenge these political injustices do not accept the territorial boundaries set for them. Insights from feminist theological scholarship will now be perused in order to identify a useful strategy for interpreting the situation in this context.

*Liberal feminism* focused on political reform, equal rights for women and the improvement of women's work environment. However, this approach did not address the hierarchical system of male dominance and power and such, left women not fully liberated from male chauvinist tendencies (see Dreyer 2011:8). The focus on equality was a valuable contribution, but did not address the heart of the problem. Biologically men and women are different, which inevitably leads to different social roles. Total equality as a universal principle cannot be achieved. Equally should be in worth, value, dignity and contribution, not in sameness.

*Socialist or Marxist feminism* focused on equality in the workplace. This, however, led to a double work load for women (Dreyer 2011:9). They then had an equal responsibility in the work place, but remained solely or mostly responsible for household and child-rearing tasks. Though giving birth is solely the task of women, there is no biological necessity for women to do housework, feed people or rear children. Those tasks can be performed and shared equally by all the adults in the household.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit in the third phase of the development of the AFM in Zimbabwe was understood as that Spirit-endowment was the baptismal claim of every believer and its cultivation everyone's challenge (see Wire 1990:137). There is no reason for ministerial roles to be gender exclusive. There is no biological or spiritual reason for male persons to be the only or the highest church leaders. In

order to fulfil the role of spiritual leadership a willingness to serve is required, not a particular sex. The baptism of the Holy Spirit helps people to perform the tasks for which they are called. The importance of the Holy Spirit in this phase of the development of the church, is seen in the extraordinary strength and abilities of people, including women. Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe perform their roles not only or necessarily because of inborn talent, but because of the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Paul emphasizes diversity in his appeal to baptismal confession (1 Cor 12:13): 'For in one spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and we were all given one to drink'. There is need for some form of liberation for women from stifling and restrictive cultural views and church practices. The norm for such a liberating practice will depend on one's view of Scripture which is indelibly subjective.

Feminist interpretation of the Bible has taken different directions. Carolyn Osiek (1997) identifies three approaches to feminist biblical interpretation. These three approaches clarify women's need for liberation also when it comes to interpreting the Bible. The approaches are the following (Osiek 1997:955-967):

- The Bible is part of human history and has been used as an instrument of power. The church should recognize this and eliminate the abuse. In such a state the power struggles for women are based on the contents that are suggestive of open ended statements that allow abuse.
- Biblical hermeneutics is not just an abstract academic enterprise; understanding the Bible should therefore happen in constant interaction with the experience of faith communities.
- Biblical texts originated within specific traditions and continue to function within specific traditions. Tradition determines how people understand their reality in light of a specific biblical text and, consequently, biblical texts are understood in light of the specific situation in which people find themselves. Contemporary hermeneutics should therefore focus equally on experience and theory (see Gabaitse 2015:8).

Reading the Bible from this perspective, women in the AFM in Zimbabwe can be empowered to know that the Holy Spirit empowers them to do no less than men are

able to do. Paul cautions that believers should not exclude others from Spirit-endowed tasks. They should not be 'puffed up one over the other against each other' in their spiritual arrogance (1 Cor 4:6). Anthropologist, Mary Douglas (1973:88-90), already pointed out that societies where leadership is not ascribed in advance but can be achieved by people who function most effectively and is an option that is open to all, irrespective of gender, are most successful. From a theological Pentecostal perspective, it can be said that it is the Spirit who edifies people to perform various roles in the society and community with great power and blessing. Wire (1990:137) points out that Paul warns against competition among believers when performing their roles and tasks through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:3-5; 4:6-7; 12:14-27). Gifts as given through the baptism of the Holy Spirit will be highly beneficial to the AFM in Zimbabwe if there is an open space for all. Women who adhered to prescribed roles and 'desired spirituality and holiness' have been restricted by this and could not freely do what they felt called and empowered by the Spirit to do. Two symptoms of such restrictions that have been a great challenge in the AFM in Zimbabwe are the insistence that women wear a head covering and the way in which they have been excluded from church leadership. These issues will now be discussed further.

### **3.7 The head covering of women and male headship**

The discussion on women and head covering is significant for this study because it brings to surface how women in the AFM in Zimbabwe are sidelined and segregated in places of worship. It is used to keep women in their allocated place especially when they prophesy or minister by the power of the Holy Spirit in the house of God. How the injunction that women should cover their heads has been used in the various traditions and how it forms the basis of social arguments will now be traced. The Pauline letters reflect the culture of the time. How they are used in later church traditions, specifically in the AFM in Zimbabwe for the purposes of this study, and the consequences of this for leadership of the church, will be investigated. The primary texts for this discussion are 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33-36; 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Head covering, hierarchy and authority are discussed in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16:

Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered [them] to you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God. Every man praying or prophesying, having [his] head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with [her] head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover [his] head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on [her] head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman [is] of the man, even so [is] the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her: for [her] hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

In the Corinthian letters Paul addresses concerns raised by the Corinthian church. Some of his responses are critical and require close attention as they can help to clarify the role of women in the Christian church in general and also today.

In reading 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Wood (2012:34) deduced and argued that 'in the context of Paul, the head covering is prescribed for women and not men 'because men are the image of God and the mirror of His glory. A woman reflects the glory of the man. Women were made out of men and they were created for the sake of men. Head covering for women is therefore a sign of authority of men over women and indicative of their submission'. In the AFM in Zimbabwe the connotation with the

head covering is that it symbolically covers the nakedness of womanhood. The unique functions of prayer and prophecy are carried out by women as well as men, often without any distinct sign in their dress indicating a subordinate status for women. In some of the provinces, however, the head covering is still emphasized and a woman cannot stand before a congregation to perform any role without having covered her head. Even a prophetic message that came through being baptized by the Holy Spirit cannot be heard without a head covering. Such a directive demeans the role of women in church leadership. Wire (1990:130) points out that, though the covering may not be a *physical block*, such as a facial veil that would make the woman's speech-projection difficult, it does constitute a *symbolic block* that limits what others expect of a woman and how the woman herself would value her calling. The question is whether the empowerment through baptism of the Holy Spirit can be celebrated fully and with discernment if the rule of the head covering does have an effect on expectations (see Longwe 2000:16). According to Wire (1990:13), if a woman decides not to conform and goes against what 'custom' consider 'honorable', she is also rejecting the roles associated with head covering in social history. The gifts given to people through the baptism of the Holy Spirit are not hidden in a piece of cloth. Such cloth or the lack thereof cannot inhibit women from standing up and delivering God's message or fulfilling God's assignment.

In Phase Three of the history of the AFM in Zimbabwe more clarity was gained of the functions fulfilled by those baptized by the Holy Spirit and how they operate in the church. Understanding Paul's explanations on the head covering of women and the headship of men within their cultural context can shed light on how to such ideas are to be understood and dealt with today. This will now be discussed in greater depth.

In the past in the AFM in Zimbabwe the head covering was a requirement for any woman who would stand up to preach or to perform a service in the church. In many provinces in the church today this is still practiced, particularly where the leaders (overseers) are 'old school'. In the past women wore hats during the service in the AFM in South Africa (see Nel and Burger 2008:375). In 1975 the Council of AFM in South Africa investigated the biblical evidence of 1 Corinthians 11 and came to the conclusion that women should continue to wear a hat or veil as a symbol to demonstrate that they adhere to the divine order of authority, which declares man as

the head of woman as God is the head of the church (Eph 5:22-25). In time this practice became a symbol of piety and respect. The AFM in Zimbabwe continued with the practice and today the head covering is often a fashionable hat rather than the more sober traditional beret. Where initially the reason for covering their heads was a social custom, it shifted to obedience to a scriptural principle. According to Nel and Burger (2008:376), this practice should not be enforced in such a way that it keeps people from attending church services. When the matter was re-investigated the council determined that wearing a hat should not be a requirement for women to attend services, since this was not part of the core of the gospel.

The matter of the head covering is not only about social custom and general piety. It is closely related to the matter of male headship over women. Therefore these two issues should be discussed in conjunction. The question is what 'headship' meant in the Pauline understanding of the term and how it was applied by the AFM in Zimbabwe.

Though today the head is seen as the seat of the human cognitive capacity and the 'executive' of the body, it was not the case in the ancient times. The head, then, was merely the uppermost part of the body. This elevated position, however, did mean that it was highly visible and made identification easy. In biblical Greek the 'head' is *kephalē* (κεφαλή), the translation for *r'osh* in Hebrew. The Hebrew word was used to indicate a person in a position of authority or command as well as 'priority'. In Paul's world the Greek word 'head' (*kephalē*) would refer to a physical head, a person with authority, or the source of something. Head (*kephalē*) was also used as a synonym for 'ruler' (also *archon*) and for 'source' (*arche*) (Hurley 1981:44). To refer to the man as 'the head' of the woman was to indicate that male and female were connected as parts of a single body and that the male was origin of the female, the 'her beginning was in him'. It also referred to the male's position of authority over her. These meanings are not mutually exclusive. Schreiner (1991:16) initially argued that the term 'head' (*kephalē*) in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 meant 'authority' and not 'source.' However, he later changed his position. He explained "that *kephalē* in some contexts denotes both "authority over" and "source" (see Schreiner 2005:301). The significance of this change is great. For decades, scholars who championed a complementarian view, argued against even the slightest possibility that Paul could

have meant 'source.' To concede this possibility to be a viable option, is a significant change of heart. Schreiner's new position is an insightful attempt to provide an understanding on leadership from an AFM in Zimbabwe perspective. Until recently, there has not been a single position which preferred 'head over' to 'origin of'. This issue should be solved by taking the context of Pauline writings into account.

According to Kroeger (1993:375) the meaning of *kephalē* has attracted much interest because of its use in Ephesians 5:23, 'The husband is the head (*kephalē*) of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church,' and in 1 Corinthians 11:3, 'the *head* of every man is Christ, the *head* of a wife is her husband, and the *head* of Christ is God.' Kroeger (1993:75) argues that *kephalē* primarily meant 'source,' not 'authority over,' and that it had that meaning not only at the time of the New Testament but also in the preceding classical period and in the subsequent patristic period in Greek literature. The term is used to refer to leadership in general and then also with regard to the familial setting. This expands the scope of leadership beyond the church. Many scholars who have investigated the word 'head', have come to the conclusion that it cannot simply be interpreted on face value as male authority over a subservient female. It is a much more complicated cultural matter.

The position, for example, that 'head' as used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 as a *metaphor* is taken by New Testament scholar Anthony Thiselton (2000:811). He calls it a 'live metaphor' for the readers of Paul. However, a metaphor has got several meanings as well as emotional overtones. Therefore a single answer will not suffice or satisfy. Thiselton (2000:821) points out that 'since the actual physical head of a person is what is most prominent or recognizable about a person, the metaphor of "head" would convey "the notion of *prominence*; that is, the most conspicuous or *topmost* manifestation of that for which the term also functions as *synecdoche for the whole*".' The sentiment of Thiselton that the head is the most prominent part of the person does not necessarily mean that it is the 'source' or 'origin' of the person. He rejects both the translation 'source' and the translation 'head' (which, he says, has inevitable connotations of authority in current English). At the same time the head might not be more prominent than the face of a person, thus, making the statement be found wanting.



However, throughout history, it was the heritage from the fourth century Christian world that has, to a great extent influenced the subsequent interpretations of the term 'head' by churches and church leadership (see Kroeger 1993:377). Church fathers of that period have been known for their utterly negative assessment of the value and place a women, also in the church. One such example is Chrysostom who described women as weak and flighty, a fault of nature, evil, as temptresses and as mischievous. However, he agrees that it is God who maintained the order of each sex. God gave men supremacy as leaders in various sectors of society including the church. Women, on the other hand, were assigned the presidency of the household and other so-called inferior matters. According to Chrysostom (see Ranke-Heienemann 1995:130-236):

Among all the savage beasts none is found to be so harmful as a woman. ... The whole of her body is nothing less than phlegm, blood, bile, phlegm and fluid of digested food. ... If you consider what is stored up behind those lovely eyes, the angle of the nose, the mouth and the cheeks you will agree that the well-proportioned body is only a whitened sepulchre.

With such a description of women, there would be no possibility for them to be seen or treated as equal to men. For Chrysostom women would have not been able to be leaders at all. Subsequent inpterpretations based on this kind of thinking would reserve female leadership for spaces that are inferior to those of men (see Wood 2012:45). In his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 Chrysostom stated that women lost their divine image because of the fall. This caused them to be 'below men' in all respects. He contended further, that because Eve sinned, all women were punished with subjection:

The woman (i.e. Eve) taught once, and ruined all. On this account therefore he said, let her not teach. But what is it to other women, that she suffered this? In certainly concerns them; for the sex is weak and fickle, and he is speaking of the sex collectively. For he says not Eve, but 'the woman,' which is the common name of the

whole sex, is not her proper name. Was then the whole sex included in the transgression for her fault? As he said of Adam, ' ... after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come ... ' (see Rom. 5:14), so here the female sex transgressed, and not the male.

The position of Chrysostom was that women should not to play any role of authority but should be subject to men. He used the Bible also to position himself and his beliefs regarding women. He did not include women as part of the *imago Dei* (image of God) because that image is associated with power, authority and dominion which, according to him, women could not possess. In his view, the Bible itself deprives women of authority because they are described as 'weaker vessels' (see 1 Peter 3:7). Chrysostom's views and those of church fathers like him as well as those of the theologians who built on them, have influenced views on women and how they were treated in churches over the ages and still today in many cases.

In the AFM in Zimbabwe part of such a heritage is the whole discussion on and practices with regard to the 'head covering' of women. This issue evokes a variety of interpretations. Some see it literally as that women must cover their heads in places of worship. Any woman who does not present themselves with head covered is viewed as naked in the culture of the AFM in Zimbabwe. This could be an idea taken from Zionism (Maxwell 2006:43) where women would wear long dresses with long sleeves and berets on their heads. The head covering represents that women are under authority and dignity of men in an African context. The men in the AFM in Zimbabwe would not agree to the fact that women have authority or are the sources of power, (yet it could mean source of all humanity) but must submit in dignity to that which the veil signifies.

### **3.8 Women's roles in the AFM in Zimbabwe**

The beginning of the leadership of women in liturgy in the church in general is difficult to trace, but in the AFM in Zimbabwe records go back to the Azusa Street revival. As AFM in Zimbabwe branched off from the AFM of South Africa, it is also necessary to examine the role of women in that church in order to ascertain how women's role in the church's liturgy evolved. The word 'liturgy' derives from the

Greek noun *leitourgia*, which had a background in ancient times of service to the state. In the New Testament it came to mean 'service' in both the social and religious sense or the word (see Corrie 2007:210). The usage of the term 'liturgy' in Philippians 2:30 points to 'service'. Paul mentions the man Epaphroditus (in verse 25) who did a service to Paul in his ministry. Later in history, the term has come to mean the form and order of worship. In the liturgy of the AFM in Zimbabwe women function in various roles as leaders or assistants to the leaders. They lead the large constituency of the *ruwadzano* (women's guild). First it is necessary to explain the roles of women in the various church departments which is where women mostly feature and function in several roles. The following roles are explained in the Church's Constitution:

- **Deaconess**

Recent societal and cultural developments in Zimbabwe have influenced Pentecostal perspectives on the issue of deacon/deaconesses and women's ordination. The rise of the new religious movements in the Pentecostal environment in Zimbabwe has brought a challenge to the AFM in Zimbabwe with regard to its stance on women's roles and pulpit ministry. The office of the deacon is believed to be following the order of the office of Stephen (Acts 6:1-7). The Ordinal explicitly teaches that the office of the deacon is in continuity with St. Stephen's diaconate. In contrast, deaconesses are not considered to be in continuity with Stephen's diaconate. However they have always been regarded as their own distinct order (see Abrams 2012:5). At the request of apostles, the early church selected 'seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty' (Acts 6:3). The seven individuals cited in Acts 6 were chosen to minister to widows and serve tables (see Haenchen 1971:17). The New Testament does refer to women as workers in the churches. A close reading of Romans 16 reveals that of the thirty-seven individuals specifically mentioned, ten are women. At the top of this list is Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2):

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for

the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

Miller (2011:16) points out that there is 'no other page of the Bible that mentions Phoebe, leaving us little to go on.' Tracing more about Phoebe from other available sources would be helpful to understand why Paul specifically recommends her highly and places her on the top of the list of women in the chapter. The name Phoebe is translated as 'bright,' 'radiant,' or 'pure' (see Liddell et.al 1996:79). Her name appears only in the New Testament. According to Romans 16:1-2, she was from Cenchreae near Corinth. Cenchreae was Corinth's port on the eastern coast of the Isthmus of Corinth. Via the Saronic Gulf and the Aegean Sea it gave access to Macedonia, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt (see Miller 2011:16). The only other information about Phoebe is that she fulfilled four functions: patron, deacon, preacher, and apostle.

Deacon is from a Greek word '*diakonos*' which denotes the holder of some office in the local church as in Philippians 1:1. It would seem the office could be held and its tasks, whatever they were, performed by men and women. The 'deaconess' Phoebe of the Cencherean church is recommended to the Romans in the highest terms. This is evidence that Paul approved her as a female leader in the church. 'Deacon' or 'deaconess' can be described as one 'who also holds office', (see Goodacre 2004:9). The term 'office' perhaps suggests that Phoebe had some business of her own to do in Ephesus, either church or secular. Like Prisca (2 Tim 4:19), Phoebe might have championed the founding of the Christian church. Prisca can also be called a 'deacon' given this brief discussion on Phoebe (see Freed 2005:11). Paul relies on women not merely as disciples, companions and contributors to the common good as Jesus did in an unprecedented fashion in that culture, but also as very active and constant helpers in his work (see Westfall 2016:23). The word 'helper' in Romans 16:2 may have been a technical designation. It could refer to the financial assistance that they gave to the church. Probably the early congregations had a number of women who served and were called deaconesses. In 1Timothy 3:8-13 women are probably deacons' wives rather than deaconesses because the female counterparts

of deacons recorded in 1 Timothy 5:3-16 are the widows (see Freed 2005:11). In this regard some widows played the role of deaconesses or were deaconesses.

The deaconess was recognized in the councils of Nicaea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE), but this was discontinued in the Middle Ages (see Wilken 1984:12-13). Deaconesses were revived in modern times, though some churches are against having deaconesses, especially those that apply 1 Timothy 2:11-12 literally for today: 'Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men.' This literal interpretation that is employed to prevent women from working in churches today, is questionable. A church which uses this Scripture passage as a reason for not having deaconesses should logically also bar women from 'speaking in church' as Sunday school teachers, youth counselors, or to function in other responsible offices. In the AFM women teach and speak and represent various departments of the church. Paul makes no distinction between the sexes when he writes to the churches at Rome (Rom 12:1-8) and Corinth (1 Cor 12:1-31) about the gifts of the Spirit, the service that is to be expected, and the oneness of the church as the body of Christ (see Wilken 1984:12; Wire 1990:26). If Paul says 'You are the body of Christ and individually members of it' (1 Cor 12:27), it is inconceivable that he meant to exclude all the women of the church.

In the early church men and women were designated to care for the underprivileged, such as widows and orphans. They held the office of the deacon. Wilken (1984:12-13) puts it as follows: 'Those functions probably included bringing Eucharist to the sick. The women deacons were also to anoint with oil the female candidates for baptism.' There were separate duties for the sexes: males served the males and females the females. One of the female elders in AFM in Zimbabwe find this fitting. She regards preparing communion as work for males. Women's task was to help to give out holy communion to the congregation and to wash the utensils. In the AFM in Zimbabwe deacons and the deaconesses, male elders and female elders mostly perform similar duties. This, however, is not the case everywhere. It depends on the demographic, ethnic and geographical location. In other churches that ordain women in ministry, such as the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army, women participate fully.

If women were to be fully included in the diaconate this would bear visible witness to the gifts of God given to the *whole* Body of Christ. God's gifts are not distributed according to gender (see Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). Ordaining women to the office of the deacon or deaconess in the AFM in Zimbabwe is particularly important if women are to then be ordained to the office of the Overseer and President. This submission is supported by Scriptures such as Acts 6:1-6, Romans 16:1-2, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The word *diakonos* has a variety of meanings, thus the mere use of *diakonos* does not necessarily indicate that Paul had in mind the diaconate. Common definitions of *diakonos* include 'servant, helper, minister, deacon, deaconess' (see Yue 2004:3). This could mean that Phoebe was a hard worker and that her title was fitting a person who was of her nature. Paul did not call her deaconess but deacon, a significant difference in the gender. Martimort (1986:18) points out three examples where he argues the word *diakonos* refers to an 'office.' Because of its parallelism with the word *episkopos* (which means overseer; bishop) in the following verses, *diakonos* should be understood in a hierarchical sense:

Philippians 1:1, 'Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons (*diakonois*).'  
1 Timothy 3:8, 'Deacons (*diakonous*) likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.'  
1 Timothy 3:12, 'Let deacons (*diakonois*) each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.'

The texts offer a challenge on gender where the some texts ascribe the office to be specifically for men. However, where the text does not mention gender at all, it is possible that the office or role could also have been fulfilled by women.

Phoebe was also called *prostatis*, the female form of *prostates*, 'leader'. However, Schreiner (1991:219-220) identifies three reasons why *prostatis* does not necessarily mean that Phoebe was a leader in the church:

Firstly, it is highly improbable that Paul would say that Phoebe held a position of authority over him. He says that about no one except Christ, not even the Jerusalem apostles (Galatians 1:6-7, 11), so confident is he of his high authority as an apostle (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37-38; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:14). Secondly, there seems to be a play on words between the word *prostatis* and the previous verb *paristemi* in 16:2. Paul says to help (*paristemi*) Phoebe because she has been a help (*prostatis*) to many, including to Paul himself. It fits the context better to understand Paul as saying 'help Phoebe because she has been such a help to others and to me.' Thirdly, although the related masculine noun *prostates* can mean 'leader,' the actual feminine noun (*prostatis*) does not take the meaning 'leader' but is defined as 'protectress, patroness, helper.'

Phoebe, then, could probably have been a woman of high social standing and wealthy, who managed to put her status, resources, and time at the services of traveling preachers and Christian leaders whom she supported and helped. Similarly, this could be viewed from an example of the three women recorded in Luke 8:1-3 who helped Jesus from their substance but were not titled as Phoebe was. It can be concluded that whatever kind of ministry Phoebe had within her church, surely it was such that she submitted to the God-given rules for church order communicated elsewhere through Paul and the ministry of women in the contemporary church should follow suit. Deacons and the deaconesses, all members of Christ's body, are meant to be considered equal.

Women are competent adults and should share equally in the responsibilities and activities of church life. A deaconess is no less than a deacon. This calls for the by-laws of the church to describe the place also of the deaconess in the organization of the church, including her authority and responsibility. The church constitution includes the women in these duties as deaconesses to be appointed into the church board, in point 8.1.1. In the constitution there is inconsistency on segregation in lines of gender. Where 'elder' is mentioned, there is no qualification in terms of gender, but when it is in line with deacons and deaconesses it is made plausible (see

Chapter 4 of the constitution). As women accompanied Paul and partook in the salvific message and work of the early church, this should also be the case among the faithful in the body of Christ today. Technically the appointment of seven men for the ministry of 'help' or 'service', as in Acts 6:3, does not disqualify the women in any way.

Besides being a deacon, Paul also calls Phoebe a patron in Romans 16:2:

'. . . that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a *patron* of many and of myself as well'.

The two words, deacon and patron, do not mean the same thing. Paul would have deliberately mentioned them concurrently. Paul would have had a reason for calling Phoebe a 'patron'. Piper and Grudem (2005:101) point out that 'Phoebe is referred to in verse 2 as a *prostatis*. While that is often translated "helper," it can also be translated as "benefactor" or even "leader". It seems that the Apostle is underlining her place in the Church'. The term refers to a leadership role which Phoebe played along with being a deacon. This was perhaps due to her status in society. Paul's designation of Phoebe as *prostatis* indicates that she was a leader placed in authority over others and even over Paul himself: 'for she has been a patron (*prostatis*) of many and of myself as well'. This is the only instance where *prostatis* occurs in New Testament. It must have been selected purposefully.

According to Piper and Grudem (2005:915) the word *prostatis* does occur in extra-biblical Greek writing from this period. Its use in these writings can provide clues to what Paul likely meant when he used the word. Moo (2006:197) points out that when the term appears in extra-biblical literature, *prostatis* typically means 'patron' or 'benefactor'. A patron was one who came to the aid of others, especially foreigners, by providing housing and financial aid and by representing their interest before local authorities. In that respect, Phoebe was probably a woman of high social standing and some wealth, who put her status, resources, and time at the services of traveling Christians who needed help and support. Whereas deacon functioned in the church, patron could function in church and society. Paul refers to Phoebe as both a leader



in the church and in society. In Zimbabwe women find themselves rising to positions of responsibility in society, but often the church is ignoring their potential contribution to top leadership. They are still only appreciated in a supporting capacity.

- **Elders**

In the AFM in Zimbabwe the office of the elder was mainly reserved for the males. Women who performed the duties of elders would do so “under their husband”. Referring to 1 Timothy 2:11–12, Foh (1979:248) concludes that:

1 Timothy 2:12 is intended to eliminate women from the office of elder (that is, women cannot occupy the official teaching-ruling office of the church). It is an unusually specific exegetical conclusion that any passage in the Bible was specifically ‘intended to eliminate women from the office of elder,’ for historically, those who forbid women elders have understood 1 Tim 2:12 as a basis for prohibiting women elders, not the specific prohibition itself.

Foh (1989:81) changed her interpretation of this Scripture a decade later in her word, *Women in ministry: Four views* as follows:

Possibly the writer aims to disqualify women from the office of elder before he defines the requirements of that office [as in 1 Tim 3], and it is debatable whether this passage specifically excludes women from the office of elder or not.

The shifting of interpretation by Foh does not provide a solution. Though the shift in her interpretation is significant, it is also problematic. The matter must be dealt with cautiously. Women, as human beings want to and have the right to serve God equally with men. If there is any biblical ban on women as elders, it is important to know whether it is actual or potential. The theological distance between ‘this is a ban’ and ‘this can be used for a ban’ is vast (Hübner 2015:11). Most leaders in the AFM who are take the complementary approach, would not agree with Foh’s original interpretation because they do not see this verse in Scripture as a ban on women being elders. They rather see it ‘as providing the grounds for such a ban’ (see

Hübner 2015:11). Paul does not specifically ban women from serving God for simply being women.

In post-Pauline literature, 1 Timothy 2:14 refers to Eve's failure as exemplar and as the cause of the nature of women in general that this susceptibility to deception bars them from engaging in public teaching and leadership. However, Eve's failure cannot be used as a reason for barring women from active work on all levels in churches today. It is not viable to consider verse 14 as a statement about the nature of women. The reference could be a means of suggesting the difference between Adam and Eve in the fall. He sinned openly, she was deceived. For Hübner (2015:12), the message could be that there is a need to restore the pre-fall situation.

Moo (2006:190), however, suggests that it may be that the author implied that all women are, like Eve, more susceptible to being deceived than men. This can then be given as the reason why women cannot teach men. However, there is nothing in the Genesis accounts or in Scripture elsewhere to suggest that Eve's deception is representative of women in general. Even if the fall should be brought into direct connection with current life challenges, then the purpose of the cross of Jesus which restored humanity from the lost grace through the fall, would be central. From a theological perspective there is no way in which all of womankind should be punished forever because of what the character of Eve did or did not do in the narrative.

For Benjamin Reaach (2012:52), who is a New Testament scholar, women are unable to teach. He states outright that 'appointing women to the teaching office is prohibited because they are less likely to draw a line on doctrinal non-negotiables, and thus deception and false teaching will more easily enter the church'. Schreiner (2005:210) stereotypes women as 'more relational and nurturing' whereas men are 'more given to rational analysis and objectivity'. Women will therefore be less prone to see the importance of doctrinal formulations, especially when it comes to the issue of identifying heresy and making a stand for the truth.

In the history of the AFM, at the beginnings at Azusa Street, twelve elders were 'selected to examine candidates for licenses as missionaries and evangelists' (Nel and Burger 2008:15-30). At least six of them were women. Gender was not an issue.

One of the women was named Phoebe, just as one of the helpers of Paul (Rom 16). There were many other women associated with the work at Azusa Street. Their faithful labour was essential to the operation of the ministry (see Nel and Burger 2008:30). Today women who are elders are few, but those who are elders participate in all the areas of the work. The church's constitution does not differentiate between men from women in this ministry. It only describes their duties (see 15.3.1 of the Constitution).

- **Sisters' Union Conferences**

The Constitution of the AFM in Zimbabwe states that the women conduct their own meetings in their own space. The Sisters' Union has the spiritual growth of all women as its aim and task. Women comprise the majority of the church's membership. Also when it comes to conversion, the numbers of women who convert are greater. If a family converts, then it is mostly the women who convert first. When the husbands follow the women and also convert, these men very soon become deacons or elders and take up leadership positions. The women in the church are often passed over and their presence ignored while the men climb the ranks.

The Sisters' Union, also called women's fellowship (*ruwadzano* in Shona), was established to also create space for women to do the work of God, since the regular duties of the congregation and positions of leadership went to the men. The women gather periodically and a woman preaches a sermon. This group was formed in 1967 as a counterpart to the male dominated councils where women were not allowed to participate. In terms of women being 'helpers', Biri (2018:79) states that women are taught to help their husbands by being economically productive. These teachings are done when the women hold their Tuesday and Thursday meetings (*Chipiri neChina*) which have become synonymous with women meetings. According to the Reverend Enock Manyika (the immediate successor of Reverend Stephen Mutemererwa as AFM president from 1996 to 2005) in a 2014 interview in Bindura, the older women were reluctant to lead the group because of the biblical injunction that women remain silent in the church. The young women were ready to take up leadership positions. There were some problems with the male pastors. According to Rev. Aspher Madziyire (2014), the successor of Rev. E Manyika and current presiding president, male pastors tend to use the pulpit to preach about their problems and use the Bible

to attack people with whom they have a problem, whereas the women preach the word of God, in his words: 'a straight-forward gospel'. Some began to realise that woman could do the work of ministry as fully fledged pastors.

When the church in Zimbabwe gained independence, the Sisters' Union was reorganized. A new committee was formed with a male person, Pastor Langton Kupara, the then superintendent, as the leader. This move was aimed at monitoring the direction the group would now take. The Sisters' Union (S.U.) was the church's outreach to those who were poor and suffering. Women were not allowed to lead each other without a male overseeing them. However, there were some women who, like Prisca and Chloe in the early church, were persons of substance who to a large extent supported the church. Though they did the work, they could not lead in the main church but in the house churches or homegroups. They could not contribute to the formulation of policy. They could only participate in a serving capacity. It progressed in that way to the extent that the provincial Overseer would be the one to close the women's meeting. They were told that this was 'God's command'. Reverend Stephen Mutemererwa did not regard this exclusion as oppression (interview 2011, Harare). With progression of time the church changed their constitution to allow women to lead, but each other. Mrs. Madziyire (interviewed 2015, Bulawayo) was later appointed according to the constitution since she was the wife of the Overseer and Pastor as to lead the women's wing and see it that the S.U. functions well. The S.U. was to do the church's charity work because the men were 'too busy'. Rev Madziyire (interviewed 2014, Bulawayo) described his fellow males as 'stubborn, selfish and rough. Men would rather stay with their demons than to be put to shame in front of the people at altars calls. Women are more prominent than men,' he concluded.

The 'biblical idea' of women as unclean because of menstruation was refuted by Reverend Mutemererwa (interviewed 2011, Harare). He argued his case for women with an appeal to Jesus' words and actions in the gospels. He also emphasized that Jesus had many women followers and helpers (Luke 8:1-3). Miller et.al. (1970:272, cf Miller 1973:102) points out that there the deaconess in Paul's company also attended to the charity work of the faith community. In the interview with Reverend Mutemererwa in 2011 in Harare, he cited John 4 where the Samaritan woman was

the one to proclaim the message of Jesus to her people who then converted. This became the 'reform formula' of AFM in Zimbabwe in terms of women's role. The president of AFM defended the participation of women as follows: 'If women were not there, then we would not have things going on well. I do not agree with people who despise them.' The injunction that women should be silent in public (1 Tim 2) can be understood as the patriarchal inheritance of ancient times, not to be continued today. Men too should be liberated to see all human beings created by God in God's image as equal before God and equal in their worth and value. Paul and Jesus were accompanied by 'many other women' besides those explicitly mentioned (see Grant 1976:58). Paul's female associates, Priscilla, was on occasion given precedence over her husband Acquilla (Rom16:3). The decision to ordain women was declared by the president as 'led by the Holy Spirit'.

- **Prophetic ministry**

In many instances women are at the forefront of the ministry of prophecy. This is a ministry that contributes to the church's growth since God's will is spoken, God's desires for the church. Some leaders of the church regard this ministry as not of importance to many, but only to a few. Women are taken to be emotionally ready and when the Holy Spirit uses them more in this ministry because of their readiness than men. Some speak the word of wisdom which will be linked to prophecy in line with what will be happening in the life of the person they are talking to. However, in the AFM in Zimbabwe there are not many outstanding women prophets as compared to the men.

- **Midwifery as spiritual practice**

A midwife is a person trained to assist women during childbirth. Many midwives also provide prenatal care for pregnant women, birth education for new mothers and their partners, as well as post-natal care for mothers and newborn babies. In the African context of Zimbabwe in the AFM this service is not confined to medical care and advice. It is also about spiritual care and prayer. In the history of the AFM, being a midwife required faith. Mrs K Murape of Domboshava village, commonly known as 'Gogo Murape', had pregnant women queuing at her home for prayer and also to have their baby delivered since she also was a midwife. This role is culturally

considered as women's domain. Male persons, however, can go to medical school, train in this field and become practitioners. In Zimbabwe, Tawanda Nyamakura (31) is a registered male general nurse and midwife, one of the few males to take up this 'woman's role' in society. There have been no challenges regard this man doing a woman's work as there is when a woman is considered doing a man's work, specifically with regard to church leadership. Since it can be possible for males to function in the 'female environment', it should be possible for women to function and fit in leading spiritual matters since they too are vessels who can be used by the Holy Spirit.

- **House church leadership**

Cell or home prayer groups often contribute more to church growth than Sunday worship services. In home groups women are mostly the leaders. This is because the groups are about relationships and are more intimate than church gatherings. People know one another better and build relationships of trust. This is also often the way in which the husbands of women who have converted, come into contact with the gospel message and also eventually convert. In the history of the AFM, the Pentecostal revival of Azusa Street began small in a cottage with but a few people led by the then 'elder Seymour.' Another church that has grown into one of the largest in the world, that of Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho (1981:23) focuses on home groups. However, often the value of such home groups is underestimated. Led by 'subordinate women' they nevertheless contribute largely to church growth.

- **Music ministry**

There is power in music that touches and transforms many people's lives be it in praise and worship, a choral group or choir. This ministry leads people into the presence of God in a special way. Women often lead the singing during church services. The liturgist often asks for volunteers to lead the singing. Often it is women who take that responsibility. Since this is a space where they can play a role and are not pushed to the side, women tend to make the most of this opportunity to do meaningful ministry.

- **Fundraising**

The Sisters' Union has a constitutional mandate to open bank accounts (see clauses 7.1 and 12.1 of the Constitution). Women raise funds with which church assets are bought. At church construction sites (Pictures A to C below) women cook food for the builders and other male members of the church. Women also assist with the building, loading and pushing wheel barrows and pushing ramming machines. This has led to some women being included in the national fundraising committees. However, when it comes to the top levels of church leadership, they are excluded. In William Joseph Seymour's team of elders were women were at the forefront with the missions operations, especially the financials, and performed very well (see Kwaramba 2004:4). Women have also raised funds to buy a parish car, for example the Waterfalls Assembly Sisters' Union. According to Reverend R. C. Chipere (interviewed 2014, Harare), the women are contributing most to the project of having their auditorium enlarged. However, mostly men are the ones to put themselves in charge of the business enterprises of churches. The policies and practices of the Azusa Street Church of W. J. Seymour should be revisited: there was no racial or gender discrimination because all 'were washed by Jesus' blood'.

*Figure 4 (Chikanga Assembly, Mutare)*



*Figure 5 (Chikanga Assembly, Mutare)*



Below women are sweeping the area, a task that is normally regarded as ‘fit for women’, rather than pushing wheel-barrows.

*Figure 6*



- **Welfare**

The constitution of the Sisters’ Union articulates the purpose of the movement as: caring for the needy (Clause 1.1 of the Constitution). Women assist at the Manhinga Orphanage, support widows and do a variety of charitable works. Male ministries



often lean strongly on the support of their wives. Though women are relegated to a subordinate position in the church, their contribution is crucial to ministry.

- **Christian education**

Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe are involved in Christian education. They teach children during the church services. This fulfils the task articulated in Scripture as: 'Train up the child the way he should go so that when he grows he will not depart from it' (Proverbs 22:6). The first part of the worship service is attended by all, but before the sermon the children are taken out to be taught and to play. In most of the AFM assemblies it is the task of women to take care of the children. Even during camps the women are to ones who teach the children. Children are considered 'women's work'.

- **Cleaning**

Cleaning is also regarded as 'woman's work' as designated to women and girl children by society and the church. They are to keep the sanctuary and church yard clean. They sweep, mop, and polish. Some value this service also as a spiritual task. A cleaner at one of the churches in a suburb in Harare explained it as follows: 'As I wash and clean the church, I take it spiritually as my prayer to God over and above the vocal prayer and that, as I clean God's house, God is cleaning my life too' (Mrs M Mangwende, Interview 2016). However, Mrs Mangwende also recognizes the derogatory aspect of this state of affairs: 'Those who see us sometimes see this as a role of those unemployed or in dire poverty, yet God is seeing my heart more than my state'.

- **Preaching**

Most women, including those who are pastors or elders' wives, find opportunities to preach during their annual *ruwadzano* (women's fellowship) since this is only and specifically for women. The annual conference lasts four days. At such a gathering, the Apostolic Council, constituted by the male overseers, gather at the same venue to hold elections for the church's top presidium office bearers. This event is usually performed on the Saturday during the women's *ruwadzano* meeting. The women will then be the first to know the results. At the women's conference, different women will

preach. They will mostly be overseers' wives or former overseer's wives. Some pastors' wives will also be hand-picked on account of their gifts. The critical question would be whether the Holy Spirit bestows the gift of proclaiming the word only on pastors' wives and not on other women as well.

### **3.9 Summary**

In early times in Zimbabwe women were not only confined to child rearing and household tasks. They participated in agriculture and the economy. Women tended flock and the land. Women did spinning and weaving and made clothing not only for the family but also for trade. Sometime women could even share in the profits. However, women were excluded from playing a role in public affairs and their social life was severely limited. Then and now, society confines women to a certain place and then prescribes what she must do to 'know her place' (Oduyoye 1995:13). The question is whether this social and cultural injustice which in fact amounts to oppression should also be normalised social behaviour among the people of God.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit empowers women also, and not only men, to fulfil their functions in the AFM in Zimbabwe. The phases of the church's development, categorized as 1) classical Pentecostalism, 2) baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, and 3) Spirit baptism with other signs, wonders and miracles that affirm the baptism, saw women also receiving the gifts of the Spirit in equal measure and fulfilling their designated and restricted roles with dedication. The Constitution of the church clarifies what 'acceptable roles for women' are. It is clear in policy and practice that women are in effect barred from offices such as Overseer or President of the church.

Restrictions placed on women go against the evidence of their giftedness, dedication, and abilities as they participate in the many departments of the church's work, and contribute greatly to the stability of the church. In spite of evidence in especially Paul's writings and in the Jesus story that women contributed and were valued in the community of believers, the AFM in Zimbabwe still confines them to subordinate positions which reflect their lower value as human beings and believers.

This can change if the church accepts the challenge of rewriting the Constitution in order to amend some glaring injustices and anomalies. In the wake of the acclaimed heroine, Mrs K Murape, whom the church has widely celebrated, other women were encouraged to yield to the baptism of the Spirit and to function in the church. The space to do so, however, still does not exist. The church in some areas still holds on to practices such as head covering in public meetings, literally following the biblical idea that a woman must carry a symbol of her subordination to men on her head, without considering the cultures (of then and now) and the audiences (of then and now) in their interpretation of the Bible. The interviews with leaders in the AFM showed different sentiments with regard to the changing position of women in the church. Some regard women as unworthy human beings because of their natural biological functions such as menstruation, whereas others regard women as perfectly capable of serving God equally.

Rev S Mutemererwa pioneered the ordination of women in April 1999. This recognition by a former leader of the church paved way for women to consider and accept God's calling into ministry. Whether they are now able to truly function in the church according to their gifts and calling is, however, debatable. Women serve God in many areas where they are not explicitly excluded. In Jesus' life women participated in many ways. The important function of his anointing was performed by a woman (Luke 8:1-3):

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup>And certain *women*, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, <sup>3</sup>And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Women were available to help Jesus in his ministry. Women are active in the church today. On both counts they did and do not receive recognition for their contribution by the male counterparts. Because of a lack of recognition coupled with a measure of androcentricism, chauvinism, misogynist tendencies and patriarchalism in the church, some women have left the AFM to establish their own ministries. Most of

these focus on women's needs. This provides another incentive for the AFM to revisit its policies and practices. It is an anomaly that in the church women occupy a subordinate place, yet those who leave, have flourishing ministries.

The discussion has shown that, in spite of restrictions, women participate in church work and that their contribution is critical. They fulfil both service and (limited) leadership functions. Both of these are central to the understanding of the way in which the AFM in Zimbabwe sees the role and function of Christian believers. The roles and duties performed in the church by all members should not be limited or restricted. Full congregational participation includes worship and prayer during the church service, participating in liturgical music, prophetic ministry, house church leadership, service as deacons and elders and higher levels of leadership in church governance. All of this should be open to all, according to their gifts and abilities.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE AFM IN ZIMBABWE

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on an analysis of the organisational leadership system and hierarchical structures of the AFM in Zimbabwe in order to identify the roles and practices in the structures. The AFM in Zimbabwe identifies leadership positions in their various assemblies as pastor (*mufundisi*), elder (*muvhangeri*), deacon (*muparidzi*) and lay-worker (*mubati*). From these ranks the provincial and national leadership is chosen. The access to and participation of women in these offices and leadership positions will be investigated in order to ascertain the church's attitudes and practices with regard to women. The mechanisms for the election of leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe will be investigated. Leadership positions in the church require qualified people. This chapter analyses the leadership, hierarchy, succession, leadership roles of the AFM in Zimbabwe in order to investigate the gender equity or gender imbalance in the church's leadership. In this and the following chapter the four aspects of the EDNA model will be applied. By means of a focus on the descriptive and pragmatic tasks as described in Osmer's model, the type of leadership the AFM in Zimbabwe will be examined in order to understand the position the church takes regarding women.

Women do not have access to top pastoral leadership positions in the AFM in Zimbabwe even though there are no explicit public policies that regulate their exclusion. There seems to simply be an assumption that women are not fit to take up the presidium offices in the AFM. Patriarchal and male chauvinist discourse contribute to women's invisibility so that they are not taken into consideration when choices are made to elect people for certain positions. The chapter illustrates the effects of this on women first by highlighting the roles they do fulfil and then by exploring the reasons for the discrepancy regarding women in leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe.

## 4.2 Definition of leadership

Leadership is an ancient art as civilizations continue their efforts not only to survive but also to advance (Titus 1950: xi). Early descriptions of leadership have come from practice, from a perspective of hands-on leadership experience. In the process of defining leadership certain challenging questions emerge (see Posner 2002:86). One such question is: how does one explain the upward mobility of one section of the members of an organization, whereas others remain stationary or move upward only for a short period of time? Such a question is equally valid for an organization such as the church. Another question concerns the factors that determine how a stranger who enters into a group, in a short period of time attains a dominant position, whereas another who enters into the organization at the same time, remains a follower in the lower ranks of the church or organization.

For a society to exist and thrive, some form of a leadership system is necessary. Leadership is needed for an organization to achieve its objectives. The AFM in Zimbabwe is both an organization and a community. It has a structure and therefore requires leadership on different levels, from assemblies, to the national and international level. The purpose of the discussion in this chapter is to explore the leadership system of the AFM in Zimbabwe in order to ascertain the measure of the acceptance of or resistance to women in pastoral offices and leadership positions.

In order to come to a useful description of leadership, it is necessary begin with the term 'lead' then look at the term 'leader'. One problem with language is that words tend to carry very different connotations for different people. Hence in this case the word 'lead' will sound strong and domineering to some, but moderate and servant-like to others. It has overtones and undertones. Grudem (2002:37) puts it as follows:

One word carries many different nuances and implications for different contexts and situations. For example, the word 'lead' could refer to what people do when they direct an orchestra, or persuade a friend to go to the zoo, or inspire a group for a cause, or command a military platoon, or make the first suggestion about where to eat, or take the driver's seat when a group gets in the car, or take the

initiative in a group to push the button in an elevator, or choose a door and open it for another to go through, or chair a committee, or sing loud enough to help others, or point a lost motorist to the freeway entrance, or call the plays on a football team, or call people together for prayer.

Therefore, leadership is not only about standing in front of a congregation, but rather to influence people to doing and achieving something. According to Luke 22:26, Jesus said: 'Let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as one who serves'. Leadership is not about demanding obedience from others. It is about moving things forward toward a goal. Anyone, any sex, male or female can contribute to that goal. Leadership is not only a male space. It can also be a female gift. Further, leadership is for the mature. If men are not mature they should not be leaders. If women are mature, there is no reason for them not to be leaders. Mature people in leadership will understand that leadership is about *servicing* those who follow.

According to Ephesians 5:23, 25 'the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church...' and husbands should 'love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her'. This verse can also contribute to clarifying the understanding of Christian headship. The image of head implies that Christ is the provider as well as a leader. Novices and immature men in marriage will destroy the marriage and women they marry. Grudem (2002:38) points out that Jesus was mature when He showed his love for the church by sacrificing for it and only mature men can sacrifice for their wives. This analogy between Christ and the husband loving their wives breaks down if pressed too far, because, unlike Christ, all men sin. Christ never has to apologize to his church but husbands are expected to do this often. Leadership is about taking moral and spiritual responsibility.

No human leader is infallible or is superior to those who follow. Therefore, a good leader will always take into account the ideas of the followers and acknowledge if these ideas are better than the leader's own. Should the AFM in Zimbabwe

leadership incorporate the views of women as valuable it would not be so difficult to also accept women as potential leaders even in the top structures of the church.

A leader should not be oblivious to the best qualities and desires of others. A leader can be surrounded by peers with many extraordinary gifts. Some of these can be women. According to Grudem (2002:39), the aim of leadership is not to demonstrate the superiority of the leader, but to bring out all the strengths of people that will move them forward to the desired goal.

With respect to the term 'leader' Daniel and Gilbert (1995:12) relate the term 'leader' to connotations with 'path' or 'road'. It is about guidance on a journey. It is about looking forward, identifying the way ahead and steering others towards agreed objectives. Leadership, for Daniel and Gilbert (1995:13), is the process of directing and influencing the task related activities of group members. Given these descriptions, there would be no reason to exclude women from the candidature of the personnel required for leadership positions. For Simkins (2005:9), leadership is the process of motivating other people to act in particular ways in order to achieve specific goals. Women who function in families spent their time doing exactly this: directing people to achieve the tasks and goals of the individuals and the family as a whole. Women generally find themselves in some sort of a leadership position in families.

Where there is leadership there will also be followers. The group or organization follow the identified leader, whether appointed or elected. In most churches, the AFM included, leadership skills are required for ministry to be successful. One can be a leader anywhere where there are people. Leadership is also a special form of power which is based on the personal qualities of the leader (Saungweme, 2012:32). For Etzioni (1965:688) leadership is based on the personal qualities of the leader to elicit the follower's voluntary compliance in a broad range of matters. Such compliance can be elicited through the leader's personal characteristics and the voluntary obedience of the followers. An examination of leadership styles and how they function in the AFM in Zimbabwe will lay the foundation for the investigation of women and leadership in the AFM.

The reason for a lack of women in the higher leadership positions in the AFM in Zimbabwe, even without direct constitutional impediments, probably has to do with



culture. Leaders' place of origin and the culture of that place, as well as the culture in which the church operates will both have a determinative effect on leadership unless there is an intentional initiative to 'eliminate all cultural elements that continue to foster traditional attitudes that the sexes might be differently gifted' (Johnson 2006:280). The behaviour of male leaders often remains stagnant and women continue to be victims of societal oppression and hegemony. Leaders who have been elected often cling to their power positions and regard contenders as 'unfit to be a leader'. Traditionally in Zimbabwe women had to follow male lead without question. AFM leadership seems to simply continue with that cultural way of doing things and use the Bible to support their position (Ayanga 2012:90). The Zimbabwe traditional way has been that families do not allow girls to be educated very far, since they will marry and their education will be wasted. The focus was therefore on the male children who also were the ones to carry the family name further. The female children then grow up with a socialized sense of inferiority which severely compromises their ambitions and vision for their future.

### **4.3 Criteria for leaders in the AFM in Zimbabwe**

The leadership of the AFM in Zimbabwe is described in the Constitution of the church. Those who make themselves available for a leadership role should fulfil the requirements and adhere to the regulations. Novices are not eligible for leadership positions since the church focuses on preserving its legacy. Qualifications required are: seniority, the length of time the person has been a church membership, kinship and inheritance (Daneel 1989:253). In the election of leaders for the AFM in Zimbabwe factors that are of particular importance are the involvement of the Holy Spirit, seniority, expertise and experience. These will now be briefly discussed:

- **The involvement of the Holy Spirit**

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this study, the AFM in Zimbabwe submits to the power and influence of the Holy Spirit in their operation and belief systems. The development of this aspect can be traced through in three phases of the church's history. According to a former leader of the church, Rev S Mutemererwa, leaders are

selected after much prayers and 'yielding to the Holy Spirit'. This 'yielding' is done by all church members through praying and seeking the Spirit's guidance. Though leaders are chosen after prayer and yielding to the Holy Spirit, in the end there is a distinctly human factor as well and that is that people make the final decision by casting lots. This electoral process is not be exempt from human error. One of these errors could well be the exclusion of a major section of the church population from the opportunity to be elected, namely women. The end result of the selection is, however, announced as the work of the Holy Spirit.

In an interview with the former president Mutemmerwa (Interview, Harare 2011), he pointed out that in the early years of church-planting in Zimbabwe, leadership yielded to the Holy Spirit with much dedication for the day to day activities of the church. His own experience with the power of the Holy Spirit was narrated in terms of how he would travel in the Chivi district, a rural area in Zimbabwe's Masvingo province, and preach the gospel. In his travels and preaching he experience the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit. He once encountered a male lion on the path he was taking. He spoke to the lion to let him pass and invoked the help of the Holy Spirit. The lion let him pass without a problem. When asked about the position of women and how it came that the first women were ordained during his term as president in 1999, he explained that he had heard from the Holy Spirit to ordain women and he complied. Though he faced much resistance, his insistence that the Holy Spirit was the initiator of the process, silenced the opposition. Pentecostals believe their leaders (Rev S Mutemmerwa, *Interview*, Harare, 2011). Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe are still affected by African cultural norms and taboos which hold that the role of women is second to that of men.

- **Seniority, expertise and experience**

Experience and the length of time that they have served in the church are important criteria when it comes to the election of leaders. This is explained in the Constitution. The Constitution states that an elder 'must be at least thirty years of age, spiritually mature and has served at least three years as a deacon without having been disciplined during that time' (AFM Constitution 4.6.1, p 20). Seniority, experience and expertise expected of top leadership such as an overseer or a president are attained by means of a continuity of leadership service through the ranks of deacon

to elder and beyond. Rev C Chiangwa (Interview, Harare, 2015) explained that one does not necessarily have to be a senior for all leadership offices, but for some offices seniority and expertise are high priorities. Even if a person had the seniority and long-term experience but was fairly passive, the probability of being chosen to lead would not be high. The procedure laid down in the policy is that, after a period of service in the church for a given number of years, a person could be recommended by their pastor for being vetted for a key leadership office. In these recommendations, women are not often mentored or recommended by pastors. They remain invisible while men are groomed and recommended, irrespective of their gifts or qualities.

Women in the assembly perform the roles prescribed to them by the local church board. Most of the roles in the church are voluntary. People wish to serve God in some way. According to E. Gweshe (Interview Harare, 2015) a woman can remain a secretary to the pastor if she is able to write or she can lead the choir if she has musical ability. He emphasises that leadership potential is also considered when electing a leader, since leadership skills are developed over time. If a person is actively showing potential, they could also be chosen for leadership. According to Rev C. Chiangwa (Interview Harare, 2015) moral uprightness is of the utmost importance when electing a person to a leadership position in the church. If a bishop or leader were to commit a transgression, the matter would be investigated and, depending on the findings of the panel, the person would be suspended or disciplined. The discipline could entail the removal of the person from the leadership office in which they were. The marital status and lifestyle of the person would be another pre-requisite for selection to leadership. This is based on the 1 Timothy 3:12, 'let deacons be husband of one wife'. In this letter, the language indicated that only male persons were deacons at the time. In independent churches both age and marriage contribute to the status of a person and the eligibility for the person to become a leader (Powers 1979:53). This is also the case in the AFM in Zimbabwe where mostly married men are chosen as leaders for top offices in the church. The preferred candidates for the top positions are, hitherto, all men.

To qualify for the position of Overseer, a person should have completed ten years of service in the church. The Constitution puts it as follows: 'A provincial Overseer must

have been an ordained pastor of the AFM in Zimbabwe for a minimum of ten years with a proven record' (AFM Constitution 9.3.1 p24). Though this clause is not gender-specific, the attention is automatically focused on male candidates, due to the patriarchal and cultural mind-set that does not consider a female for leadership in key positions. Technically, ordained women (which is now a possibility) with ten years of experience in pastoral ministry in the church, could qualify as a candidate for the position of Overseer. However, in practice the opposite is the case. Women are ignored when it comes to selection for this key provincial position. The patriarchal scissors 'trims their wings' and keeps them from soaring. They are confined to the sphere of local assemblies.

When the position of Overseer is explained further in the constitution, the exclusive male language is conspicuous: 'He must have a Diploma in Theology and qualify according to 1 Timothy ... ' (AFM Constitution 9.3.2 p25). Through this language, gender matters arise. The church obviously expects a male candidate for the position of Overseer. The exclusive male language continues: 'The minimum age must be forty years, retirement age maximum of sixty-five years. He shall serve in the office as long as he is elected' (AFM Constitution 9.3.3 p25). In this clause, the minimum age that is stated would also mean that the candidate for this position would be mature enough to make informed decisions and provide productive advice through the experience. Either sex could be competent and eligible for this. However, then the Constitution adds a sentence that exhibits the gender biased and excludes women.

Inheriting the legacy of a father who had been a leader, is another way for a person to be regarded as an adequate candidate for leadership. This method is common in most African Independent Churches (AICs). Leadership is usually hereditary in that it follows the traditional concept of *wabara wamuka* (you rise through your offspring). Usually this passed on from father to son. Regardless of their constitutional clauses the AFM in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not exempt from such practices. The names that are popular and following this line of thought in the AFM in Zimbabwe are, but not limited to, Madawo, Shumbambiri, Mutemererwa, Murefu, and Kupara. These names carry much respect in the church. Mostly when the father was once a leader, either as provincial overseer or president, their children who become pastors are likely to be

chosen for leadership positions. Again, in this practice women as possible candidates fall by the wayside. This practice favours the male heritage.

#### **4.4 Leadership structure of the AFM in Zimbabwe**

The leadership structure of AFM in Zimbabwe is comprised of the lay workers who are the deacons and elders, pastors, overseers and the president. For the AFM in Zimbabwe, constitutionally, the leadership power is situated mainly in the local board of elders. In this structure, the ordained pastor becomes part of a team of seven members. The pastor does not have the autonomy to decide the affairs of the church alone. The views of the elders and deacons from the assembly leadership are the deciding factor. Yet at national level, in the Apostolic Council, the elders have little decision making power since they are outnumbered by the overseers who are ordained pastors. The leadership structure comprises overseers and only one elder who is the national administrator. All the overseers are ordained ministers. This is further explained as follows:

- **Deaconesses, deacons and elders**

Deaconesses, deacons and elders in the AFM in Zimbabwe cannot be new converts in the church. These are the 'lay workers'. Ordained ministers, on the other hand, are the 'full-time workers' (Constitution Chapter 15, p 14). The duties of the deacons and elders are regulated by the constitution. The full-time employees are made up of probationer pastors, ordained pastors and emeritus ordained pastors. They are certified by the Apostolic Council according to the provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution of the AFM in Zimbabwe states that deacon or elders are elected when the local board of elders 'annually submit names of the candidates to the annual General Council for recommendation. The names shall then be submitted to the Provincial Council for investigation and appointment' (Constitution, 4.1.1 p 19). The names of those who succeed are then forwarded to the provincial secretary for the issuing of credentials.

According the Constitution (15.3.1 p 32), 'the elders may preach and conduct services, baptize believers, lay hands on and pray for the sick, bury the dead,

consecrate children when authorised by the pastor or overseer, administer the Lord's Supper'. The deaconesses are authorised to pray for the sick, as well as assist with the physical and temporal care of members of the church and community. They pray for the sick and conduct other spiritual activities at the pastor's discretion (Constitution 15.1 p 31). On the other hand the deacons in the AFM in Zimbabwe help with administration of the church, as well as with the physical and temporal welfare of the members of the church and community. They may also preach, conduct services and pray for the sick at the discretion of the board of elders and the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Constitution 15.2.1 p 31). In the AFM in Zimbabwe, the lay workers have decisive power since they constitute the majority of the church board. This is why the clause 15.2.1 is added, namely that their guidance does not come from the pastor but from the Holy Spirit. However, when it comes to the leadership of women as deaconesses, they are guided not by the Holy Spirit, but by the pastor.

- **Pastors**

Any person can apply for training at the Bible College. They should, however, be endorsed by the local board of elders from their local church. This provides a measure of control to ensure that a complete stranger or novice in the AFM will not be accepted to the Bible College as a potential pastor in the church. Pastors are considered 'full-time workers' in the AFM in Zimbabwe. The constitution of the AFM in Zimbabwe states that 'the pastor shall be an ex-officio chairperson of the Assembly Board, all committees and all departments in the assembly, (Constitution 15.4, p 32). The pastor, together with the assembly board, manages the affairs of the assembly. The pastor is seen as the shepherd and leader of the assembly.

- **Overseer**

Each province in the AFM in Zimbabwe elects an Overseer during their council meeting. The requirement is equal representation from the assemblies. The Overseer presides over all provincial meetings and business, and advises the President on the activities in their province.

- **President**

According to the constitution of the AFM in Zimbabwe, the election of the President takes place during the workers' council with equal representation from all the provinces (they are called the Electoral College) during the election year (Constitution 13.1.1 p 29). The candidate is selected from the overseers of the provinces. Like the Overseer, he (up till now male only) is still also the pastor of an assembly while he is leading the whole church. According to the Constitution 13.3 p 30, the President has overall supervision over the Overseers, pastors and all departments of the church. The President is the head of the whole church and chairs the Apostolic Council, the church's highest governing board. The position of the president is the highest position in the AFM in Zimbabwe and the president, as a pastor, is a full-time employee of the church.

According to Banks and Ledbetter (2004:42), those in Pentecostal leadership should understand that 'leadership begins with understanding that one is a follower of Jesus and a vessel for the power of his Spirit. God is the chief leader who chooses human leaders.' AFM leadership in Zimbabwe is therefore no different from others who look only to God. The fact that Pentecostal people believe that God baptises people with the Spirit, is an indication to them that leadership is from God. They believe that leadership is 'transportable, adaptable and personal' (see Banks and Ledbetter 2004:47). Leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe is therefore seen as in continuity with biblical leadership. However, the individuals in the church's leadership are often viewed with suspicion, especially for the way in which the gender imbalances are perpetuated in the church's leadership. AFM in Zimbabwe, governed by the Constitution, strictly adheres to certain qualifications and expectations before a person can pass the scrutiny to become a leader in the church. An analysis of the Constitution's list of qualifications is necessary to understand the AFM's requirements for their leadership candidates. The elders and the deacons in the AFM are examined spiritually and physically in order to pass their leadership entrance. The church uses two key Scriptures to accomplish that. These are 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 (Constitution 4.5.1). The candidates therefore, have to meet the following requirements:

- **Baptised in the Holy Spirit (Constitution 4.5.1.1)**

Being baptised in the Holy Spirit is possible for either sex. Hence this provides room for women in leadership positions in the AFM in Zimbabwe. According to Acts 1:4 there were women disciples who were in the upper room for prayer and ‘... along them were women and Mary the mother of Jesus was there ...’ When the Holy Spirit then descended in Acts 2:4, ‘... all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues ...’ As discussed in Chapter Three, women were highly represented in the church with endowed with gifts that followed their calling. In the AFM in Zimbabwe Mrs Murape’s leadership was not by election of votes but by the gift of the Holy Spirit and signs, miracles and wonders that followed her baptism. People flocked to her house to receive the blessing of her gift, also some church leaders. When speaking in tongues was seen as proof that someone was baptised by the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues was, however, not a requirement for leadership.

- **Tithing (Constitution 4.5.1.2)**

Tithing can be done equally by women. No one can be forced to pay the tithe, so whether people do or do not, is not verified with pay slips. The Constitution in this respect is open to women to participate in the leadership of the church as either elders or deaconesses.

- **They may not be divorced or married to a divorcee (Constitution 4.5.1.3)**

The AFM in Zimbabwe is a firm believer in family as a pillar of society, the faith community and that the leader should have the ability to lead well. Leaders should lead by example. The followers will be watching closely how leaders live their lives. Students in Bible College who are married, for example, must provide proof of that by submitting a certified copy of their marriage certificate (Constitution 15.6.1 p 32).

- **They must be legally married. Only civil marriages according to Christian rites shall be recognised (Constitution 4.5.1.4).**

Because marriage and family are of such great importance to the AFM in Zimbabwe the candidates for leadership are to be married and are to uphold their marriage with



respect and in a spirit of unity. Besides the church emphasising the importance of civil marriage, the church also discourages marriage between believers and non-believers. Church marriage officers are given the right to refuse to solemnise such marriages (Constitution 15.28.1 p 35).

- **Persons not completely delivered from tobacco in any form, intoxicating drinks, or any other sinful habit, may not serve on any council or committee in the church (Constitution 4.5.1.5)**

The AFM closely monitors its leadership to ensure the sobriety of the leaders. When it comes to the members of the church, the Constitution lists what is considered to be serious misconduct, but tobacco or intoxicating drinks are not mentioned. The list for members includes: 'adultery, fornication, murder, robbery, fraud and all similar cases' (Constitution 16.3.2 p 37).

As much as the stated requirements do not exclude women from leadership positions in the AFM, the Constitution does set deliberate demarcations regarding gender when it comes to the higher office of Overseer. The Zimbabwe AFM Constitution 9.3.2 and 9.3.3 contains biased language which indicates that the candidate is to be male: '*He* must have a Diploma in Theology ...' and '*... he* shall serve in the office as long as he is elected ...' These statements were written before the church reconsidered their position on the ordination of women. Even after the resolution was passed that women could be ordained as pastors and were, in principle, eligible for all higher church positions, this language was retained.

## **4.5 Voting procedure**

The AFM in Zimbabwe elects leaders through a process of voting. A person who is elected becomes a leader in the particular area in which they work. The mode of election is that candidates are first nominated and then voted for by the voters' college by show of hands. The voters' college initially consisted of all assemblies' church board members. This was later amended to only ten members from the province. It is the task of the overseer and his committee to select the voters' college

members. This voting system is based on Acts 1:23-26 where Judas was replaced by the apostles:

And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Also in this biblical example of casting lots only men were considered to be eligible candidates. In effect the exclusion of women amount to directing God to endorse their choice, rather than all the people being available for God to choose from and make known to them through their prayers. It is clear from how the apostles went about selecting the two men, that the one was their preferred candidate. The candidates were in effect selected by the people and not by God. This electoral system automatically did not give room for women since it started out by providing the candidates for people to choose from. The process was not surrendered wholly to God. Had the patriarchal cultural system not dictated the process, women might even have been in picture.

Though a woman could feel called to expressing her gifts of leadership, she will probably encounter resistance. The voice of women at the senior levels of leadership is not strong. It takes a great deal of courage and a clear sense of calling for women to make it to the table where key organizational decisions are made (see Banks et.al 2004:29). The 'voters' college' of the AFM in Zimbabwe, includes women voters, but the college is 'not allowed' to vote *for* them. Gender bias, not parenting responsibilities or biological reasons, is the main factor that slows down a woman's advancement in the church. However, in herself a woman is equally capable of having the potential to be a leader as a man.

## **4.6 Leadership styles in the AFM in Zimbabwe**

There are a number of leadership styles according to which church leaders operate as they direct and influence the group. Three styles of leadership will be discussed and evaluated for application in the AFM in Zimbabwe. The three leadership styles are: democratic, laissez-faire and autocratic. Each style has its own advantages and disadvantages.

### **4.6.1 Democratic leadership style**

Democratic leadership as explained by Gastil (1994:953) is also known as participative leadership. This leadership style will now be evaluated as it emerges in the AFM in Zimbabwe. In this particular church the members participate in the decision making process. Some leaders in the AFM in Zimbabwe adopt this leadership style. It can contribute to higher productivity and better contributions from group members, as well as improved group morale because members are involved and encouraged to share their ideas and opinions, even though the leader or pastors retains the final say over decisions. Though this is the preferred style in the AFM in Zimbabwe, there is a difference between the role of the board of the elders and the pastor whose role is that of an ex-officio chairperson of the assembly board. The board of elders govern the events of the church whereas the pastor has the power to engage with the people. Members generally prefer to participate rather than just being observers. This style of leadership can be adopted by any leader regardless of gender. When the congregation is actively involved, creativity is encouraged and rewarded.

Many men still do not accept a woman 'above' them. Also in the AFM in Zimbabwe women have not yet found it easy to break new ground in the church's top leadership. However, there are men who are in favour of women in ministry. To deny women the privilege of service in the church will impoverish the church and distort the gospel.

A democratic leadership style would include women's voices, since they are the majority. Since the congregation is encouraged to share their thoughts, democratic leadership can lead to better ideas and more creative solutions. Some member of

the church are intellectually capable and can advise the leadership well. However, the AFM in Zimbabwe is not consistent in a democratic leadership style. The local board still is dominant. Democratic leadership could stimulate higher productivity and contribute to developing the assembly at large. However, where roles are unclear or time is pressing, democratic leadership can lead to a failure of communication and uncompleted assignments or projects. This can disrupt the flow of the assembly. In some cases, group members may not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to make quality contributions to decision-making process.

A democratic leadership style works best where the members of the church are educated and knowledgeable. In the case of the AFM in Zimbabwe, cultural norms and values play a role in the way in which leaders see their role and execute their duties. The position of the AFM leaders regarding female leadership in the top positions is based more on African culture than on a biblical understanding. It is easy to find biblical texts that support patriarchal structures and leadership. Therefore, the challenge for the AFM in Zimbabwe with regard to women in leadership roles would be to focus on the local culture. The AFM in Zimbabwe is purportedly democratic, but where gender is concerned democracy is overshadowed by culture. Hence, women in the AFM in Zimbabwe are fighting a cultural war for their freedom from male dominance that has held them prisoner for so long.

#### **4.6.2 Laissez-faire leadership style**

This style of leadership is also known as delegative leadership. It is a style of leadership in which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions. According to Saungweme (2012:34) this is the leadership style that is generally leading to lowest productivity among group members. This style as it functions in the AFM in Zimbabwe will now be evaluated.

The laissez-faire leadership style has very little guidance from leaders and provides complete freedom for the followers to make their decisions. The leaders only provide the tools and resources that are needed for the followers to proceed. In this style of leadership, it is expected of the members to solve problems on their own. On the one hand, this style of leadership can be effective in situations where group members are highly skilled, motivated and capable of working on their own. The laissez-faire style

is a hands-off approach. Leaders remain open and available to group members for consultation and feedback. This style of leadership is not ideal in cases where group members lack knowledge or expertise for completing their tasks and coming to decisions. Some people are not good at setting their own deadlines, managing their own projects and solving problems on their own. Saungweme (2012:35) emphasizes that in such situations, projects can go off track and deadlines can be missed when team members do not receive sufficient guidance or feedback from leaders.

The main characteristic of laissez-faire leadership is that the leader gives room for followers to contribute and make decisions through delegation. This style will not work in a congregational structure such as the AFM in Zimbabwe. The leadership in the assemblies is dominated by men. Less than 5% of church board members are women. If the AFM in Zimbabwe were to transform and accept women into top leadership positions, the leaders on grassroots church boards should also include a fair percentage of women as deacons and elders.

#### **4.6.3 Autocratic leadership style**

The autocratic leadership style is also known as authoritarian leadership. It is a leadership style characterised by individual control over all decisions and little input is from group members. Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely invite or accept advice from followers. Autocratic leadership involves absolute, authoritarian control over a group. This leaves the group with little or no input regarding matters that may affect them in the community or church. In this style of leadership, leaders make decisions by themselves. However, to function well, executing the decisions may need the engagement of the congregation. Such leaders dictate the work methods and processes and members are rarely trusted with decisions or important tasks. This style can also be found in AFM in Zimbabwe from time to time. Though this is not the official choice, those with a political agenda tend to force their way by using this style.

The decisions that are needed are made quickly and without consulting the group. The leader may select a few members to work on implementing the leader's political

rather than spiritual agenda. While this style can be beneficial at times, there are also many instances where this style of leadership can be problematic. People who abuse an autocratic style of leadership are often viewed as dictatorial, bossy and controlling which can lead to resentment among group. Because autocratic leaders make decisions without consulting the group, people in the group often dislike that they are unable to contribute ideas. Autocratic leadership leads to a lack of creative solutions to problems, which can ultimately impair the performance of the group. While autocratic leadership does have its pitfalls, leaders can learn to use elements of this style of leadership wisely. For example, the AFM in Zimbabwe can use this style effectively in situations where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group or has access to information that other members of the group do not.

The leaders in the AFM in Zimbabwe have applied autocratic leadership in different ways. Some leaders ask for the input of followers but do not do anything constructive with their contribution. Instead, they often use the information to engage in church politics. In the process of gathering information from the followers, leaders who are suspicious and who do not have confidence in their followers regard the feedback intended to contribute to their growth, as an effort to get rid of them. This has been the basis of the politics that has hit the AFM in Zimbabwe. In such a scenario, women are seen as the 'weaker vessels' while men battle one another for power. In this there is not much evidence of the core value of the church, which is spirituality. Many leaders demand recognition for themselves rather than give themselves in service to the people and God.

Leadership requires servanthood. According to Matthew 20:27, Jesus says: ' ... and whosoever will be chief (principal, leader) among you, let him be your servant ... ' According to Jesus, servanthood is paramount to being a leader. When Paul speaks about 'deacon' as servant in Romans 16:1 and Philippians 1:1, both men and women qualify. The aspect and demand for integrity required for the church is embodied in Jesus who is ultimately the role model and head of the church (Hebr 12:2-3).

A leader is one who is able to adjust to the changes in the environment, internally or externally. The AFM in Zimbabwe adheres to both the Presbyterian and episcopal governance systems. The former is where the congregation has authority over what transpires in the assembly latter two are where the bishop is in charge and the.

## 4.7 Leadership succession in the AFM in Zimbabwe

Leadership succession is ‘the change of a leader as a result of among other things, promotion, death, sickness’ (Saungweme 2012:37). The AFM in Zimbabwe has a ‘call system’ for succession when a pastor moves from one congregation to another or dies. According to the Constitution (15.15-15.25 pp 34-35), when a local board of elders desire that a pastor move to their assembly and be their chairperson and shepherd, they request the Provincial Committee in writing to call the pastor on their behalf. This process also involves the Apostolic Council, the church’s highest governing board, to recommend the intention of the move to the local church board through the Provincial Committee. As it is the prerogative of the local church board to call any pastor they prefer, including women who are mostly called by church boards that are gender sensitive and non-patriarchal by nature. Letters are sent by the Provincial Committee to the pastor involved who has their rights to refuse the call. The pastor may only accept the call after the Provincial Committee informs him or her through its secretary general that the call is in order. However, this system can be abused for political reasons. It then becomes a politically motivated succession system. Should the pastor who is called, respond positively to the call, he or she replies to the assembly board through the Provincial Committee. Usually only a pastor who has worked at an assembly for two years would be eligible for transfer or to accept a call to another assembly. Succession or change of leadership has its advantages and disadvantages. This is the case in the AFM in Zimbabwe as in any other organisation (see Saungweme 2012:37).

Succession *disrupts* an organisation’s performance which can lead to a decline in productivity. The pastor who is called may not have finished the work plan at the previous assembly. This would disrupt the workflow in the assembly. This challenge escalates on higher levels of leadership such as the provincial or national level. An example of this is when one Overseer took an initiative to build a conference centre at the church’s Bible College. This project was disrupted when the province was divided and the conference centre became part of the new province who had a different leader. The project was not completed.

Succession *improves* organisational progress when a new leader brings new and fresh ideas that change the present state of affairs for the better. Overstaying one's welcome at a specific place can lead to complacency which can affect the progress of the church affairs. If, for instance many proposed projects were started but not completed due to the reluctance of the leader, but a new person comes with fresh ideas and the zeal to achieve the goals, this can shift the progress of the assembly. If a president of the church takes on a second term of office but without bringing about any development or taking the church to a next level that is in tandem with the modern technological world, this can caused the church to become stagnant.

There is no causal relationship between succession and organisational performance. The church has to identify the relationship between its organisational need and the performance of leaders (see Clegg et.al 2005:88). In its selection of individuals for the church's leadership it is not wise to exclude more than half of the talent by looking only at male leaders as possible candidates. Rather the performance of individuals who can also be females, should be appraised realistically. If this relationship is not assessed accurately, it can affect the church's growth negatively on the one hand and perpetuate gender bias on the other hand.

#### **4.8 Summary**

The AFM in Zimbabwe has in effect excluded women from its leadership structures, among others by using gender exclusive language in its constitution. However, since the ordination of women to pastoral offices, the old constitutional language has been gradually overtaken the future. Now women pastors are present where previously only men were, for example in the leadership of the assembly as the local leaders and chairpersons. The leadership of the AFM centres on the local board of elders as the governing local church board, the Provincial committee as the next level and the highest level of leadership which is the governing board, the Apostolic Council. The way in which episcopal and presbyterian leadership are intermingled, together with the three leadership styles discussed, may sound paradoxical. Initially, it is the local church board of elders that has power in the assembly, whereas the pastor is only the chairperson. The elders can engage the congregation and come to an



unfavourable decision regarding the pastor. In this way the pastor can be affected by the decisions of the board. However, the tables are turned on the higher level of the Provincial board, where the power lies with the Overseer who can only be a pastor, not an elder. The Overseer is elected through the voting system. This escalates to the national leadership level where the President is chosen from the pool of the provincial overseers who are pastors of assemblies and leaders of the provinces. These constitute the Apostolic Council, the church's highest governing board, where all are pastors except for the one elder who is the Administrator.

The church uses a succession system of the calling of pastors to assemblies as desired by the local church boards. In these local church boards deacons and elders could be women, who are then involved in the calling of the pastor. This gives women a measure of power. In the calling system female pastors are sometimes included. However on higher levels of power and position women do not feature. There is not explicit impediment to their rising to positions of higher leadership, but the church' gender biased is clear in the exclusive male language of the constitution. The patriarchal culture ensures that males remain dominant in the church's highest offices. This has been the case since the inception of the church in Zimbabwe around 1915. This was also the case when black male leadership took over, with Langton Kupara as the first Superintendent around 1930. This is still the case today. The end of the male dominance in the church's top leadership could be imminent, especially if women who have the advantage of numbers, make that count and if men become willing to see the injustice that they are perpetuating and are willing to rectify the imbalance. But until then, the leadership of the church will remain predominantly masculine and chauvinistic.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY IN THE AFM IN ZIMBABWE**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the emphasis is on biblical texts about women from both the Old and New Testament that are relevant to the investigation. Hermeneutical tools such as source, form and redaction criticism will be employed. Some developments in philosophical and theological thought on women throughout history will also be examined briefly, among others the theological thought of some church fathers that shaped how churches often still think today. Against this backdrop the discourse on women in the AFM in Zimbabwe especially with regard to leadership and the role of women in the church will be revisited in order to come to an understanding of the foundations of the church's position on women today. This church has ordained women pastors since 1999 but the numbers of women they ordain has decreased over time. Therefore, an exploration of the AFM in Zimbabwe church leaders' views on women will provide insight into the current standing and position regarding women in church leadership. . With regard to Osmer's normative task, the church's position on women will be investigated from a scriptural perspective.

#### **5.2 Historical influences on religious discourse on women**

##### **5.1.1 Introduction**

Philosophical and theological thought over the ages have influenced the way in which societies and faith communities have viewed and treated women. Biblical narratives reflect the cultures of their time, also with regard to women. The Greco-Roman culture, for instance, was the milieu in which the writings of the New Testament originated. Later the ideas of the church fathers contributed much to shaping Christian theology, including the understanding of women, their value, place

and role. The writings of the church fathers such as the Greek and Latin fathers, reflect the ideas emanating from the periods in which they lived. This cultural situatedness not only affected ideas about women. These ideas formed the basis of practice, namely the way in which women were treated. Women's dignity, spaces, relations and livelihood were and are directly and indirectly affected by these philosophical and theological ideas about them. Their place and contribution in the societies in which they live and the churches in which they worship, are determined by the ideas that form social and religious discourse on women. This heritage will be discussed briefly and the its impact on the AFM in Zimbabwe will be investigated.

The writings of the New Testament and the church fathers were influence by the thought of philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Some Scriptural passages which are central to the AFM in Zimbabwe's understanding of women, leadership and the offices, such as 1 Corinthians 14:33-35, Ephesians 5:22-23 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 will be investigated as a case in point. These Scriptures were interpreted by means of different techniques, such as *literal* or *allegorical* interpretation. The interpretations of the male theologians in history had a profound impact on the practical everyday lives of women. Lerner (1993:142) elaborates on this as follows: '*Literally*, the scriptures posted out the innate inferiority of women and *allegorically*, they referred to the human mind whereby the higher intellect belongs to men and the lower intellect to women' (my emphasis). Interpretations of the church fathers that severely affected women over the ages were, for instance, their ideas on Eve. Women in general were connected with Eve in three ways (see Sawyer 1996:149-152):

- **Woman as the *second sex***

Genesis 2 where Eve is said to have been created after Adam is cited in support of the view of women as inferior or 'second'. Genesis 2:18 became the basis for maintaining a sexual hierarchy in the church. Eve 'deserved' this secondary position for two reasons: because she was created after Adam and, because she was disobedient, which excluded her from representing the image of God (see Sawyer 1996:149). The Woman is also blamed for introducing sin into the world and 1 Timothy 2:14 states that they can only be saved through childbearing. Pauline literature was used to define the position of women in the family. On this there is no unanimity since the epistles testify to difference views on women. In some there is

mention of the inclusion and active participation of women in the church. Galatians 3:28 attests to women's value and equality before God. The church should be a model of social equity as the Bible commands; 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28 NKJV). An observation of the AFM Constitution revealed that the women's wing called 'Ladies Department' was regulated through instructions of the 'Ladies Department' of the AFM in Zimbabwe and not a Constitution like the Young People's Union (YPU) and the Children's Ministry Departments (CMD). The President is ex-officio chairman of the Young People's Union (YPU), the Children Ministry and all other AFM Departments at national level. It is only the 'Ladies Department' which was chaired by the President's wife. This totally alienates activities of the women from the main church administrative line. Women are also excluded from participating in the control, administration, leadership and succession of church leadership somewhat making them second-class believers. Other passages are less positive about women's participation in the church, such as 1 Corinthians 14:33-35.

- **Woman as either Eve or Mary**

The second idea of the church fathers' theology that greatly influenced the way in which the church thought and often still thinks about and treats women is that Christianity produces two kinds of women: the Eve type or the Mary type. Irenaeus saw both similarities and contrasts between Eve and Mary, the mother of Jesus (Sawyer 1996:156):

Eve, having become disobedient, was made the cause of death both for herself and for all human race. Thus also Mary had a husband selected for her and nonetheless was a virgin, yet by her obedience she was made the cause of salvation both for herself and for all the human race. For this reason the law calls a woman engaged to a man his wife, while conceding that she is still a virgin. This indicates a link that goes from Mary back to Eve ... Moreover, the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosened through the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve bound through unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith.

The impact of this kind of theology is that women must forever strive to prove that they differ from Eve and are more like Mary. Since no adult woman of flesh and blood in the real world can miraculously turn into an obedient virgin, this is an ambition that would doom women to failure from the outset. Such failure holds them forever the 'second place' position. Men, on the other hand, only have to be the flesh and blood male human beings that they were created to be and also be believers, not only to be acceptable, but to find themselves, with no effort on their part, in the 'first' and 'highest' positions.

### **5.1.2 Philosophical origins of the discourse on women**

Plato's Academy from the 4th century BC is the first centre of learning to have had female students (see Chroust 1967:25). Though some extraordinary women were mentioned in his work, *The Republic*, for example those who served as guardians, Plato's views on 'ordinary women' as can be seen in *Timaeus* and *Laws* tend to be rather misogynistic (see Rosser 2008:4). In these writings he describes women as 'womanish', with 'obsessive appetites' and 'ungovernable emotions. If in this early period women are already positioned in this way, and the influence of such great minds and thinkers as Plato permeated not only the world of his day, but persisted for many centuries thereafter, then the redemption of women requires much effort and great support. Women have been typecast as people with a diminished intellect.

In Plato's anthropology his understanding of humanity was hierarchical. The master was above the slave, the man above the woman and people above animals (see Trainor 2001:42). In practical life that meant that slaves were dominated and often mistreated by their masters and similarly women by men. According to Strong (2000:65) the word 'dominion' as used in Genesis 1:28 means 'to tread down', that is, to subjugate. It also means to prevail against or to reign over. Pauline theology in Ephesians 5:22 portrays a similar ethos, namely to obey, to be obedient, to put under, subdue unto, be/make subject to, be/put in subjection to/under, submit oneself to (Strong 2000:84). If this is to be interpreted literally for today as is some churches do, then women are still seen as being 'under men', subjugated in a similar way as slaves to their master. However, in a contrary way, Plato was in some ways also seen to be in support of women (see Olugbade 1989:512). Though Plato thought that women should be dominated by men because they are naturally weak,

he did seem to see a role for educated woman in the politics and philosophy of his time (see McGrath 1997:141-143). In Plato's paternalistic society complete equality among the sexes would have been unthinkable. His idea of women as 'weak' was carried forward for many centuries.

Aristotle was a student of Plato. His work attests to rather sexist and misogynist views of women (see Morsink 1979:85-88; Freeland 1994:145-146). He disagreed with his mentor in most things but agreed on the hierarchical order of things in the world, including nature which was ranked low by him and reason which was ranked high. Because men are associated with reason and women with nature, it was obvious to him that men were dominant and superior. Only male persons were born free. For Aristotle the hierarchy of things is as follows:

- the supreme principle;
- spiritual beings;
- man;
- woman;
- nature.

This 'natural order' should be maintained if there is to be peace in society. Like many of his contemporaries, Aristotle was against women having any role in the society other than child-bearing. He put it as follows (see Ruether 1985:65):

Women's coldness transformed male embryos into females, thereby thwarting their development into pure human type. Women were essentially misbegotten males, cursed by nature with lamentable physical and emotional deficiencies and useful only for production.

Menstruation 'was a result of women's bodies being soft and porous and therefore their bodies' need to drain off the excessive blood causing their bodies to become painful and overheated (see Oluwafemi 2001:86). Men's bodies did not suffer this condition (Dean-Jones 2003:201). Such arguments seem ludicrous today since some bodies (male or female) are stronger or weaker than others. To stereotype a sex in this way goes against all medical scientific evidence and to use it to oppress

others, goes directly against the gospel message of love and humanistic principles of human dignity and the equality of all people. Scientifically and biologically it is common knowledge today how the sex of a baby comes to pass. However, in spite of the scientific knowledge available today, the myths on which the subjugation of women are based, tend to persist tenaciously. This is still given as a 'reason' for refusing to accord women an equal position in society and equal value as human beings.

Though the reasoning has changed somewhat modern times, the underlying ideas about women and their value in society are strongly reminiscent of the ideas of the ancient philosophers. During the Enlightenment era philosophers such as Hegel, Kant and Rousseau still echo the basic sentiments of the ancient philosophers. German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Frederick Hegel, regarded women as incapable of acquiring an education, knowledge and skills (see Luther 2009:156). Stearns (1978:45) explains it as follows: 'Hegel argues that women are not meant for activities which demand a universal faculty such as the sciences, philosophy and certain forms of artistic production'. For Hegel, the difference between a man and a woman is similar to that of a plant and animal. Women are created in certain ways and as such, they are more emotional than rational (Stearns 1978:47).

According to another influential German philosopher, Emmanuel Kant, women are not suitable for the public sphere. Kant excludes women from active citizenship. He argues that women naturally do not have any civil personality (Dorrien 2012:16). This in effect strips women of civil rights. They just 'occupy space' in society and cannot contribute anything substantial. Religious leadership is a 'civil position'. If women occupy this position they will be leading people who are the 'raw material' of civil society. Kant's gender ideology was mirrored in his racial theory where he argued that race can be used as a class distinction. He projected onto 'inferior' races such as Africans and American Indians the same deficient 'unchanging and unchangeable inferior moral quality' as he projected onto women. This illustrates how the various forms of discrimination tie in with one another and that the underlying dynamic is the same. Certain groups of people regard themselves as superior and declare others to be inferior, be it because of their race, class or gender. The superior race, class or gender then has all the privileges and the second class citizens are there to serve

those who are superior. Women were mostly regarded as second-class citizens during the first century in both the Roman world and in the context of Judaism. This has been well documented. Yet, according to Hurley 1981:36), God never authorized or approved behaviour that depersonalised women. Not the male leaders of the AFM, nor any other Christian male leaders have any real basis for their side-lining or depersonalising women and undermining their role in the church.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Genevan philosopher, writer and composer, influenced the French Revolution and the development of modern political, sociological and educational thought. According to Rousseau, 'women are silly and frivolous creatures, born to be subordinate to men' (Clifford 2008:192).

The marginalization of women has been explained through the ages with the following reasons: *biology* – bodily functions such as menstruation and child birth cause women to be inferior to men; *nature* – women are naturally weak and emotional, lack the higher rational capacity and are therefore inferior to men. From ancient Greek, Latin, and Roman as well as modern European origins, these ideologies and influences have had a great impact on Christian thought and theologies over the ages and eventually also on African churches and their leaders. The current leadership of the AFM has, for instance, taken a similar position using much the same reasons. This suggests that the marginalization of women has not changed all that much, but exhibits a consistent feature over time, cultures, religious spaces, contexts and generations. This has a bearing too on the prevailing ideas in 21<sup>st</sup> century Pentecostalism, including the AFM in Zimbabwe.

However, though the philosophical and theological heritage regarding women can still be detected in the AFM in Zimbabwe today, there are also those who opt for another way. Some shifts have occurred and are still occurring in society and in some churches. There is a growing willingness in some circles to see and acknowledge the injustice of stereotyping and oppressing women and to make space for them to take their rightful place as gifted human beings in this world. This can be seen in Zimbabwe where female leadership in politics, once a taboo in African culture, is now increasingly becoming a reality. Similarly, the male leadership of the AFM in Zimbabwe can become willing to adopt a different stance regarding women's



value as human beings in general, and women's ability to lead if so gifted, in particular.

Cultural value systems tend to create and perpetuate conflict and tension among people and in individual themselves. Cultural practices also tend to interfere with succession in the church. The leadership of the AFM in Zimbabwe has, for example, been affected by totemism. Those who share the same totem with the the leader, receive all kinds of benefits. Since the leadership mainly patriarchal, the pastor with power often places leaders in church boards according to their affiliation to his totem. Some men attain leadership positions on account of their marital relations with the leaders of the church. If a man marries the relative of the leader his position becomes more favorable than that of others. Those who have benefited from a specific leader will then also support him when their support is required.

Not only the heritage from philosophy and theology over the ages, but also the heritage of African cultures have worked against women taking their rightful place as human beings and adults who can contribute fully to society and the church. As the philosophers did not deem it possible for women to be educated, so in the Shona tradition in Zimbabwe it was not seen as of any value to educate girl children, since they will be married and can then make no contribution other than in the home. Some of these girls grew up to become the wives of the men in leadership positions in the AFM in Zimbabwe. This mindset could possibly contribute to these men holding on to their patriarchal tradition regarding women which, in turn, causes them to not see the possibility of electing capable and educated women to top leadership positions in the church. In this way they are perpetuating the discrimination against women and girl children even in ministry.

## **5.2 The ordination of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe**

Women and men in the AFM in Zimbabwe have been actively campaigning with the slogan: 'More women in top positions in the AFM in Zimbabwe!' This has been put forward by those who advocate for gender justice and equality in the church. There still is a significant gap between the *philosophy* that women have the political and

legal right to be equally represented in all areas of life and work, and the *reality* that women only rarely have access to positions of power or top leadership positions. This chapter highlights the situation of women in senior positions of power in the AFM in Zimbabwe. In this respect the AFM in Zimbabwe differs from the AFM in South Africa where women are already to be found in the higher ranks of church leadership. This analysis therefore has a specific cultural context.

Going back to the founding of the AFM, in the earliest history of the church women were helpers in the ministry just as there were women in Jesus' ministry (Luke 8:1-3). Their ministry was based on faith and was not determined by position or gender. A number of women were associated with the work of William Joseph Seymour. One such a woman was Lucy Farrow who attended Parham's Bible College with Seymour. She performed many miracles which included the laying on of hands. People were baptized by the Holy Spirit in a mighty way. She later came to Africa with the Gospel where she spent the rest of her life in ministry. William Seymour himself was a man who followed in the footsteps of a woman, Florence Louise Crawford. This illustrates the leading role of women in the Pentecostal ministry that started in Azusa Street (see Borlase 2006:253-256). The church then had no permanent leaders. Leaders rotated as the Spirit raised people to the position of Superintendent, which is equal to the office of President in the AFM in Zimbabwe. Such rotational leadership through election was regarded to be in keeping with Acts 1:26. The early leaders did not put anything in writing with regard to women in ordained ministry. The reason was perhaps that the focus was on faith and the guidance of the Holy Spirit rather than anything else. Faith mattered most for progress of the work.

What sparked the issue of the ordination of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe was when the daughter of a former minister of the church, Diaga, attended the conference at Rufaro, Chatsworth in 1996. She was an ordained pastor from South Africa. The then president, the Reverend S. Mutemererwa posed the question: what was to stop the ordination of women in ministry if the evidence that it was possible was present right there in the council (see Kwaramba 2004:67). Though there was not biblical reason not to ordain women in the church, traditionally it had never happened. The Constitution of the AFM in Zimbabwe does not specify the gender of

the person who completed the Bible College training and was eligible to be ordained. The Constitution also does not specify the gender of a person who is eligible to be an elder. Since the attendance of the ordained South African pastor at the council, there has been no concerted effort in the church in Zimbabwe to create a platform or forum to address the negative sentiments and promote a wide acceptance of women's ordination. The result is that the very same issue was raised again in the present Apostolic Council with its new members, none of whom were present at the previous meeting.

According to Reverend R.C. Chipere (Interview 2014, Harare), the ordination of women pastors was considered 'a trial', which shows that the issue has not been fully resolved in the AFM in Zimbabwe unlike the AFM in South Africa. If they are still on probation, the question would be for how long this would be necessary. In meantime the ordinations of women is taking place at a slow rate. The attendance of Diaga's daughter (ordained pastor in South Africa) at the AFM's highest level meeting in Rufaro, could have had a positive impact on the local leadership. Since the AFM in Zimbabwe was born from the AFM of South Africa (see Murefu 2015:6), the AFM in Zimbabwe would have simply followed the lead of the mother church in South Africa with regard to the ordination of women. However, in Zimbabwe some women who had already graduated in 1996 had to wait until 1999 to be ordained.

According to the leader, Mbuya Mutemererwa, 'men are afraid of women and women are afraid to be women. Great male preachers often will not allow women to preach, but dismiss them to the nursery or prayer room'. Men can seemingly feel threatened if these women have a powerful Word. What follows now is an overview of the trends of the biblical discussions on the status of women in ministry as argued by the long serving leaders within the AFM in Zimbabwe.

### **5.3 AFM interpretations of biblical perspectives on women**

Biblical passages that are used by male church leaders to enlighten the issue of the possibility of women in ministry, regardless of the particular Christian tradition, are mainly 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy, though the whole Bible should be included in

the discussion. Caution is needed when the exegesis of these passages is done and the interpreter should be cognizant of their historical, social and cultural context.

Women feature throughout the Bible, though not nearly as much as male characters. They also often remain nameless, as was the custom in those cultures. The Old Testament provides a specific perspective on women which was carried over to New Testament times and cultures. Jesus was the one to have brought a different teaching regarding women into play. He accepted women unconditionally wherever he went. The AFM in Zimbabwe places much emphasis on the creation narratives.

### **5.3.1 Old Testament perspectives**

The story of the creation of human beings as male and female (Gen 1:26-28) indicates that man and woman were created together as *imago Dei* (image of God). Dominion over creation was given to both. Texts such as Exodus 38:8 and 1 Samuel 2:2-10, indicate that women were present in the worship and worship spaces of Israel (see Lamb 2011:48). Special mention is made of Miriam (Ex 15:20, 21) and Huldah, the prophetess (2 Kg 22:14-20), which is a significant cultic role. Deborah was not only a prophetess but also a judge of Israel (Judg 4-5) and a leader in a time of severe conflict (see Kwaramba 2004:22-23). A judge who led Israel would have been anointed as a way of 'ordaining' them to the leadership role (see also Jehu's anointing in 2 Kg 9:5-14; Saul's anointing in 1 Sam 10; Eliezer anointed to have charge over the ark in 1 Sam 7:1; David's anointing in 1 Sam 17). Though this was a trying time Deborah prevailed. Though women in leadership were scarce in ancient Israel, the fact that there were female leaders in that culture and that their presence and role were recorded in history, is remarkable.

With regard to Deborah and her leadership role in Israel, Schreiner (1991:113) initially states that 'Deborah did not prophesy in public' and 'did not exercise her ministry in a public forum as male prophets did.' But in *Two views on women in ministry* (2005:302), he revisits this interpretation and points out that 'previously I argued that women's gift of prophecy was not exercised as publicly as it was by men ... I now have some reservations about the validity of this argument.' In the AFM in Zimbabwe, the example of Mrs Kerina Murape who worked from her home and not in

the church as a public place can be seen to be in support of Schreiner's earlier position.

The strategies used to keep women from participating in church leadership roles are sometimes overt and sometimes covert. They are not static, but dynamic. They evolve. There is an opportunity of status quo to affect the praxis as well as the positions people will end up declaring as their new stance towards women. However, such scriptures that are recorded with women leading as judges and prophets of nations cannot be taken off but may receive an opposite meaning to what is meant. Such treatment of scriptures can affect the way the churches present their case against women. The position of Deborah could be handled differently depending on the reader's background. This is also true in the treatment of women who participate in some spiritual roles like prophecy, teaching, pastoral and other ministry as according to Eph 4:11. Many male leaders in the AFM in Zimbabwe may desire to change their positions regarding women but may fear the society they live in who may be patriarchal in nature.

The Old Testament affirms women on various occasions, providing examples of their initiative and leadership, and there are even passages that imply their equality with men in the eyes of God. Most significant is the narrative of Genesis 1, which according to scholars stem from the Priestly tradition ('P') (see Carr 1996:48-52; Smith 2010:60-61; Schuele 2017: 45). The passage describes how God created 'Adam', that is humankind or humanity, in the divine image, as the crown of creation and to rule over the animals. The text makes it clear that both male and female were made in God's image (*imago Dei*) and likeness (Gen 1:26-28):

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Despite the important role played by women in the church as well as in the African cultural milieu, women are still largely confined to the home and otherwise limited in their lifestyle by patriarchy. Generally they do not occupy leadership positions. Maposa and Sibanda (2013:105) who advocate on behalf of women and their ordination in the African Apostolic Church (AAC), concur that women in the AAC are not ordained as ministers of religion because the church follows the 'biblical teaching' according to which women are second class citizens. The motivation for this interpretation rests on what is interpreted to be 'the order of creation'. Both the AFM in Zimbabwe and the AAC church leadership take it literally that woman was created out of Adam's rib (Gen 1:27-28) and from this follows the interpretation that women in the church are ascribed secondary duties such as church music. The imbalance of gender in the leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe is therefore the result of a general gender imbalance in African culture and in religious culture.

The creation narrative of Genesis 2, attributed to the earlier Yahwist source ('J'), is much more positive towards women than is often assumed. For example, the Hebrew word *ezer*, 'helper' is used in connection with woman's creation (Gen 2:21-23):

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

*Ezer* does not imply subordination, but is regularly used in the Old Testament for the assistance a superior gives to others (see De La Torre 2011:52; Kissling 2004:170). It is, for instance, frequently applied to God as the one who comes to the aid of those in need. Examples are Exodus 18:4 where Eliezer said: 'The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh' and Deuteronomy 33:7: 'And this he said of Judah: "Hear, O LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him in to his people. With your hands contend for him, and be a help against his adversaries"'. The fact that God is a 'helper' does not make. To call the woman a 'helper' should

not make her inferior to the man. A woman can just as soon be a leader who brings about change in the life of the person to whom her help is being rendered.

The creation of the woman from the man's rib is often used to argue that for this reason women have a secondary or supportive role in God's creation. Actually this is a vivid symbol of the *unit* of the male and the female – they are, quite literally 'of the same substance' (bone and flesh), that is to say ontologically identical. This is the perspective that should prevail in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism and also in the AFM in Zimbabwe church, where women strive to be recognized in the pulpit ministry and for their capabilities as leaders.

Pentecostal Christianity in Africa has to a great extent appropriated the religious significance of women from indigenous culture. People's way of life and philosophy of life is formed by language and is expressed by language (Muhwati, *Interview*, Harare, 2017). An example is the word *musikana* to describe woman as the one who brings forth life. *Musika* means 'creator' and *-na* means 'with'. Woman cannot produce a child alone, 'she creates *with*'. This is linked to Genesis 2:18 where she is called the *ezer*, helper, or helpmeet of Adam. In light of this Genesis 2 story on the creation of a man's helper, Spencer (1985:23-24) explores the phrase 'a helper suitable for him,' drawing attention specifically to the Hebrew translation of the words 'suitable for him'. She argues that the phrase *kenegdô* is composed of three constituent parts: *ke + neged + ô*, that is (very roughly), 'as + before + him' (cf Piper et.al. 2006:103). Spencer (1985:24) then interprets the phrase to mean 'a helper "as if in front of him."' She explains it as "front" or "visible" which seems to suggest being superior or being equal' (Spencer 1985:25). This position questions whether the helper who was created after Adam could in some way be regarded as *superior* to him who was created first. However, according to the order of creation Adam was created first and this undoubtedly had consequences for hierarchy in that culture. . In support of her interpretation of the noun *nagîd* as meaning 'leader', Spencer (1985:26) gives the following substantiation:

The same preposition [*neged*] when converted into a noun (*nagîd*) signifies 'a leader, ruler, prince or king', an 'overseer'. Literally it signifies the 'one in front'.

Spencer's proposal of the changing of meaning of the term *neqed* to into a noun *nagîd* is, however, not evidenced or supported. She concludes that the Hebrew text even literally signifies that the woman is 'in front of' the man or 'over' him (Spencer 1985:26). This view could find support should one read the temptation story as the temptation coming to Adam came through Eve, in other words that Eve had power over Adam. However, this is not sufficient to argue that Eve was 'before Adam'. The woman in the story is 'a helper' of the man, which suggests a supportive role. On the other hand a supportive role does not necessarily imply inherent subordination.

According to Muhwati (Interview Harare, 2017), because women were associated with that which gives life, they had a special place as religious functionaries. In Zimbabwe, particularly after the year 2000, women began emerging as leaders in Pentecostal Christianity. However, the AFM was still struggling to accommodate its own female pastors. Lagerwerf (1990:34) concludes that, despite the intimidation, resistance and challenges that are faced by most African women leaders, 'women continue to serve as effective church leaders' in Zimbabwe'.

African traditional roles of males and females are similar to those of the Hebrew communities of the Bible, where a patriarchal structure and outlook prevailed. Men exercise political, religious and social leadership whereas women play a supportive role and were confined to domestic duties. The only place in the home where women can exercise autonomy and even make decisions that affect the whole household without having a man cast a vote or a veto, is in the kitchen. African theologian, Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1995:1) calls this 'kitchen power'. Women try to find refuge in this kind of power because other areas are forbidden to her. According to Chinweizu (1990:14), this 'kitchen power' should be taken into account when dealing with African women, since it is important to their sense of personhood.

Mapuranga (2013:180) points out that religion is highly influential when it comes to assigning gender roles and keeping women's spaces and activities limited. According to Chitando (2004:123), women feature prominently in African Initiated Churches (AICs) and significant space is given them (see also Mwauri 2013:78). This is unlike the rather limited space for women in the AFM. Though, according to Chinweizu (1990:14) women have the power of giving birth to new life, have the rule of the kitchen and the cradle, and men exhibit relative psychological immaturity,



women in the AFM in Zimbabwe have failed to make headway when it comes to leadership in the church. By now, with views such as those of Chinweizu and other theologians, the AFM in Zimbabwe church could have made history by accommodating women in leadership, rather than protecting the political stance that the males have been protecting for years.

If an African woman achieved something exceptional or distinguished herself in ethical, religious or intellectual matters, she usually was not praised as a good woman but was seen as a woman who had become manly (Chinweizu 1990:13). Throughout the Bible the roles designated to women are similar to those designated to women in traditional African cultures. In African Christianity, the Bible is regarded highly. However, with regard to interpretation and application of the Bible there are variances. Some believers in African Christianity further fuse traditional worship with their Christian faith. African Pentecostalism oscillates between obedience to what they regard as biblical law and disobedience to the same Bible when it comes to some cultural matters. Thus, in a way culture dominates over the biblical authority. The Bible also represents a fusion of cultures. People who lived about four hundred and thirty years in a foreign land with its different cultural values and systems would inevitably have been influenced by those cultures. When it comes to the Bible itself and also the application of the Bible for later times, ignoring culture and its influence would be problematic.

The status and roles of women vary according to culture. There are variations even on the African continent where cultures are similar, yet distinct. Some men perceive women through a cultural lens. However, in some cases, they disown the same culture when they have specific needs that go against cultural injunctions. Male leaders in the AFM in Zimbabwe tend to support culture when culture endorses their views of things. The silencing of women is not only a trait of African Christian culture. It can also be found in, for instance, Islamic culture. Cultural patriarchal hegemony is supported in most major religions. In the Judeo-Christian religions the following biblical passages provide substantiation for this: Genesis 16:2-4; 41:45; Numbers 12:1-2; 27:1-11.

As in Ancient Greece and Rome, women were married young (often aged only twelve to thirteen years) to men older than themselves. A woman's husband was

known as her Baal or lord (see Gur-Klein 2014:149). Throughout her life a woman was expected to be subject to a man, first her father, and then her husband or some other close male relative. An example is 1 Peter 3:6: 'Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement ...' In the Abrahamic tradition there is evidence of total male control as Abraham did not even inform Sarah that he was going to sacrifice their son, Isaac, for whom they had waited so long (Gen 22) (see Van Seters 2014:166). This Scripture is evidence of the fact that the woman was not present at the place of sacrifice. The way in which Sarah treated her slave, Hagar, was harsh and cruel, though she was there to suggest that Abraham have a baby with the slave woman (Gen 16, see McKeown 2008:114).

This story is taken as paradigmatic for African feminist theology. Hagar, is a slave of African (Egyptian) background. As a slave she is the property of her mistress, Sarai, who can use her anyway she wants. As a foreigner laws that were meant for the protection of Hebrew people, did not protect her. Her oppression includes sexual abuse and forced surrogacy. Hagar is also exposed to domestic abuse at the hands of her mistress when her son Ishmael is seen as a rival to the position of Sarai as the primary wife (see Ruether 2012:194). Twice she is thrown out into the wilderness at Sarai's demand, because of the perceived threat of Hagar's motherhood. She is abandoned without any resources and has to find her way in a situation where she and her son would surely have died. In the wilderness she has a direct encounter with God, her only hope in her predicament in a foreign land. God assures her that through her son she will be the mother of a powerful nation. This promise mirrors the promise God made to Abraham. The first time Hagar is expelled God orders her to return and subjugate herself to Sarai, after which she is permanently expelled and left to make her way alone with her son after Sarai has finally had her own child.

For Rosemary Ruether (1998:232), the God that Hagar encounters in the wilderness is not entirely on the side of the oppressed woman, but sides with the interests of Sarai. Hagar, however, interprets her experience of God as a 'God of seeing', a more positive experience coming from a non-Hebrew tradition. Ruether (1998:232) understands this to mean that, for black women, the Hebrew God is an ambivalent

figure. Black women would need to turn to their own experience and to African traditions for additional theological resources to sustain them.

Though African women in general, and African women in the AFM in Zimbabwe in particular, have nothing of their own and nothing much to present to men and to the world, like Hagar, through their creativity and availability for the call to ministry, have their own unique encounter with divine power in this 'wilderness'. This has empowered them to strive to make a way out of no way. Their bodies are used for surrogacy in church and society: they are confined to performing 'female duties' such as child-bearing and household chores, but nothing more.

Many men in church leadership in effect send the women into the wilderness to die. The gifts God has given them are then to die there with them. Their creativity, ability and the power of their encounter with the Divine could have and should have abundantly enriched the church. It is always a risk for the oppressed to resist oppression for fear of retaliation at the hands of the oppressors who want to keep their system of hegemony intact. Therefore many remain quiet and submissive.

Jesus is a model and helper for black women. He is a role model as one who resisted the temptations toward unjust power in the wilderness and chose to speak the word of life against systems of death. It is as one who ministers on behalf of life that Jesus can be claimed by African women as their helper as they seek to find 'a way out of no way' for survival and quality of life in ministry.

Ancient Hebrew and African cultures have many elements in common. In the ancient cultures the patriarch, for example, had absolute power over his children: Jephtha, acted with his rights when he sacrificed his own daughter (Judg 11:30-40). In Genesis 19:6-8 Lot protected the honour of a male guest by offering up his own daughters to be raped. In 1 Kings 3 Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh of Egypt to marry the Pharaoh's daughter. The Old Testament contains many examples of a woman being treated as a man's possession rather than as a person in her own right. Even within marriage the two partners were also far from equal. In biblical times and in traditional African cultures a man was permitted several wives (both polygamy and concubinage were legal), but a woman could have only one husband. For many African women this is still a reality today. In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah's

unhappiness at her childlessness is vividly portrayed, as is her husband's love for her despite this. When she does have a child, she acts with independence and dedicates her special son to God's service in the Shiloh temple. She herself, not her husband, prayed the deeply spiritual and radical song (1 Sam 2:1-10) which later became the model for Mary's Magnificat (Lk 1:46-54).

In Judges (13:3-22) Manoah's unnamed wife shows more religious sensitivity than her husband (see Le Roux 2016:246). Abigail's intelligence and good sense are directly contrasted with her husband's boorish behaviour (1 Sam 25:3, 23-25, 33). Ruth, a Moabite woman, appears as an exemplar of loyalty and faithfulness in the book that carries her name. The book of Esther dramatically illustrates the courage and the fortitude of the queen whose heroism was regularly commemorated at the Jewish feast of Purim (see Edwards 1989:31). Miriam, in the familiar story of Exodus 2, uses her wits to save Moses; after the escape from Egypt she take a timbrel in her hand and leads the women in dance, singing the 'Song of the Sea' (Ex 15:21). She is described as a prophetess (15:20) and joins her brother Aaron in rebuking Moses when they thought that his actions were unwise. However, she is smitten with leprosy as punishment, whereas Aaron remains unscathed (Num 12). This is interpreted by many as 'a lesson to women': they can prophesy but should not judge the words of men. They should submit to men as Miriam should have submitted to the leadership of Moses. However, the prophet Micah celebrates her as 'sent by God' along with Moses and Aaron to be a national leader (Mic 6:4).

Like Miriam, Deborah, a married woman and mother, who exercised civic, religious and military leadership was also called a prophetess (Jud 4:4). Alongside the men, she is one of the 'judges' of Israel. She takes the initiative in summoning Barak in the name of the Lord to muster troops against Sisera, and her strength and courage makes a striking contrast with the feebleness of that male leader of Israel. Her heroism and that of Jael (the woman who killed Sisera) are celebrated in the magnificent 'Song of Deborah' (Jud 5). Other prophets are Isaiah's wife (Is 8:3) and Noadiah (Neh 6:14).

Because women were, as is pointed out by Mary Daly (1975:75), the marginalized sex in Old Testament times, the exceptional roles played by Athaliah, Deborah and Miriam in the public sphere, equal if not more successful than the male leaders, to the

advantage of the nation of Israel, is all the more remarkable (see Bilezikian 2006:52. The AFM in Zimbabwe could embrace this heritage from Scripture which resonates with the foundation of the second Pentecostal movement in Azusa to its own advantage. The South African AFM has done so and women today are in positions of leadership such as overseer and member of the church board (Rev B Pedro, *Interview*, 2018). At a retreat for Overseers held in Cape Town on 6-8 July 2017 the all-male Zimbabwean leadership did not change their stance regarding the ordination of women and recruiting them into their top board, the Apostolic council. The liberation of women from the confines of limited designated roles is still not a priority.

Because *liberation* is a theme that runs through the entire Bible, is a core theme of the history of Israel, and is particularly pertinent where people are exploited, it will be useful at this point to explore the similarities and differences between feminist and liberation theology. The work of feminist practical theologian and liberation theologian, Denise Ackermann (1985; 1988; 1996), will be utilized. A similarity is that 'theology is done by those who *themselves* belong to "the exploited classes" and not on their behalf' (Ackermann 1985:37). A difference is that '[t]he context of feminist theology is more universal than the class struggle of liberation theology ... [because] feminist theologians look at *all* structures, symbols and words which are discriminatory and oppressive' (Ackermann 1985:37).

Against such a backdrop, a feminist theology of praxis that 'seeks a political understanding of truth and theory and recognizes that the task of describing the relationship between God and humanity is intrinsically an historical and practical act' (Ackermann 1996:42: cf Chopp 2007:134) should be on the agenda of the AFM in Zimbabwe leadership since this is utterly relevant to the African context. According to Ackermann (1985:33), feminist theology is rooted in two needs:

- 'the need for woman to reflect on human relationships and in particular on woman's relationship to God', of which the work of Chitando (2012) is an example in Zimbabwe;
- 'the need to make theology, words of faith and church structures less one-sidedly male and more person-orientated'.

In short, feminist theology is born when a critical and systematic reflection on sexist oppression takes place 'in the light of faith' (Ackermann 1985:33, cf McKim 2001:66). As such, liberation, coupled with 'a new vision for all of humanity' (Ackermann, 1988:17) should be a focus of the AFM in Zimbabwe leadership since people who have been created and gifted by God should not be oppressed by others and pushed to a peripheral position and confined to a limited role. Such a situation calls for liberation. Feminist liberation theology 'remains first and foremost a critical theology of liberation' (Ackermann 1988:17, cf Vuola 2002:119) which is particularly concerned with 'the historical reality of sexism in human society' (Ackermann 1988:15, see Bergmann and Eaton 2011:136). This reality necessitates the liberation of women in general and female pastors specifically also in the AFM in Zimbabwe. On a practical note, the splintering off and mushrooming of ministries led by women who have taken their liberation into their own hands, bodes no good for a church whose largest constituency is women.

If the gospel message of liberation in Christ and equality before God is not backed up with emancipatory action, church practice is, in effect, contradicting its own proclamation of the gospel message. A feminist theology of praxis reflects critically on the communicative praxis particularly of oppressed groups such as women (Ackermann 1996:38). If the leadership advances the liberation motif of the Old Testament and of Jesus in practice and liberates women from their gender confines, they can be liberated to enjoy full participation in their full humanity. Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe should not be treated as mere sex objects, but are also vessels that can be used by God to transform lives, families and nations. Yet, critical reflection is always also experimental. It constantly raises 'questions and tentative observations about a changing world', but does not arrogantly presume to provide final answers and conclusions that are not suitable for a dynamic world (Ackermann 1985:37). The arrogance of final answers for today, especially if based on cultural views and practices of centuries ago, can be the downfall of a church which aims to serve a dynamic world effectively.

The following section focuses on the role of women in the New Testament, especially in the Jesus movement and in Pauline theology.

### **5.3.2 New Testament perspectives**

Jesus' life on earth shaped the writings of the New Testament. He had a following that gathered around him and taught them through stories – the parables. When he was no longer among them, his apostles carried on teaching of Jesus, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. However, at times cultural views and practices that went against the gospel message of liberation thwarted their mission of bringing God's love, full acceptance and freedom to all human beings. Both in the patriarchal Hebrew and Greco-Roman cultures of the time, women were regarded as inferior to men, embedded in men and not as people with full humanity or freedom (see Greenspahn 2009:31). The following discussion will elaborate further on the views and practices of the time in which the source document of the Christian faith originated.

#### **5.3.2.1 Women in the Jesus movement**

New Testament authors focused on the life and teaching of Jesus and on what they understood the lives of Jesus followers according his message to be. Jesus' words and deed with regard to women and the understanding of New Testament authors of the position of women in the faith community, will be explored in this section. The gospels, the story of the life of Jesus, will be investigated for insights with regard to the leadership of women in Jesus' day and in the early church, and the implications of those insights for faith communities and faith practice today. According to Evans (1983:25), Jesus' approach to women was 'revolutionary' for his era

In the *Marcan* account of Jesus' life, Mary of Magdalene was one of the women who were present from the beginning of his public work (Mk 15:40-41):

There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; <sup>41</sup> (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

The earliest gospel in the Christian Bible shows that women were involved in the ministry of Jesus or at least closely following the events of Jesus' ministry. The phrase, 'and also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem', signifies the substantial involvement of women in the ministry of Jesus (see Gottwald 1989:424). Little is known about Mary of Magdalene, who could be the one who anointed Jesus in the Pharisees' house (Mk 14:9): 'Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, [this] also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.' (see Mashner 2017:116)

The *Lucan* account in Luke-Acts presents a similar and elaborate account of women who accompanied Jesus and his disciples on the journey to the towns and villages of Galilee (Lk 8:1-30). In this gospel there women of means who were able to support Jesus and the Twelve. Since these women are not wives of the disciples, a picture emerges of an itinerant traveling entourage of males and females who were not married to each other. This situation would have been scandalous in that culture. Some women were pillars of the congregations in Rome, Philippi and Thessalonica. Women were witnesses to all of Jesus' works (Acts 1:21-22). Gottwald (1989:425) puts it as follows: 'The women who followed Jesus before and after his death played a full part in proclamation of the prophetic message of Jesus' (see Heil 2018:67). However, when it comes to 'the official Twelve', Luke mentions only men who were called (Lk 6:13-16):

And when it was day, he called [unto him] his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zealots, And Judas [the brother] of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

Acts 1:21-22:

Wherefore of these *men* which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. Beginning from the



baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

However, women were mentioned in Acts 1:14: 'These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren' (see Wilson 2007:23). Together the men and women played an important role in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. That much cannot be questioned.

As one takes a closer look at the ministry of Jesus, there is evidence of his desire to advance and promote the value women of his time. Piper et.al. (2006:113) affirms the reading through the biblical texts and says that Jesus' high regard for women is seen in how He recognized their intrinsic equality with men, in how He ministered to women, and in the dignity He accorded to women during his ministry. Hence, in his time and as part of His ministry Jesus promoted the women and gave them value. This is one lesson that ought to challenge the AFM in Zimbabwe in their policy regarding women's emancipation and affairs in the church. The distribution of task when men and women came to him could not point inequality but could suggest his understanding them as playing a pivotal role in their daily support to his up keep and ministry. The recognition by Jesus regarding role distinctions for men and women is demonstrated by His choosing only men to serve as His apostles with their primary tasks of preaching, teaching, and governing. Piper et.al. (2006:113) state that women, however, served in other important capacities, such as praying, providing financial assistance, ministering to physical needs, voicing their theological understanding and witnessing to the resurrection. These areas are regarded 'important capacities' and should add value to their worth in the ministry of the gospel in the AFM. Such teaching and practice by Jesus regarding the status and role of women harmonize with the other sections of the bible where disciples ministering beyond his practical ministry should pick progressive lessons.

### **5.3.2.2 Pauline perspectives**

In order to come to an understanding of Paul and the Pauline tradition on the issue of women, a brief survey of some relevant passages in the letters will be done. Three rather difficult passages that refer explicitly to women's roles in the ecclesial

community, merits close attention, namely 1 Corinthians 11:2-6; 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14.

- **1 Corinthians 11:2-6**

Paul is responding to a specific problem. The Corinthians, under a sense of 'direct prompting from the Spirit', were indulging in very free, disorganized worship, so much that Paul twice advises them to speak one at a time. They so much overvalued glossolalia (γλωσσολαλία, speaking in tongues) that Paul needed to remind them that other gifts are important, especially love (1 Cor 12-14) (see Barnes 2014:247-253; Cartledge 2017:66). Paul's response is to urge decorum in worship, and a proper respect for traditional ways. This passage contains a number of difficulties and ambiguities.

Firstly, the word 'veil' nowhere occurs in the Greek. Seifrid (2014:168-170) argues that Paul is merely insisting on women wearing their hair long (to distinguish them from men who wear theirs short) or put up tidily and not disheveled (in contrast with some orgiastic cults where women wore it loose). Some church fathers understood this passage as prescribing head-covering, as was customary for married women in both Judaism and Greco-Roman world (see Edwards 1989:65). In the passage Paul might be advocating both for women to cover their heads (verses 5-10), and for them to wear their hair long (verse 14).

With regard to the head-covering which is often translated as: 'as sign of the authority over her', the Greek does not say 'over her' but simply states that women must wear 'an authority' on or over their heads (see Hurley 1981:143-145). Some elderly pastors and elders in the AFM in Zimbabwe believe so much in the veil and that it is worn as a sign of the woman's authority to pray and prophesy in the new order of the Christian community. The veil should be seen as a sign of women's modesty, dignity, and the respect due to them (see Khan 2006:307).

A third ambiguity lies in the meaning of the term 'head' in the phrase, 'the head of a woman [or wife] is man [or her husband]' (v.10). The ambiguity touches various elements: it might mean 'chief', with the idea that husband has authority over his

wife, or 'source' with the idea that the woman was made from man (verse 9 and Gen 2).

### **1 Corinthians 14:26-40**

Once again Paul is concerned with orderly conduct in the congregation. He urges that only two or three 'prophets' speak on each occasion, and those one at a time, stressing that 'God is a God not of disorder but of peace' (1 Cor 14:26-33). The problem comes with two verses (34-35) which stand between these two sections and state that women must remain quiet, 'since they have no permission to speak. Theirs is a subordinate part, as the Law itself says'. These seem to contradict 1 Corinthians 11:5, where properly attired women are envisaged as praying and prophesying in the congregation (cf Sherwood 2017:480). The whole tone seems much more legalistic than Paul's normal style.

Whether these verses are an authentic Pauline injunction or whether they were added by a later editor of the Pauline school and are an interpolation. Since these verses cannot be excluded on textual-critical grounds but are usually declared inauthentic on theological grounds, it is exegetically sounder to accept them as original Pauline statements and then explain them within their present context. For quite some time people dealt with 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as authentic portions of Paul in his letter (see Porter 2004:263). This text does not permit women to be in the leadership positions in the church. Those who are exhorted to 'keep silent' cannot take any leading role in the community. Hurley (1981:146) suggests that 'keep quiet' is even more than a prohibition of chattering. For women were argued to having been discussing in places of worship (see Hendriks et.al. 2012:118-120).

There is a change in Paul's attitude in 1 Corinthians 11. 'Paul presupposes full participation of women in the worship services, but his growing concern over the chaotic practices in Corinth leads him in 14:34-35 to an unfortunate reversal.' A good many scholars (such as Newsome et.al 2014:97) have, therefore, argued that verses 34-35 are not by Paul himself, but are an early gloss by hard-line interpreter, (probably of Jewish background), who felt that women should be kept in their place. If we retain the text, then we have to assume that, provoked by the disturbing behavior of some women, Paul is, for the meantime, banning women's vocal

leadership in the congregations. He could not have intended this ban either permanent or universal without contradicting the whole thrust of the rest of his theology. As has been highlighted earlier on this passage might have been an interpolation by some disciple of Paul or someone with the intention to get their teaching heard.

According to Payne (2009:12-13) the domination of men over women is a result of sin. The situation did not remain the same with progression of time as the New Testament unfolded. Ruether pointed that 'equality of men and women has been restored in Christ, who mandated that women as much as men should be prophetic evangelists of the gospel. Those who would silence women in church are the "seed of Satan" who continue the fallen state of humanity that has not yet received the 'inner light' of the redemptive Spirit' (see Ruether 2011:5). In other words this school of thought wants to restore the equal participation of women in the missionary work. Not only does the injunction for women to be silent in 1 Corinthians 14:33-34 seem to contradict the idea in 1 Corinthians 11 that women were prophesying, but it also runs counter to other New Testament accounts of women prophesying (among other ministries) as a mark of the new age (see Acts 2:17-18, Mathews et.al. 2003:240-241). The fact that a Christian wife and church member, according to Acts 2:17, may 'prophesy' implies, at least, that she may often have ideas and insights that a wise and humble husband and pastor will listen to and adopt.

In the above views, women are regarded as great leaders who played a key role in providing leadership. On one hand some acknowledge the fact that women can be chosen to be in service of the Lord, whereas, on the other hand, the patriarchal mentality still maintains that church leadership is a preserve for men alone (Mapuranga 2011:182). The same attitude can be found among most female pastors in Pentecostal Christianity. Ephesians 5:22-33 is often appropriated by women in power in the church to reinforced the submission of women to their husbands in order to be good or rather virtuous women (see Robertson 2010:41). These women have departments in which they serve when they are at church, such as decorations and administrations where some men under their leadership.

In his evaluation of patriarchy within the Pentecostal movement in Zimbabwe, Chitando (2007:217) concludes that, while some progress has been made, there is

still a need for a radical overhaul of church leadership structures and of attitudes if women are to experience equality with men. Elisabeth S Fiorenza (1999:43) coins a neologism to describe the hegemony of patriarchy. She calls it *kyriarchy*, a derived from the Greek *kyrios* (master) and *archē* (rule), signals that 'domination is not simply a matter of patriarchal, gender-based dualism but of more comprehensive, interlocking, hierarchical ordered structures of domination, evident in a variety of oppressions, such as racism, poverty, heterosexism, and colonialism' (see Fiorenza 2011:9-11. Schüssler Fiorenza's understands the systems of domination as *kyriarchal* rather (than) patriarchal.

Though Paul responds carefully to the question of veils in 1 Corinthians 11, there is a strong insistence on the silence of women in the church (see Newsome 2014:72). How can women exercise their acknowledged right to pray and prophesy (1 Cor 11) if they should keep silent? How can women like Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3), Prisca (Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19), Mary (Rom 16:6), Junia (Rom 16:7), and Tryphaena and Tryphosa (Rom 16:12) functions as co-workers in the churches if they cannot speak in those churches? How can Phoebe fulfill the role of deacon (Rom 16:1-2) if she cannot speak out in the assembly? There is a need for a plausible explanation here. Alston et.al. (2007:235) suggest that the praying and prophesying described in 1 Corinthians 11 were done in the home, while silence was imposed on women in public spaces such as the church (cf Stephenson 2011:38). However, nothing in 1 Corinthians 11 suggests a domestic setting. 1 Corinthians 14 shows that worship services were deemed the environment which would be fit for prayer and prophecy. There also seem to be a contrast between inspired speech (1 Cor 11), which Paul permits, and uninspired chatter (1 Cor 14), which he does not. However, 1 Corinthians 14 seems to cover all genres of speech.

Yarbrough (2005:122) explains Paul's mindset with regard to me and women's relationship:

In Paul's understanding men and women, while equal in value and importance before the Lord, were not regarded as unisex components with swappable functions in home and church. In the overall scope of biblical teaching this was not, apparently, felt to be a

penalty or restriction. Women's gifts, callings, and ministries are delineated and even exalted in numerous passages both in Paul's letters and across the whole of Scripture. Women are hallowed in the innumerable situations arising in home, church, and public life that call for those expressions of Christian graces that lie uniquely within the purview of regenerate female nature and competencies. But a corollary to this is that at certain points, women's gifts, callings, and ministries were differentiated from the gifts, callings, and ministries of men. The historic position of the church on the sanctity of motherhood (for married females only), fatherhood (for married males only), and certain church offices (only males were chosen as apostles and elders) recognize this.

This means that in God's economy of church and home, women assume certain roles and perform certain functions distinct from of men. It is therefore relevant to note that the theological underpinnings for sexual distinction within the church and the home can be found in the Bible because the Bible originated in and speaks the language of patriarchy. Patriarchal is transmitted through time and place. This is also evidenced in the AFM in Zimbabwe and in their treatment of women and their perspectives on women's roles.

From the exegesis of Pauline writings it becomes clear that women played an important role in the leadership of the early church. According to Pellow (2011:62), Lydia (Acts 16:40), was one of Europe's first converts who took a significant leadership role in Christian ministry and can be regarded as a female leader. She established a house church. In Romans 16:3, Priscilla and Aquila are given credit for having helped Paul to establish the churches at Ephesus and Corinth. Pellow (2011:62) also notes that Priscilla played a key role in leadership and was responsible for the growth of the church. She can therefore be regarded as a female leader. One can conclude from this that the Bible provides various instances where women assumed leadership positions and played an important role as leaders.

## 1 Timothy 2:8-14

In the Deutero-Pauline epistle of 1 Timothy there are a number of ambiguities with regard to women. In 1 Timothy 2 it is unclear whether all female teaching is forbidden, or only whether women may not teach their own husbands or men in general. In relation to authority as presented in 1 Timothy 2:12, Grudem (1998:133) initially confidently asserted that ‘whenever we have seen this verb authority (authenteō) occur, it takes a neutral sense, “have authority” or “exercise authority,” with no negative connotation attaching to the word itself.’ In this sense having authority and exercising it makes the difference as it implies acting out the authority. In this case when women have this authority and exercise it in the church makes the men uncomfortable. Some still carry the African cultural induction that the man is always in charge. However, Grudem (2002:106) later changed his position so that the term ‘is primarily positive or neutral’ and argued that the term signifies ‘a positive use of authority.’ It is unlikely that either of the positions could be correct. The immediate context and a full lexical study of the term lend more support to a pejorative use of the term.

The meaning of authenteō (here usually rendered ‘have or usurp authority’ (see Strong 2000:1611) is also uncertain. According to Staton (2003:123), the primary aim was to prevent women who have been liberated by the gospel of Jesus Christ from using their new-found power to speak in an authoritative fashion to their husbands or men in general and upset the social order. Whatever the precise meaning, the main point is clear: the author, in tandem with his cultural environment, is enjoining the submission of women or wives, and limiting their leadership roles in some way (see Beck 2005:233). The ‘theological’ reason given is again based on the exegesis of Genesis 2-3, in which Eve, not Adam, is blamed for the ‘Fall’, and Adam’s priority in the order of creation is taken to indicate men’s pre-eminence over women (see Davidson 2007:145). The author of 1 Timothy (2:15) continues: ‘Nevertheless, she (woman/wife) will be saved by child bearing, provide she lives a sensible life and is constant in faith and love and holiness’. It is difficult to reconcile this statement with the author’s central teaching about justification by faith through God’s grace (see Towner 2006:33-36). The imbeddedness of the passage in the prevailing cultural environment is obvious. Possibly the pronouncement in this

passage were necessitated by particular circumstances, such as heretical teachers who were leading gullible and uneducated women astray (see Edward 1989:69).

In the African cultures which also influence the AFM in Zimbabwe, the power of patriarchy has continued to suppress women's full participation in the public sphere. This was further fueled by the colonial regime which also hindered women's participation in the public sphere. The colonial regime's interest was in line with that of the black African men, namely patriarchy (see Geisler 2004:22). Patriarchy has therefore continued to marginalize women and relegate them to being second class citizens while it upholds and celebrates men as leaders. This view is supported by Essof (2013: x) who argues that there has been a reconfiguration of patriarchy and the continued need to control women in Zimbabwe in both the private and public arena. This implies that even though Zimbabwe has attained independence from colonial powers, men continue to be the main drivers in political and church leadership and do not intend to share power with women by providing them with the opportunities necessary to function as equal participants. From a political perspective, Maphosa (2015:129) points out that former president R. G. Mugabe fired vice-president Joyce Mujuru because of his perception that she was a threat. Zimbabwean male political and also most Pentecostal church leaders do not seem to be ready yet to invite women to participate fully in politics and the church's top leadership.

The power of patriarchy continues to undermine the work of women's rights groups who advocate for the meaningful participation of women in the Zimbabwean church and in the country's politics. As a result of the influence of patriarchy, according to Ndlovu and Mutale (2013:76), men continue to be in authority of the state of affairs and they continue to make decisions exclusively, even when the issues and decisions concern women directly. The way in which women experience life is different from what men experience. Women should have their own voice and full participation in the society, politics, church and economics. Patriarchy continues to be one of the major causes of low female participation in Zimbabwean politics although; according to ZimStat Report (2012:5) women make up the majority of the population in Harare. According to Cheeseman (2013:154), many of the barriers to women's political participation lie in the gendered construction of political institutions



and processes. Women are socialized to take a back seat. They are confined to private spaces while the main stage of the public arena has always been a male reserve. According to Cheeseman (2013:154), patriarchy is also at play where male party leaders hinder women's participation by electing male candidates and by influencing the selection of males at constituency and provincial level. According to Murithi and Mawadza (2011:181) patriarchy is what holds women back from participating in the Zimbabwe politics. Patriarchy continues to promote and perpetuate a continued system where males enjoy political leadership at the expense of women and continues to keep the political arena a male dominated sphere.

Rekopantswe Mate (2002:549) point out that Pentecostal discourses of femininity tend to promote male dominance and female subordination in Zimbabwe. The female leaders that there are, continue to teach women to respect their husbands and to not question the male abuse of power and authority. There are also those who teach that women will be saved through childbirth, thereby promoting women's domesticity. Mate's critique emphasises that it is not sufficient for women to rise to positions of power, they should be able to transform oppressive structures and ideologies. In order to hold on to their power, women in leadership positions often have no other choice but to be like men and to preach the same patriarchal gospel that reinforces servitude and resilience to their fellow women (Ndhlovu-Gatsheni 2003:241). The gospels provide an interesting case in point. In Mark (10:35–40) it is the sons of Zebedee who seek honorary positions for themselves at the right hand and left hand of Jesus. In Matthew, however, it is their mother who wants these positions for her sons. In that culture women's status depended on having sons and on how well their sons did in life (Saldarini 2001:168–169). When Matthew deliberately changes his Markan source and makes it the woman who seeks honor for her sons (and through them for herself), he reveals his attitude towards women and their place in society, perhaps *his* society. He portrays the mother in a negative light. In the story she is duly put in her place (see Dreyer 2011:7). First century Mediterranean cultures and African cultures have some similarities in this regard. Practical theologian, Dennis Ackerman (1985:30), explains how this kind of thinking with regard to women and their 'place' in culture requires a 'feminist theology of praxis' concerning the communicative, critical and experiential dimensions of life,

which, in turn, play a formative, transformative and performative role in the shaping of Christian doctrine and Christian believers' thought and practices. How believers act on account of what they believe reality to be, falls in the interest of practical theology (see Parker 1996:35). This study focuses on what the AFM in Zimbabwe chooses to select from Scripture to believe. On this a practice is built that benefits some to the detriment of others.

Despite the fact that some Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches really find nothing wrong to be led by women, the AFM in Zimbabwe still denies women in their church the opportunity to reach a top leadership position. The notable roles they are allowed to perform in their numbers, other than being pastors, are counseling, being choristers and doing the interior decoration of the church. These they perform up to national level. Men play the leading roles in the church and rise to the top positions such as Overseer and President in the AFM in Zimbabwe. Given the emphasis of the church on the power of the Holy Spirit, this means that the Spirit is restricted to men when bestowing the gifts of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 12:1-1). On lower level, the Holy Spirit is restricted to the wives of pastors and cannot bestow the gifts on other 'ordinary' women. The assumption is that ordinary women are too weak or too defiled for the Holy Spirit to work through them and perform the same miracles that males do (Masenya 2002:56). This practical experience of women in the AFM in Zimbabwe is not in line with the role that women played in the beginning of the Pentecostal tradition, namely the revival in Azusa. This is also not in line with the role played by a prominent woman such as Mbuya Murape in the Zimbabwean context. Women are denied their space not because they lack the capacity or ability. This unfortunate situation is perpetuated by sexism in the church itself. Against this women are now rebelling.

Some people in the church do not approve of the trend of increasing numbers of female pastors. They still deem this calling exclusive to men. Women often internalised the social stereotyping and believe that they cannot ever do what men can do. This patriarchal mentality is an on-going issue in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism (see Mate 2002:568). Unfortunately for women, some use the Bible as the authentic source for patriarchalism as being the position of God. In addition, Kunhiyop (2008:227) argues that Jesus Christ himself could have not chosen women

amongst his 12 disciples as evidenced by the available scriptures. (Mat 10:1-4, Mk 1:16-20 and Lk 5:1-11). Furthermore, after his resurrection, Jesus commissioned the eleven disciples who were left, to 'go and make disciples of the nations' (Mat 28:17-20) and in this commissioning there is no gender exclusivism. There was no woman amongst those sent. Thus one could argue that the resistance of women started long back (Stanton 1974:15) and now people are using the Bible to resist that women assume leadership roles in Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwean. Such is the power of patriarchy. New Testament scholar, Cathleen Corley (2002:52-53), states emphatically that Jesus was not a feminist. Calling him that would be anachronistic. According to her, Jesus' 'message concerning the Kingdom of God' did not aim 'at a clear social program geared towards major social change for women'. However, his contact with women contrasted strongly with the pervasive silencing and invisibility of women in the patriarchal world of first century Middle Eastern cultures.

According to Mathews (2003:225–250), Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza pointed to some 'egalitarian impulses' in the Jesus movement. These did not necessarily originate with Jesus, but were in line with several ancient social movements and emancipatory struggles against *kyriarchal* relations of exploitations (see Schüssler Fiorenza 2011:9-11; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016:51). In their approach to the relationship between male and female persons, AFM leaders are mostly either egalitarians or complementarians. Egalitarianism is described by Grudem (2002:105) as a label commonly used for those who believe that the Scripture teaches the equality of men and women in a way that minimizes or denies gender-specific roles in marriage or the church. In particular, egalitarians do not see the necessity for any unique male leadership role in marriage or in the church. Complementarianism sees men and women are equal in but different. Their roles are therefore different, equally valid and equally important, but complementary to each other, both in marriage and the church (Grudem 2002:106).

Following these two positions, the leadership of the AFM in Zimbabwe is divided. Some want women included leadership roles in the church whereas others object to this. They attribute the egalitarian position to merely being a product of contemporary thought which changes with the waves of culture (see Hübner 2015:1). In Zimbabwe cultural views on the matter are as influential as theological differences. There is no

single ethnic group or language in the country and also not in the church and its leadership. This leads to inconsistencies in decisions regarding women in key leadership roles within the church structure. There are notable inconsistencies in the position of the church's presidency policy on role of women in the church. Since the leadership of Rev S Mutemererwa, women have been ordained as pastors but have in all this time not attained any higher leadership roles in the church.

Men and women who succumb to the cultural stereotyping of women, interpret the Bible to suit their own expectations. Feminist scholarship calls for a re-interpretation of the texts, for all are equal before God (Gal 3:28). In practical theology methods such as mapping, remapping and exercises in theological cartography can be used to describe the tasks of a feminist theology of praxis (Ackermann 1996:34:43). On Ackermann's (1996:43-48) map of a feminist theology of praxis there are six clues or markers that are of importance:

- critique and commitment;
- constructive engagement and collaboration;
- accountability;
- struggle and hope;
- the mending of creation;
- stories and experiences.

Ackermann (1996:49) concedes that her attempt at drawing a theological map or 'landscape of faith' may be incomplete or faulty and that new maps may be needed. Indeed, 'theologians continue to be cartographers of changing contexts' and therefore 'the need for revised maps for changing times will compel one to return to the drawing board again and again' (Ackermann 1996:49). Through such a re-interpretation, one could argue that when it involves women, they were also part of the disciples chosen by Jesus, as illustrated in the verse; 'the twelve accompanied him and also some women ... Mary called Magdalene ... Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, Susana and many others' (Lk 8:1-5). Using the same Bible, one can find female disciples as well. This is why Stanton (1974:14) argues that in the Bible there is representation of both the masculine and feminine elements (cf DuBois and Smith 2007:289). As such, one could use the Bible to argue either for or against women's leadership roles in the church in contemporary society.

The AFM in Zimbabwe is cognizant of the fact that women play a significant role in spreading of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. Ecumenical conferences (Mate 2002:567) and Pentecostal gatherings where women from different churches came together to worship, share business ideas and spread the message of the gospel are advertised widely. Female leaders from Pentecostal churches have often assumed a more strategic position than women in the mainline and independent churches.

Pentecostal female leaders are often married to men who are founders of churches (Mapuranga 2011:181). Examples include Eunor Gutti (wife to Ezekiel, ZAOGA) and Rutendo Wutawunashe (wife to Andrew, FOG) and (Petunia Chiriseri, wife to Apostle Chiriseri), Ruth Makandiwa (wife to Emmanuel Makandiwa). These women are made prominent by their husbands' prominence. They are given room to lead a women's division within the ministry, thereby gaining a measure of prominence. They acquire their husband's title: if the husband is a Prophet, the wife will be titled Prophetess, so also with Apostle-Apostle. However it is different in the AFM in Zimbabwe. The pastor's wives do not get their husband's title. They are not referred to as 'pastor', but simply as '*mai mufundisi*' (pastor's wife). Even if they have graduated from Bible College and are pastors in their own right, will they still be called 'pastor's wife'. An example of such is Pastor Olivia Charamba who graduated as a pastor from the AFM Bible College in 2003, but is still referred to as '*Ma*' (Mrs) Charamba.

Mostly the opportunity to preach will be, for women, to only preach to other women and only up to a certain level in the church. Many women preach at their local assembly, but only rarely at the provincial conferences. Wives of Presidents and Overseers are only preachers at their women's national conferences. The male Overseer (for provincial conference) or President (for national conference) would then close the conference on the last day. The power imbalance within marriage and ministry has serious implications for the leadership in the AFM.

Even if women are accepted as pastors, this does not necessarily mean they are no longer subordinate, but equal. Some male elders and men in general accept female pastors, but when there are meetings, women remain invisible. According to Reverend Hove (Interview Harare, 2017), women have to keep 'proving' their calling to ministry. On 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Rev Dube (Interview Harare, 2017) points out that the *Sitz im Leben* of the Corinthian church should be taken into account when

interpreting the text. It cannot simply be taken literally ('plain sense of Scripture'). Paul probably responded to a specific problem in the Corinthian church. One thing that has been added to this contention is Romans 8:1, there is no more condemnation for them that are in Christ. Culturally, one can observe that the girl child has always suffered rejection and oppression under men. When she does great things for the Lord, she is ignored but if it is the male figure he is made to be a deacon. Fungisai Zvakavapano-Mashavave poignantly expresses it in her song, *Mwanasikana munhu* (the girl child is a person): the woman is rejected simply because she is a woman. However God cares for girls and women who are God's creation, despite the state or status into which they are forced by culture.

The church should be the hope of freedom for women who are negatively affected by societal views and pressures. However, the AFM in Zimbabwe's leadership exclusion of women from the hierarchy of church leadership contributes to the process of inculcating an emotional inferiority and psychological confusion in women. Ground-breaking feminist author, Simone de Beauvoir (1953:290) used the example of the Roman Catholic Church to challenge male dominance:

God's representatives on earth: the pope, the bishop (whose ring one kisses), the priest who says Mass, he who preaches, he before whom one kneels in the secrecy of the confessional - all these men. ... The Catholic religion among others exerts a most confused influence upon the young girl ...

Women are filled with a sense of inferiority that hinders them from aspiring to a higher role in life. This is linked directly to the idea of the old feminist adage that 'if God is male, the male is God'. Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe face the same confusion as those in the Roman Catholic Church. Their challenge in the church already begins at the local level of assembly leadership where male domination can be seen from the deaconate up to the level of the pastor. This male domination is entrenched by language which renders God male (God the Father, Jesus the Son) and ostensibly the angels are also males with names such as Gabriel and Michael. This affects the women in Christianity and also in Pentecostal Christianity where the

leaders are mostly males, where the male centre is associated with divinity and women who find themselves on the periphery are not. The AFM in Zimbabwe affirms this notion with its behaviour, making it visible to all in that no female has ever led the church from its inception until today.

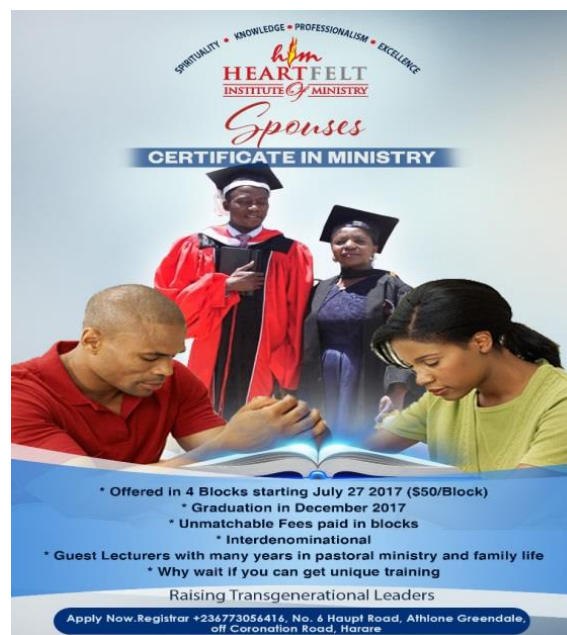
#### **5.4 The pastors' wife and leadership**

In practice, women leaders in the Pentecostal movement exercise considerable authority over both their male and female congregants but in the AFM in Zimbabwe, their leadership is hampered to a great extent by their being female. There are two categories of women who are leaders in the church: trained pastors who are employed by the church and pastors' wives who fulfil various functions in spite of having had no training or specific calling. In the interviews with female pastors and elders it was emphasised by the interviewees that women who train for ministry do so in response to a strong sense of calling. The wife of a pastor has neither a calling nor training. They happen into ministry because they have married a man who feels himself called by God and who is employed by the church. Though the women fulfil various functions that are expected of them only the male pastor receives a salary. The wife's work has to be done for free. Pastors' wives often take up a position of leadership in the church, but at home they must submit to their husband who is seen as 'the head of the household'. Pastors' wives therefore move from the role of leadership to the role of submission, depending on the context in which they find themselves and the tasks that have to be accomplished.

In their leadership role pastors' wives often perform the duties of a pastor. They can, for instance, serve Communion, baptise and provide pastoral care. According to Reverend Dube (Interview Harare, 2017), a pastor's wife 'works undercover'. Often she is stronger in her ministry than her husband. However, the husband is the one who receives all the recognition whereas the woman's contribution is not acknowledged. Pastors' wives should be encouraged to advance themselves and acquire skills and an adequate education rather than wait to be recognized and given credit for what they are doing, since that might be a long time coming, or never happen at all.

In some churches, such as the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army, a woman can be trained as a pastor. Should she then marry a man who is also a pastor, they are given different congregations to pastor. W J Seymour's wife pastored the church after his death for a period of about 12 years (see Bartleman 2000:67). In the AFM today that had been unheard of, until the death of their famous Evangelist Phaniel Dzangare Chiweshe in 2011. The Living Waters Theological Seminary, the main Bible College of the AFM in Zimbabwe, awarded Chiweshe's wife, Tabeth, a first ever Honorary Diploma in Theology in 2012. Often when male pastors die, their wives are neglected by the church. Many pastors' widows are given three months to find alternative life and accommodation and vacate the assembly's manse. However, Mrs Chiweshe was asked to stay at the same assembly and in the same house preaching the gospel as an evangelist like her husband. One Pentecostal ministry in Zimbabwe, the Heartfelt International Ministries, confers a spouses' certificate in ministry (see figure 7 below). This program targets pastors' wives (or husbands) who did not receive theological training in order to equip them for their task as 'support' for their spouse in his or her ministry (Rev C Matsapa, Interview Harare, 2017). This is meant to encourage women (or men) to undergo some training in order to complement their spouse in ministry.

Figure 7





Before 1999, women were not trained and ordained as pastors in the AFM in Zimbabwe. The President at the time argued for women's ordination based on the Bible. When the AFM entered into Zimbabwe, a new movement entering a new place, males were at the forefront of the adventure, breaking new ground. Because of patriarchal attitudes women were not included in leadership. Some rural areas where the gospel message was brought by the pioneers, were difficult. Long distances had to be covered on foot due to a lack of transport. In such a context it would have been impossible for women to do the job. Church boards also simply assumed that pastoral ministry was male domain.

Pentecostalism represents the fastest growing brand of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa (Kalu 2008:6). This is also true for Zimbabwe. Pentecostal churches tend to attract the young, upwardly mobile social and elite classes, to such an extent that Togarasei (2010:8) wonders whether Pentecostal churches are now for the elite classes only. Are the lower socio-economic classes rejected? David Maxwell (2006:44-46), whose study focuses on one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe from its origins in the great Azusa revival, has demonstrated how the church strives to meet the spiritual and material needs of its members who consist mostly of women.

Pentecostalism represents a significant religious phenomenon in contemporary Africa, including Zimbabwe. It is therefore strategic and imperative to understand the status of women in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. In Pentecostal churches women constitute the majority of members even though men have dominated positions of power and influence within the Pentecostal movement especially in the traditional Pentecostal churches like the AFM in Zimbabwe. According to Mapuranga (2018:141), 'the status of women in Africa has never been homogeneous. It could also be labeled as paradoxical. On the one hand, culture denigrated women, while on the other it valued them.' This is the case also in many African Pentecostal churches, including the AFM in Zimbabwe. Historically, men have been the founders and leaders of Pentecostal churches. From the 1960s to the 1990s, men have had exclusive access to power, influence and authority. Prominent male founders of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe who are linked to the AFM include Archbishop Ezekiel Guti of ZAOGA, Andrew Wutawunashe of FOG, Prophet Emmanuel

Makandiwa of United Family International Church (UFIC), Apostle Tavonga Vutabwashe of Heartfelt International Ministries (HIM) Oliver Chipunza of Apostolic Flame Ministries (AFM) to mention but a few.

In the AFM in Zimbabwe, Mapuranga (2018:144) points out, women have embraced the notion of 'helpers', as they stand by their husbands in the ministration of the gospel. Since the year 2000, a number of women have emerged as leaders in the Pentecostal movement, specifically the AFM, either as pastors or as members. Some of these include Bishop Patience Itai Hove of Elshaddai Women's Ministries International, Florence Kanyati of Greater Unlimited International Ministries. Their initiative to found their own ministries is an indication that women are able to minister and be at the helm of the work of God.

According to Mapuranga (2013:14), due to the dominance of men in formal leadership positions, women are relegated to women's ministries in Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. According to Lagerwerf (1990:35), these 'women for women ministries' are found in different parts of the continent, not only in Zimbabwe. The following is an advertisement of a conference for women in 2017 where the wife of the reigning President of the AFM in Zimbabwe, Mrs Madziyire, was invited to preach. The conference was organized by Dr Eunor Guti of ZAOGA. People of all races and a variety of churches and nationalities attended.

Currently women leaders are playing a significant role in spreading Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. Should they be given the room, women of the AFM in Zimbabwe could similarly contribute much. Numerous banners and posters advertising 'Today's Woman' conferences bear witness to the quest for the emancipation of women in Zimbabwe. These conferences are ecumenical, but mostly they have a distinctively Pentecostal ethos. For the purposes of this study interviews were particularly done at such gatherings. It was clear that the women leaders from Pentecostal churches had assumed more strategic positions than those in the mainline and independent churches. According to Mapuranga (2013:14), female Pentecostal leaders are often married to Pentecostal pastors, some of whom have founded their own churches. Such women are in a different position to those who form part of the AFM system.

However, it is also true that some women pastors within the AFM in Zimbabwe are heading assemblies where they are leading both women and men as their congregants. Such women have broken into a male dominated environment. The question is what price they have to pay for their survival strategy in a male world. Mapuranga (2013:15) points out that these women often have to bargain with patriarchy in order to survive in the politics of the church. In order to survive in the positions previously held by men only, these few women who have risen through the ranks have to 'be like men' in order to survive. Often they reinforce patriarchy rather than preaching the gospel of the liberation and equality of all people. In most instances, the few women who have found a space for themselves as pastors in the AFM in Zimbabwe and various Pentecostal ministries preach the same message that men would, namely of the submission of women in the church. This is what Mapuranga (2013:10) calls 'bargaining with patriarchy'. Women do this in order to protect their own positions of power. They would rather not cross those in positions of power in the hierarchies. Rekopantswe Mate (2002:28) concurs that Pentecostal discourses of femininity in Zimbabwe tend to promote male dominance and female subordination.

The question is then to what extent women in the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe have really been committed to radical social, cultural and ecclesiastical transformation. The AFM in Zimbabwe remains predominantly male when it comes to leadership, especially in the provincial and presidium positions. Women in AFM in Zimbabwe are mostly still chained by patriarchy. Soothill (2007:54) explains the ambivalence of the Pentecostal tradition as follows: 'While Pentecostalism may empower women as "mouthpieces of the Lord," it does not empower them as women'. It is highly doubtful that the AFM in Zimbabwe accords women leaders with 'sustainable female power' (Sackey, 2006:68) in the church. Kalu (2008:38) asks whether these women would have the capacity to confront injustice in their churches.

## **5.5 Summary**

Women have had played an important role in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. This can be seen throughout Christian history. If women should be

acting according to their call to ministry, then women must not despise themselves or take any despises from people. Women are encouraged to embrace liberty. In the Bible there are sufficient examples of female leadership: Deborah, Esther, Ruth, Prisca, Chloe and others are role models for women. However, though women in the church find much joy in serving in a variety of roles, when it comes to the leadership in the top offices, their presence becomes controversial. Women can be able pastors and leaders even in the highest echelons of church hierarchy.

## CHAPTER SIX

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and the recommendations with regard to the role of women within the AFM Zimbabwe and its leadership structures. This study has investigated the impediments to leadership as experienced by women in ministry in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, especially against the backdrop of the way in which the biblical idea of the headship of all males over all females interpreted and applied in practice. It explored how leadership is described and prescribed in the church's policies and doctrine. The context of this investigation is the Pentecostal tradition with its specific theology and biblical interpretation, as it manifests in the Zimbabwean Apostolic Faith Mission which was established more than 100 years ago. The AFM in Zimbabwe celebrated its centenary in 2008, but the perception of women has not changed much in the 100 years of the church's existence. Women in the AFM in South Africa do not struggle for recognition as the women in Zimbabwe do. Many ministries have been birthed by the AFM in Zimbabwe. These daughter churches often have women as their leaders. An example is ZAOGA who is led by Apostle E. H. Guti. In ZAOGA, women rise to become Evangelists, Overseers and Archbishops, something that the AFM in Zimbabwe has failed to do. Besides ZAOGA, ministries such as the United Family International Church, Heartfelt and True Vine celebrate women in leadership. Apostle Tavonga Vutabwashe, who left AFM in Zimbabwe in 2010, published a book, *Promoting the value of women*, in which he teaches men and the women to acknowledge the value of women.

These break-away preachers from the AFM are advancing in roles that the AFM did not permit them play when they were still in the church. Ostensibly the AFM as the mother church did not see what these young ministries have understood. The status of women in this ecclesial and cultural context was investigated against the backdrop of the use of biblical, African traditional and cultural arguments regarding women and their participation in leadership. The study explored the roles women played in history namely in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras in the areas of

religion, culture, politics, and economics. The focus was on factors that had and still have a bearing on women's full participation or lack thereof in Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe in general and the AFM in particular. The AFM church in Zimbabwe was selected as case study for this investigation because it is one of the oldest Pentecostal churches in the country and its history and development shows different phases in the understanding of the Holy Spirit, which is central to the Pentecostal tradition. The understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit is also relevant with regard to practical matters such as the ordination of women, their participation in pastoral ministry and their eligibility for election to the so-called 'higher' ecclesial offices.

The aim of the study was to investigate female leadership in a Pentecostal environment in the context of Zimbabwe from a practical theological perspective. To achieve this aim, the study explored preconceptions and power relations in African Pentecostal churches (particularly the AFM in Zimbabwe), as well as how African Christians define the roles of males and females in the church. This was done firstly through exploring existing literature on gender and leadership, feminism, sexism and women's studies in Africa, and secondly through narrative interviews which provided data for investigating the AFM in Zimbabwe's position with regard to female leadership and the rise of women to top ecclesial positions. The interview participants were from the Zimbabwean Shona religious and cultural group. The Shona, a Bantu group, are in some ways representative of the African mind-set, views and practices with regard to women. In other ways this group exhibits distinct religio-cultural features. Insights from existing literature and results of the empirical study were brought into dialogue with Scripture, particularly relevant passages from the Old Testament, Pauline epistles and the gospels. The Church's constitution was examined with a specific focus on those clauses that discuss the involvement of women in the church's activities. This was done in order to shed light on how women's involvement in the leadership issues is perceived and to discover what alternative interpretations would be possible.

## **6.2 Findings**

The findings of this study correspond to some extent with the existing literature which focuses on contexts outside of Africa. Literature in the field of feminism, gender

studies as well as feminist and womanist theology was examined, especially regarding gender inequality. The differences in the roles of men and women in Zimbabwe were traced from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era, all of which had a specific influence on 'women's place' in the society today. Also the differences between the male and female behavioural patterns are traced back to cultural values and norms which lead to certain perceptions of the place and value of women, which in turn had an effect on church theologies, policies and practices. The question is to what extent biblical narratives, which originated in and reflect patriarchal cultures of old, contributed to the formation of the church's position and ideas.

The study has shown that the formation of ideas with regard to gender in the Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe can be attributed to culture rather than to Scripture alone. For African Christians biblical texts serve as substantiation and justification of existing patriarchal cultural views and practices. The study had found that traditional ideologies and culture influence the reading, interpretation and application of the Bible which, in turn, affects how the sexes view and relate to each other. The following views of both males and females (most of them leaders and former leaders of the church) from the interviews corroborate this:

- Males and females have different status and roles in Zimbabwean society and the church. They are not seen or treated as equals before God.
- Domestic roles are regarded as 'women's territory'. Hence during the pre-colonial and colonial periods women were mostly seen as those who work in the household and perform domestic duties either as tending to the sick, cooking and doing the laundry.
- Due to gender differences, females are regarded as 'weaker' and therefore incapable of performing the roles allocated to men by church and society.
- Leadership, both in church and society, is regarded as a male prerogative. This is because the male as 'the head of the household', was called and equipped by God to perform such roles. Women are meant by God to follow. They have not been created capable to lead. The position of male persons in society is therefore considered superior to that of female persons.

The epistemology of this qualitative investigation is social constructionist. The theoretical framework is phenomenological, historical cultural materialistic, and theological. The phenomenological approach was used to uncover aspects from traditional religion and culture concerning women's roles in the Pentecostal church that prove to be resilient even though they are influenced by historical, cultural, socio-political, and economic changes.

The study questions the fact that the majority of members of the AFM, women, are not represented sufficiently in pastoral leadership in generally and not at all in the top leadership positions in the church. This amounts to a silencing and side-lining of women by men in the church. It is an indication of the cultural bias of the men in the church even though they subscribe to the idea of Apostolic life based on the ways of the early church where women were part and parcel of the church's leadership. In the Pauline epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles leader women are mentioned by name: Chloe in 1 Corinthians 1:11, Phoebe in Romans 16:1, Tryphosa and Tryphena in Romans 16:12, Lydia in Acts 16:40.

The privileged treatment accorded to men over women in African cultures deprives women of equal opportunities. This privileged treatment of men begins already in boyhood. Girl children grow up with the awareness of their secondary place in life and of their lesser value as human beings. Due to this male privilege boys and men have greater access to formal education and training. In church practice this has led to more men being ordained as pastors and more men taking up top leadership positions than women. This is also the case in the AFM in Zimbabwe. Women in the AFM in Zimbabwe have only been ordained since April 1999. Male ministers have always held the main positions of power and influence. Historically men were the founders and leaders of Pentecostal churches. Women refrained from exhibiting leadership tendencies fear of victimisation. From the 1960s to the 1990s, men have had exclusive access to power, influence and authority. Since the year 2000 women have slowly begun to emerge as leaders in the Pentecostal movement.

Most leadership positions that women do have today are limited to women's groups and women's ministries in Pentecostal churches. This shows how the notion that women can be leaders for other women in the church, but not for men, still exists. These 'women for women ministries' are found all over the African continent (see



Lagerwerf 1990:44). This study has also identified some such 'women-only' ministries in Zimbabwe. Some examples of female leadership include Florence Kanyati, Chipo Ravu and Patience Itai Hove. Petunia Chiriseri is now the sole leader of a church after the passing of her husband in a car accident in 2016. Some women are heading churches that consist of members of both sexes. This journey began with small steps. These women in church leadership, albeit in the 'lower' leadership positions, have entered into a male dominated environment with all the challenges that it entails.

This study investigated the social and religious discourse with regard to female leadership as well as the situation of male leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe that employs various ways to prevent women who feel called by God from taking up a top leadership in the church. Scripture is interpreted in such a way as to suit the ideology of male hegemony which is based on cultural values. The church adheres to the doctrine of baptism of the Holy Spirit by means of which believers receive a calling from God and are equipped to serve God in pastoral ministry. The church accepts, trains and allows such persons to perform certain roles, but when it comes to women, only up to a certain level. This is captured in the language of the Constitution of the church when it comes to leadership. Where it refers to the top positions of overseer and president of the church, the language is male. Though the Constitution is given as the reason for church policy, the Constitution itself shows a gender imbalance. In this way gender discrimination and a lack of equity are entrenched and perpetuated in the church.

Historically the understanding of baptism of the Holy Spirit has evolved. In all three the phases of this development women have actively complied with the criteria for baptism of the Holy Spirit. The constitution of the church includes clauses that women are accepted in leadership roles to a certain stage, but not when it comes to offices such as Overseer or President of the church. This is a position that in essence negates the work of women in the many departments in which they are involved as leaders and where they contribute to the stability of the church. If the church becomes more open to development in order to make space for women to serve according to their God-given gifts rather than being restricted when it comes to a leadership role, then the adventure of rewriting the constitution can begin. Some

clauses that are deemed unjust, unbiblical and unsuitable with regard to human rights can be amended. Then the church's celebration of the heroine, Mrs K Murape, who has always been held in high esteem as an example to encourage other women to yield to the baptism of the Spirit and function freely in the church, will not seem so hypocritical.

The church of late has retained controversial practices such as insisting on the head covering of women in public meetings, following a literal interpretation of the Bible. The cultural aspects and the audience in biblical times were not considered. The interpretation was simply according to the 'plain sense of Scripture'. The interviews with leaders of the AFM show a diversity of opinions with regard to women and leadership. Some regard women as unworthy to be the highest leader due to natural and biological functions such as menstruation and child birth, whereas others regard women as fully and equally capable of serving God. The church leader, Reverend S. Mutemererwa advocated for their ordination in April 1999. That recognition by a respected leader of the church paved the way for women to accept God's calling into ministry. This is now the status quo in the church, though there are still a variety of stumbling blocks for women in ministry.

When it comes to leadership in the AFM in Zimbabwe, women have gradually been included. Female pastors are now to be found in positions where only men used to be, such as in the leadership of the assembly as the local leader and chairperson. Since the church is presbyterian and episcopal in its leadership structure, women pastors can occupy the role of the bishop. The lowest level of leadership of the AFM is that of the local board of elders who govern the local church board. The next level is that of the Provincial Committee and finally the highest level of top leadership is the governing board, the Apostolic Council. The way in which the congregational and presbyterian leadership are intermingled may sound paradoxical. Initially, it is the local church board of elders has the decisive powers over the assembly matters. The pastors alone cannot decide since they are only the chairpersons of the boards and have joined the local assemblies through the 'call system.' When there is an issue affecting the pastor, the elders engage and the congregation decides. Their decision affects the life of the pastor. However, on the higher level of the Provincial board an Overseer can only come from the pastoral fraternity. On this level an elder cannot

become an Overseer through the voting system. This escalates even further on the national leadership level where the President is chosen from the pool of the provincial Overseers who are pastors of assemblies and leaders of the provinces.

They constitute the Apostolic Council, the church's highest governing board. In this Council all the members are pastors with the exception of one elder who takes up the office of Administrator. On that note, the AFM church was found to be patristic in nature. The term encompasses such terms like '*Vana Baba*' (Fathers) to refer to church boards from assembly to national level. Nhumburudzi, L. & Kurebwa, J. (2018:49) submit that no woman sits in the Apostolic Council, and as such women are not eligible to be elected to the post of President of AFM in Zimbabwe. Such a position is against human rights and the liberal Pentecostal churches need to respect calls by women's organisations for gender equality. The lower down in the hierarchy the more presbyterian and congregational the system is, but the higher up it goes the more episcopal it becomes. Gender issues and women's leadership matters in the AFM in Zimbabwe are strongly impactful at their local assemblies. The local church boards have power to decide change in the church. Unfortunately for the AFM the focus of change does not include the rise of women pastors into top offices like Overseer and or President. Should the agenda of making women pastors be elected into these top office be made, there could be huge change within the AFM in Zimbabwe's and Zimbabwe's national constitutional agenda on gender inclusiveness in all sectors. One main obstacle to foresee this change happening soon is the fact that the local church board members themselves are seen rising to go to the bible college to train as pastors. Hence, if there is no woman in the church board or any supported by the church board, the rising of women to top leadership positions continues to be a long walk to their freedom.

The church has a succession system through the 'calling of the pastors' to the assemblies as desired by the local church boards after the departure of another pastor. In these local boards some deacons and or elders participating in the decisions, could be women. In this way women are involved in the calling of the pastor, usually after either the death or dismissal of a pastor. In the calling system female pastors have been listed for transfer. They do not, however, rise to higher leadership positions. It is not said explicitly that women should be kept out of high

leadership positions but is implicit in the gender-biased language of the Constitution and is operational in practice. The patriarchal culture of the church is evident in the male domination in the top offices. This has been the case since the inception of the church in Zimbabwe around 1915. This has also been the case since black male leadership took over at the end of the colonial era, with Langton Kupara as the first Superintendent in the 1930s.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Whether the end of the male dominance in the church's top leadership is imminent or not will depend to an extent on whether women will unite to bring the influence of their greater numbers to bear in the church. If they fail to do so, the leadership of the church will remain predominantly male and chauvinistic. 'The door is open for our sisters to be free, but they must not take pride and take the ministry as a competition with men,' Reverend Mutemererwa invited, but also added a warning – as though women are the sex known for being competitive. As is often the case with women, they find themselves on the receiving end of a double message: 'You are welcome, but ...' There has not been much improvement within the church's system regarding women's rise in leadership since the ordination of women was approved in 1999. The double message continues: women's service is accepted and acceptable as long as they 'know their place'. When it comes the leadership in the top offices, the message is much more clear: this is not woman's 'place'. This is the place for a 'he', in the language of the Constitution.

Rev Stephen Mutemererwa, the man largely responsible for the ordination of women, gave the following advice to female pastors:

If she were a single pastor she must pray that the Lord give her a husband who serves Him who could be a deacon, elder or equivalently a pastor. This is for the continuity of the ministry on her part for the two will encourage each other. Secondly, she must shake off the feeling of despondency because she is a woman. She is not just a woman but a servant of the Most High God. On another note the woman must not forget that she is a woman and so must not put herself at par with men. As if that is not yet enough the

woman was warned that darkness and light will never meet. In other words she must not have fellowship with the unsaved and unbelievers. She must not divide the church by dealing with the same gender but must encourage all.'

The statement again contains double messages. Issues to do with marriage are 'God-given' and 'God ordained'. If the woman were married to a man who is not a pastor or if she were not married at all, would she then still be able to do well as a pastor? Her success and confidence in her work should not have to come from the presence of a 'serving' husband, but rather from the One who called her to service in the first place. The last statement or warning is rather ironic: women pastors should not confine themselves to one sex, but should 'encourage all'. Given that women were long relegated to minister to other women because they were not deemed good enough 'to encourage all', such a statement attests to a lack of insight into the struggle of women over the ages and also in this particular context, against their systemic oppression in culture and the church. Several following recommendations could help the AFM in Zimbabwe in their leadership and perspectives on women in pastoral ministry.

The AFM in Zimbabwe should conceptualize inclusion and transformation in the church in order to bring about a shift in leadership style from authoritative to transformational leadership. Through such a shift the people's mission and vision can be redefined in a more authentic manner, with a renewed commitment to the task they envision for themselves as the followers of Jesus Christ. Innovation with regard to leadership styles can contribute to making this a truly Pentecostal church – being guided by the Spirit of God who empowers all in God's service. Such a church will not oppress further, but will rather emancipate people, free them from the bonds of culture. For women such a trend can already be seen in other progressive Pentecostal churches such as the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA). With a shift to respect for all the gifts of God in all people, the full inclusion of all people in God's service on all levels, the church can set an example of transformation.

In general, there is still much discrimination against women in all walks of life. They are largely excluded when it comes to decision-making processes and positions of

leadership. The AFM in Zimbabwe should strive to be a community of God's people who accept all human beings in the same way that God, who created them in God's image, accepts them. In general, women's experience and potential contribution are undervalued or ignored. This still renders them invisible in most areas of religious, social, economic and political life.

The AFM in Zimbabwe should adopt a leadership style that will both empower women and transform the church into a truly inclusive and non-discriminating community which reflects the gospel of Jesus Christ. It should not resemble a political party or champion segregation in any form, since that would go against the gospel message the church proclaims. As Chalou Asares (2012:128) puts it, the goals of transformational leadership is to transform people and organisations by changing their minds and hearts, by broadening their perspectives, deepening their insight and understanding, by clarifying aims, by making behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles and values and by bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating and momentum-building. The church as the body of Christ, should strive to engage such concepts in its mission statement and vision. This kind of transformation can also benefit the institutions that train ministers in order that female students can be accepted and be treated equally as capable future ministers and leaders. Theological curricula should be empower students with the skills to themselves become transformational leaders in congregations. Such leaders can reorient belief systems, foster tolerance and promote human rights as a way to transcend cultural, gender and other injustices and biases.

In order for transformation to become a reality in practice, an in-depth understanding of the organizational structure and culture of churches is needed. Then only can the relevant action be taken and the transformation of the structure and culture of church with a view to gender justice take place. If the leadership of the AFM in Zimbabwe does not have a thorough understanding of gender injustice in the church, the existing problems will be perpetuated, if not exacerbated, rather than solved. Such an in-depth understanding will necessitate engaging with the congregation in order to get their input. An analysis of gender dynamics by means of a participatory approach could be useful. Such an engagement could also provide a broader perspective on

the way in which gender justice challenges are related to wider societal structures and attitudes.

Male pastors in the AFM in Zimbabwe are the ones who can and should transform the governing system of the church since they are the ones with the power. They can also impart a transformed attitude to the congregations they lead. With a concerted effort from this in existing leadership, the can church eventually become more emancipatory, aiming toward full gender justice. However, the acceptance of women as fully human in male-dominated spheres is not a straight forward matter and often comes at a cost for women. Female ministers experience that, in order to be assimilated into prevailing institutional church structures within the Pentecostal system, they have to assume masculine leadership traits. The double bind comes into play when they are then accused of being too manly. In African Traditional Religion and culture in Zimbabwe many factors contribute to denying women leadership roles. These attitudes spill over to the AFM. Some women are disqualified because of menstruation which renders them 'unclean' and therefore makes them unfit for church work. The Bible is cited as underpinning of this attitude. The result is that it is mostly older, unordained deaconesses who are called to assist at the Lord's Supper ritual. It seems that menopause makes them 'safe' to participate in this important ritual of the church. This idea comes from both biblical and African cultures where menstruation is deemed to be dirty and 'out of place'.

It is a difficult task for women, as human being who were created in the image of God, who have been socialized to internalize their lesser value, to transcend that socialization and recognize the importance of their unique experiences and attributes and to acknowledge the value of their contribution for the societies in which they live. The AFM women in Zimbabwe with their Afro-religious roots, should be empowered to work with the church to promote gender justice and inclusivity in African churches. Male pastors are crucial to the agenda of gender justice. An Honorary Diploma in Theology was awarded to the late Evangelist Phanael Dzangare Chiweshe's wife, Tabeth. This was a signal of hope of change and emancipation of women within the church. If the male pastors' attitude is inclusive, respectful and welcoming that will greatly influence the congregants to also accept women as fully human and therefore also worthy of full participation in society and the church. This would

include their full participation in the highest leadership of church without overt or covert discrimination and exclusion (see Sumner 2003:45).

Ministers who serve congregations can be an inspiration and motivator of congregants to transcend their socialization with regard to the worth and value of women. They too have been socialized to accept the downplaying and undermining of women's worth and their roles. They uncritically accept 'the way things are' as 'the way things should be'. Hay's (2009) ten motivational devices for leadership can be useful also with regard to the promotion of gender inclusive justice in society and also in the church.

The first of the motivational devices Hay mentions is motivational speeches, conversations, which in the church can include sermons. People should be engaged, motivated and educated on the gender sensitive matters. The church should be the environment where people from all walks of life can find shelter and be treated with respect. The church can organize meetings where prominent women in society can tell their story. Heartfelt International Ministries (HIM) of Apostle Tavonga Vutabwashe, for example, organized a Sunday called 'Inspiration Sunday' and invited prominent people in the society. Among those invited to share their story was a CEO of a bank who had lost a leg and the first female pilot for Air Zimbabwe, Chipso Matimba. Her experience was that men tend to feel intimidated by career women, especially here in Africa (see <http://www.megafestholdings.co.zw/captain-chipo-matimba-special-women-in-zimbabwe-award-winner/>). This is a challenge with which many women who rise into various positions of authority in for instance the medical, academic and pastoral fields have to contend. However, the same men who submit that women cannot lead or hold positions of authority sit in the plane with a woman pilot flying them. They also seek medical attention from female doctors who they then deny them leadership in the church.

On International Women's Day 2018 the theme of the church was 'Inspiring change' with a focus on challenging the male *status quo* and working toward equality among all of God's creation. This theme is inclusive of all areas of life where gender issues are topical, be it in church or in industry.



A second motivational device is public displays of optimism and enthusiasm. Society has shown some confidence in women as leaders of prominent institutions. Therefore, the church should also affirm that the God-given talents of women should not be hidden under a bushel. The capacity of women to contribute to growth in the church and society should no longer be negated.

A third motivational device is to highlight positive outcomes. If successful women tell their story, others can be inspired. This will counteract the discourse that women cannot handle certain offices or positions in industry, church and society. The AFM should contribute to fostering a positive attitude towards women and their valuable work rather than perpetuating the negative social discourse.

A fourth motivational device is to stimulate teamwork. Jesus had a team of women who supported him from their own wealth. Among some people whom Paul considered leaders in the church, women served as deacons in the leadership team of the church. Women have always made valuable contributions. This was not always acknowledged – not in the Bible, nor in church and society.

A fifth motivational device is the development of an attractive, alternative future. The future is built from today onwards. What the AFM does now will impact the future of the church. The church should develop an attractive future by implementing policies that are gender inclusive. The church should plan for the future and then put in place systems that will make the alternative future a reality.

A sixth motivational device is promoting an awareness of the urgency of gender justice in the church and inspiring church members to become agents of change. Awareness campaigns in which the church can be involved should not be seen as separate from the other motivational devices. Should the church involve women in leadership structures from the lower to the highest level, this would become a direct non-vocal statement about the value of women.

A seventh motivational device is to inspire church members to work together, respect one another irrespective of gender, and to confront gender issues and gender injustice together. People are inspired if they see the church moving in a positive direction. The confrontation of gender issues can be encouraging.

An eighth motivational device is to encourage participation in overcoming resistance and encourage understanding of the need for gender responsiveness. Fun activities that carry the message of gender equality and the equal value of women can lead to greater participation and involvement with gender issues. The church should be challenged to continue upholding their position and mandate as the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13).

A ninth motivational device is to establish external networks for gender justice. Networking with other stakeholders is important for the development of any organization and ideas. New ideas and insights come as people network, interact and exchange ideas, also on gender. The AFM in Zimbabwe should reach out to organisations that promote the value of women and counteract the negative social discourse. This can contribute to making the church relevant in society.

A tenth motivational device is to create opportunities for re-socialisation and to create alternative value systems. When it comes to the contribution of women in politics, they form a larger constituency of voters than men, yet they have no or little place in leadership structures. Segalo et. al. (2015:231) point out that women are often doubly discriminated against and are treated as second class citizen. After the advent of democracy where women could exercise their right to vote, black women were finally acknowledged as 'full citizens' of the country. However, inequality still affects the women. Despite their large vote, when a president is elected, he is still male. Value systems can be recreated when those who have not been valued before are valued in practical ways. The church can show that it values women by including them in leadership.

Gender education can be done in the church. The leadership of the AFM in Zimbabwe should take the lead in educating church members on the importance of gender consciousness and the emancipation of women as equal citizens and children of God. This can be done by holding conscientisation workshops and seminars in various provinces and assemblies. Seminaries can provide academic literature for the church to provide a solid theological basis for such education.

The leaders of the AFM in Zimbabwe should to uphold and defend the organisation's integrity by applying the Scriptures in practice. The integrity of the church will be

compromised if the leaders ignore women's key role in the church and keep pushing them to the periphery. At present the church stands in ill repute with regard to this matter. Rising to top echelons should and must not be viewed as a taboo for women. Where male leaders differ on the matter of including women, leaders should resolve their conflict in a way that leaves the integrity of the church intact and that attests to obedience to God's great commission.

Nations dedicate certain days to certain causes in order to create awareness. The AFM in Zimbabwe with its large membership holds much sway in the Pentecostal sector of Zimbabwean Christianity. From this position the church can initiate awareness campaigns regarding gender. Gender discrimination and the oppression of a section of church members cannot and should not be tolerated any longer. A day that is dedicated to the cause of gender justice and include inspirational speeches, sermons, poems, and songs that have been prepared for the sessions. Gender-based segregation in the church, for example, between the men's, women's, boys' and girls' leagues should also be challenged.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

This study had three primary objectives. The first was to investigate the measure of female participation in the leadership of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. The second was to assess the status of women in the specific Pentecostal context from the perspective of its theological tradition in Zimbabwe. The third objective was to evaluate the available data in order to explore a liberating theology regarding women in the Pentecostal context.

Patriarchy and the lack of female leadership in the context of Zimbabwe have been perpetuated because of traditional cultural and theological views. Feminist and African womanist theologians have played a significant role in creating awareness of women's marginalization in society and the church and the exclusion of women from positions of power and authority, including top leadership positions within the church. These scholars have challenged the prevailing perceptions of why women are neither fit nor useful to be considered for top leadership positions. In spite of those

advocating for women's rising from male oppression, women in Zimbabwe are still under patriarchal dominance, oppression and marginalization. Today, some women in the AFM are able to reject the idea that men are superior, stronger and more rational than they are. Other women in the Pentecostal context of Zimbabwe accept patriarchal views that they are unfit, unsuitable, emotionally dependent, naturally and biologically weaker without question (see Gifford 2004:68).

The point of departure of this study is that women in Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular, have the potential to partner with male persons who have the power or potential to change leadership systems in the church and world at large. African cultural practices that limit, demean, humiliate or damage women should be transformed in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In response to the roles of women, Fungisai Zvakavapano-Mashavave, a popular female Zimbabwean gospel musician, produced a song which appeals to society to respect and understand the importance of women. As an African woman, she sings on behalf of the African girl child as a woman and a human being. Pentecostal herself, Zvakavapano-Mashavave points to women in the Bible such as Deborah, Mary, Miriam and Martha who acted against injustice and were recognized for their contribution. She points out that people despise a woman because she is a woman, yet when hunger, sickness and other problems befall them, it is women who must help and heal. The renowned musician advocates for opportunities for women to realise their potential as human beings and make their full contribution to society. The status quo which only has negative effects is described by her as follows: 'An African girl does not get much education simply because she is a woman and she is just sunk in poverty.' This is a state of affairs that affects the majority of African women.

This study has discussed the involvement and activities of women in Zimbabwe from the ancient times to today. This was done from a practical theological perspective. The basis was what Schmid (1998) describes as 'the locus of human history'. Scholarly perspectives on the ordination of women into pastoral ministry were investigated. As the scholars differ, so also the leaders in the AFM. No one clear position on the role of women in leadership of the church has emerged. The study aimed to foster an 'inseparable reciprocal relationship' between the church and

women. The church will benefit from the talents and contribution of women and women can benefit from the church.

The Constitution of the AFM in Zimbabwe has been visited to ascertain what the church's constitutional mandate on women and their position in the church is. In the Constitution there is inconsistency on segregation with regard to gender when it comes to offices such as elder and deacon (see Chapter 4 of the Constitution).

However, there are other anomalies. Women's meetings are described in the Constitution but no mention is made of their attending Bible College. When they do graduate from Bible College and are ordained as pastors, women are not expected to rise through the church's ranks to become either Overseer or President. This can be seen in the language of the Constitution which excludes women when candidacy for top leadership offices is discussed. The exclusive male language is conspicuous: 'He must have a Diploma in Theology and qualify according to 1 Timothy ...' (AFM Constitution 9.3.2 p25). Through this language, gender matters continue to arise. Women's experiences of being blocked from advancement in the church affects them socially.

This study has observed the church's practices from a practical-theological perspective and has explored hopes for the better in the future. Three methods were employed: A Pentecostal church like AFM would not simply want to follow the lead of secular culture on the role of women and reorder the church's life and worship in keeping with the sentiments of the world. Rather the church would want to come up with an innovative non-patriarchal theology that expressed the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ and puts in practice the great commandment of God. The AFM in Zimbabwe leadership should return to its roots and rediscover how women contributed to the very foundations of the church. That heritage rediscovered, can contribute to building a new, bright and alternative future.

## Appendix 1

### Interview questionnaire

#### Target group : AFM Leaders

1. Which level of leadership are you?

Provincial Board  Church Board  Home group  Departmental

2. What is your position?

3. How long have been in the leadership?

4. Are there women in your leadership team?  Yes  No

If Yes, how many? If no, Why not? Explain.

5. What is your view toward women in leadership?

Negative  Positive  Neutral. Explain your position.

6. Have you worked with women in leadership before?  Yes  No

If yes, how was your experience?

7. In your view should women be leaders in the church?  Yes  No

What makes you say so? If your answer above is Yes, to what levels of church leadership should the women rise?

Local Board  Provincial Board  National Board  International Board

8. What would be your comment then a woman is elected an overseer and president on the church?

9. Can women who are political leaders also be chosen to be leaders in the Church?

Yes  No. Explain your answer.

10. What roles should women play in the church when they rise into leadership?

11. In your view should the issue of equal rights be mentioned in church leadership?

Yes  No. Give reasons for your answer

12. What is your comment to Paul who says 'I permit no women to speak in church?

If they have anything to ask let them ask their husband at home....' (1 Cor 14:34-35)

13. What is your message to the women in leadership positions in the church?

14. What is your message to men who work with women in leadership?

15. What is your message to men who do not like to work with women in leadership?

## Appendix 2

### Interview questionnaire

#### Target group : Women in AFM

1. How long have you been in this church?  0-2yrs  2-5yrs  5-10yrs  10yrs+

2. Are you a leader?  Yes  No

If Yes, what kind of leadership?

Provincial Board  Church Board  Home group  Departmental

If answer is No, why not?

3. How long have been in the leadership?

4. Marital Status:  Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed

5. Does your status affect your opportunity be a leader in the church? Support your answer.

6. With your duration of stay in the church you're your seen women rise to top leadership positions in the AFM? Yes / No. Support your answer.

7. If you are in leadership, are there other women in your leadership team?  Yes

No. If Yes, how many? If no, Why not? Explain

8. What is your view toward women to rise and be in top leadership in the church?

Negative  Positive  Neutral. Explain your position.

9. Have you do you view the role of women in top leadership positions in the church?

10. What hindrances do you see towards women's rise to top leadership positions in the AFM?

11. In your view should the issue of equal rights be mentioned in church leadership?

Yes  No. Give reasons for your answer.

12. What is your comment to Paul who says "I permit no women to speak in church?

If they have anything to ask let them ask their husband at home...." (1 Cor 14:34-35)

13. What is your message to other women in leadership positions in the church and those who wish to take up the positions?

14. What is your message to men who work with women in leadership?

15. What is your message to men who do not like to work with women in leadership?

### Appendix 3

#### Interview questionnaire

##### Target group : Selected theologians

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Marital Status:  Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed
3. What is your career?  Pastor  Lecturer   
Other.....
4. What is your view toward women in leadership?  Negative  Positive   
Neutral

Explain your position.

5. Have you worked with women in leadership before?  Yes  No

If yes, how was your experience?

6. In your view should women be leaders in the church?  Yes  No

Support your answer. If your answer above is Yes, to what levels of church leadership should the women rise?

- Local Board  Provincial Board  National Board  International Board

7. What is your reason for selecting that level?

8. Do you think women should speak in church?  Yes  No

If Yes, from what levels?  Testimonies  Preaching  Meetings

9. Can women who are political leaders also be chosen to be leaders in the Church?

10. What roles should women play in the church when they rise to leadership?

11. In your view should the issue of gender equality be mentioned in church leadership?

Give reasons for your answer.

12. What is your comment to scriptures that denounce women from speaking in church?

13. How do they impact on the rise of women to top leadership positions in the church?

14. What is your message to the women in leadership positions in the church?

15. What is your message to men who work with women in leadership?

16. What is your message to men who do not like to work with women in leadership?

17. What do you see as the future of women in the AFM top leadership?



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