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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**Luke-Acts mission paradigm for the church in the socio-economic context of southern Zimbabwe.**

**By**

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate this thesis to Blessmore Musesewa Musariri, my wife. She made immense contributions to my entire academic journey.

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## **Declarations**

I declare that the thesis “Luke-Acts Mission Paradigm for the Church in the Socio-economic Context of Southern Zimbabwe” is my original work and that all sources consulted/quoted were fully acknowledged. I further proclaim that never before have I submitted it at any University/College for obtaining any qualification.

Signature: 

Date: 28 August 2023

## **Abstract**

This thesis analysed the relevance of Luke-Acts mission paradigm in dealing with socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. The aim was to find out if Luke-Acts can be applicable to the mission of the church to address socio-economic problems. The study first explored the current context of Southern Zimbabwe, discovered the meaning of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm by David Bosch (1991), explored the history of the causes of the socio-economic situation in Southern Zimbabwe, the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe and analysed the relevance of Luke-Acts mission paradigm by Bosch (1991) in solving socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. The study deployed qualitative research methods. Data used was collected from documentary sources as well as existing literature. Luke-Acts was used as a biblical narrative text where an analysis was done using the narrative critical hermeneutics supported by the historical critical hermeneutics. It discovered that Luke-Acts' main theme is forgiveness and solidarity with the poor. According to Bosch (1991), its key ingredients are; the Holy Spirit, correlation between the Jewish and Gentile mission, call to witness, repentance, forgiveness of sins and salvation, six dimensions of salvation, preaching the good news of peace by Jesus Christ, the church and that mission of necessity encounters adversity and suffering. The six dimensions of salvation are; economic, political, social, spiritual, physical and psychological, where Luke seems to give more concern to economic salvation. It was discovered that socio-economic problems in Southern Zimbabwe are a result of political, economic, social, spiritual and natural factors. Luke-Acts mission paradigm was found to be relevant in dealing with political, economic, social, spiritual and natural factors that contributed to socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. Some of these factors affect the entire Zimbabwean nation. It was discovered that the church should engage in a holistic mission through evangelism and social responsibility by individuals, denominations, ecumenical groups and Faith-Based Non-Governmental Organisations. The research recommends that the government give space for the church to contribute to socio-economic issues and also that other mission paradigms be analysed within particular contexts to equip the church for effective holistic ministry.

**Key Words:** Luke-Acts, church, socio-economic, holistic mission, Southern Zimbabwe

## **Acronyms**

ACCZ	African Christian Council of Zimbabwe
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AICs	African Independent Churches
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CCC	Citizens Coalition for Change
CI	Caritas International
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOCD	Heads of Christian Denominations
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation

MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
UDACIZA	Union for the Development of African Churches in Zimbabwe
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UFIC	United Family International Church
UN	United Nations
ZAADS	Zimbabwe Accelerated Clearing Debt and Development Strategy
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAOGA FIF	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa Forward in Faith
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZCA	Zimbabwe Christian Alliance
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZIICC	Zimbabwe Indigenous Inter-Denominational Council
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

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# Chapter One

## Introduction of the Study

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The world is experiencing change in almost every sphere of life. As a result, there is an increasing need for the church to realise this and adjust to new contexts. There are multiple challenges that continuously threaten the well-being of creation in this world. The church's role in this environment becomes critical as it has to be involved through its thinking and action towards these changes (Bosch, 1991:185). Goheen (2014:20-24) presents the challenges in the world today that the church needs to give attention to through its mission as; the fall of colonisation in the twentieth century, globalisation, urbanisation, social and economic challenges, growing world population, multiple religions throughout the world and the tectonic Western cultural movement. Hence, the church needs to engage in action through its mission to bring transformation in these areas as they directly or indirectly affect social and economic life.

As the church is trying to make itself relevant and useful to society, theologians have come up with different paradigms in the theology of mission (Franklin, 2016:242). David Bosch was one of the leading theologians to present different mission paradigms used throughout the history of the church and also what is called contemporary paradigms, which are relevant in addressing challenges affecting the world today (Goheen, 2014:122). Some theologians produce theologies that are relevant to current socio-economic changes and are interdisciplinary, which is amendable and necessary but to such an extent that it is no longer theology or mission but plain sociology and politically correct. New paradigms are produced even without critically evaluating Biblical paradigms within particular contexts like poverty. Since the Bible remains the main resource in Christian theology, biblically-based mission paradigms cannot be abandoned as the living Gospel from the Bible continues to be relevant for our day and age. Therefore, this study will critically engage with the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch, to evaluate the relevance of his description of the Luke-Acts paradigm for the socio-economic context of Southern Zimbabwe.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The major aim of this research is to critically analyse the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch (1991) in transforming the socio-economic context of Southern Zimbabwe. The Christian church is growing at a fast rate in Zimbabwe, whereas the socio-economic standards are deteriorating continuously. As the world is affected by various changes, with some being a threat to human welfare, the church needs to act towards the provision of solutions. Therefore, the role of mission becomes critical due to rapid changes experienced economically, politically, culturally, technologically, ecologically, spiritually and others. Failure to think and participate in these changes makes the church irrelevant and marginalized. The church needs to come up with relevant theologies and apply them to address the challenges facing the world.

Christian mission is going through rapid changes experienced in other subject fields as well, in response to changes in the world. Bosch (1991:185) argues that it is popular knowledge that the contemporary society is witnessing rapid changes in terms of ways of perceiving reality to another. Bosch (1991) introduces different mission paradigms. Various scholars are developing different Christian mission paradigms today and critically analysing existing ones. This is done even through using non-biblical extrapolations of mission. Goheen (2014:117) says that the crises affecting the world can be tempting for theologians to depart from the scripture as they try to deal with these contemporary challenges. The emergence of new mission paradigms without thoroughly evaluating the old ones, especially within local contexts or totally ignoring them, will deprive the church of the opportunity to get correction or enrichment from the existing paradigms used in other contexts in different stages of world history. It is crucial to know how the church engaged in mission in the past throughout various situations and settings. The research chose the Luke-Acts mission paradigm analysis to enhance the use and recognition of biblical mission paradigms by studying theology of mission from particular contexts in this case, Southern Zimbabwe. This will help the church contextualise Biblical mission paradigms into the contemporary Southern Zimbabwe, start looking where and what God is busy doing and start participating in the *Missio Dei*. This approach departs from the usual tradition of some churches that simply treat Biblical mission paradigms as outdated or irrelevant and move to other subject fields, like development and sociology, to stay relevant without any theological reflection.

### **1.3 Main Research Question**

Is the Luke-Acts mission paradigm, as described by Bosch, relevant in bringing socio-economic transformation through the church in Southern Zimbabwe?

#### **1.3.1 Sub-Questions**

What is the current context of Southern Zimbabwe?

What are the characteristics of Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch?

What are the causes of socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe?

What is the calling of the church in the Southern Zimbabwe context?

What are the contact points between the characteristics of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm and the Southern Zimbabwe context?

### **1.4 Aim**

The study aims to examine the relevance of Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch (1991) towards the socio-economic transformation within the Southern Zimbabwe context.

### **1.5 Objectives**

To achieve the above aim, the study pursues the following objectives which are to:

1. Do an analysis of the current context of Southern Zimbabwe
2. Critically engage the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch (1991)
3. Critically analyse the history of the socio-economic situation in contemporary Southern Zimbabwe
4. Evaluate the church ministry in Southern Zimbabwe.
5. Discuss the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch (1991) to bring possible socio-economic transformation in Southern Zimbabwe

## 1.6 Justification of the Study

Southern Zimbabwe yearns for a moment of socio-economic transformation as different challenges are obstructing destinies. When the community is seeking development and at the same time, obstacles are unavoidable, the church has to execute its missional calling to work towards the coming of the Kingdom of God. This demands that the church be involved in political and socio-economic transformation. The church is challenged to use theology in a relevant manner to address the Southern Zimbabwe's needs today in the face of its challenges. Bosch (1991) helps unfold different mission paradigms to address changes in society. Mission theologians are continuously reviewing mission paradigms and applying them to new contexts. This is done as an effort to still provide Good News to challenges the world is facing in contemporary times. According to Franklin (2016:53), the purpose of studying mission paradigms is not only to develop new paradigms that address new contexts, but build on the old paradigms to provide and also appreciate and promote the problem-solving ability in the old paradigms. If a new paradigm is to be produced, it has to complement the existing one instead of the church abandoning it. It is key to do an analysis of already existing paradigms within particular contexts and discover their limitations and strengths first. Within the African context, many Christian theologians are, in most cases, not trained and therefore, treat the Biblical mission paradigms as irrelevant to the current socio-economic contexts without taking time to evaluate them within their particular contexts.

In this research, the Luke-Acts paradigm, as described by Bosch (1991), is chosen as a Biblical mission paradigm to be evaluated within the context of Southern Zimbabwe and discover the Good News as an alternative to address the socio-economic transformation in Southern Zimbabwe. The Luke-Acts paradigm is chosen because of the significance of Luke's theology relating to poverty. For example, Bosch (1991:84) named a chapter of his book "*Luke-Acts: Practicing forgiveness and solidarity with the poor*" to capture this idea. A proper motivation for using this paradigm will be argued in chapter three. One of the advantages of using Biblical paradigms based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that the Gospel is timeless. This enhances the current study to discover the Good News for contemporary contexts. Goheen (2014:20) presents a number of changes in global realities affecting how the church is doing its mission today. These challenges are; the collapse of colonisation in the twentieth century, globalisation, urbanisation, increase in social and economic problems, increase in world population, multiple religions around the world and the cultural shift of the Western culture. These are the major sources of challenges in the world that have compelled

theologians to come up with different paradigms as a solution. It is clear that the community to which Luke was writing had to face some of these challenges but within a different context. The Luke-Acts paradigm may not be bound by place and time as the challenges in the world today were already in existence though sometimes in different forms and degrees during Luke's time. In this thesis, Southern Zimbabwe will be the context of the application of the Luke-Acts mission theology as described by Bosch (1991) due to the socio-economic crisis she is experiencing. The Luke-Acts paradigm seems to be relevant across different historical contexts. The theology of mission through the Luke-Acts paradigm is being investigated as a possible praxis and deed-oriented pattern for transforming Southern Zimbabwe due to its key themes of forgiveness and solidarity with the vulnerable.

## **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

### **1.7.1 Contextual Social Constructivism**

Contextual social constructivism constructs reality and explains social problems. This framework derives its influence from disciplines, such as social science, political science, philosophy, sociology, theology and others to make it a multidisciplinary theory. As a result, its primary concern is to understand individual, communal and societal realities according to social context and experiential views (Mead, 1934). It is argued in this study that community experience is not homogeneous, although some may share similar realities. These realities are clearly explained in the context of a particular region. Societies, within themselves, are diverse in different areas like cultural, social, political and others (Lartey, 2016:24). Plurality pervades Africa, including Southern Zimbabwe, an area under study in this research. This study evaluates the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in the context of Southern Zimbabwe to assess its applicability in transforming life because of such differences. The theology of the Christian mission should give attention to multiple positions and different perspectives. Doing Christian mission theology with a focus on the Southern region of Zimbabwe in the present time needs to be cognisant of the realities obtaining in contemporary Zimbabwe Southern region societies.

The analysis of the lived reality context-specific meanings that construct the general unit of analysis is believed to have been constructed by some social agents (Schwandt, 1998). This means that particular actors at particular times and places produced meaning out of situations. These paradigms may resemble the worldview to a certain extent but are not all-encompassing, in this

case, the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. Instead, actors and actions are assumptions that guide the theological discourse. This framework ensures the maintenance of a commitment to deal with a biblical text in relation to the contextual content presented by realities of experience (Bujo, 1992:16). The theology of Christian mission through the Luke-Acts paradigm in Southern Zimbabwe will, therefore promote the test of truth. Cone, when defining black liberation theology, says that “it is the study of the being of God in the world in light of the existing situation in an oppressed society” (Cone, 1997:15). This argument is relevant in the context of Christian mission in Zimbabwe. This thesis asks the question: what does the mission paradigm of Luke-Acts as Biblical text, according to Bosch’s interpretation communicate to the people in Zimbabwe particularly in the Southern region in relation to their socio-economic life.

Bosch (2006), in his theology of Christian mission, says that theology is to be worked out deductively first to establish exactly what the scripture communicates to a particular matter and then apply it to the believer in his current situation. In this regard, theology focuses on the interaction of their cultural, economic, ethical, social, spiritual and political, dimensions. This results in the theology of the Christian mission becoming multidisciplinary. According to Mugambi (1995), theology is the systematic expression of people’s reaction to God’s revelation in specific situations and contexts. This articulation and human response is better linked to the Zimbabwean situation for a better life in the Southern region. This time is when the church and theologians need to provide answers to creation and on areas like transformation, evangelism, mission and salvation as it is rooted in social factors like political stability, economic justice and community wholeness (Cone, 1997). As a result, theology of mission begins to make sense. Cone asserts that such theology can challenge societal structures because it is attached to the suffering community. The church in mission continues to interact with individuals and community structures. In this view, the mission becomes the hermeneutic of reality because it involves a multidisciplinary approach in addressing issues affecting human life (Heaney, 2015). The theology of Christian mission becomes important to issues of politics, gender, culture, economics, ecology, sexuality, race, religion, poverty and social transformation because of this issue. The social contextual constructionist framework emphasises much on historical and present developments.

## **1.8 Methodology**

Research methodology outlines the different clusters of operations done by theologians in their research (Mugambi, 2003). The African context is not homogeneous as a result of different realities. It, therefore, demands a plurality of methodologies in doing theology. Theology, which is active, needs to make an inquiry to be able to address contextual situations. This research used the qualitative research methodological category. It is the methodological category that involves different approaches to interpretive research. The methodology produces descriptive data from spoken or written words and observed behavior. Sources of data, such as existing texts and documents, were used.

Secondary data from the book of Acts, and the Gospel of Luke was primary to this study. The research also used existing literature for information about the Luke-Acts mission paradigm and the socio-economic situation in Southern Zimbabwe from libraries, the internet and other documents. Narrative Critical Hermeneutics was used to analyse the Luke-Acts biblical text against the socio-economic context of Southern Zimbabwe. Narrative analysis helped to gain insights through listening to Luke's stories and analysing what they mean in the socio-economic situation in Southern Zimbabwe. This apply to this research because Luke-Acts is a narrative text. People's world views can be discovered through this means (Bryman, 2012:582). Narrative hermeneutics enables us to know whether something spoken is important or not from the respondent's view or world (Battacherjee, 2012:12). Historical Critical Hermeneutics or analysis was also used to deal with the weaknesses of Narrative Critical Hermeneutics by providing the historical foundation of the story. The researcher did not give personal conclusions by applying own feelings or personal bias. The study used several data analysis techniques to cover for the shortfalls of other methods.

### **1.8.1 Analysis Method**

This study mainly used narrative critical hermeneutics as a key analysis method in analysing the Luke-Acts mission paradigm's relevance in addressing socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe because of the narrative nature of Luke-Acts (Kayumba, 2017:13). Although the Narrative Critical Analysis is key in this study because it enables some texts to invite the audience to participate in the creation of meaning as it shapes the way readers understand themselves and their own present circumstances, one of its limitations is that it treats texts as mere stories rather

than records of a significant time in history (Kreiger, 1964). In order to overcome this limitation, the historical critical hermeneutics was used on some of the texts. This is because it is important also to understand the text's meaning in its original setting. On the other hand, Historical Critical Hermeneutics is criticised for destroying the present meaning of a text (Lombaard, 2014). Due to this weakness, it cannot be used alone because the study's main focus is to make the Luke-Acts mission paradigm have a meaning in the present-day socio-economic situations in Southern Zimbabwe. This is also supported by Meylahn (2009:178), who says that hermeneutics was predominantly viewed as the science of interpreting texts' historicity using the historical-critical method, in the past. As a result of this, hermeneutical scholars ceased to act as theologians, but became historians that looked for historical truth in ancient texts. (Meylahn, 2009:178). This, therefore, resulted in less focus on interpreting texts in contemporary times, thereby losing the contemporary meaning of the Biblical texts.

#### **1.8.1.1 Narrative Critical Hermeneutics**

Narrative critical hermeneutics is considered as one of the new hermeneutics that responds to the shortcomings of Historical Critical method. This method focuses on narratives. Since this study focuses on Luke-Acts, which are New Testament texts, narrative critical hermeneutics is therefore relevant (Peterson, 1985). Its focus has "shifted from the historical foundations behind the text to what happens in front of texts" (Meylahn, 2009:179). It presents how the Word of God can be proclaimed today to build faith in the hearers. Instead of focusing on the text's historical context, narrative critical analysis comes with another dimension: "the text is interpreted when God is proclaimed" (Meylahn, 2009:180). Narrative Critical Analysis attempts to send stories with insights drawn even from modern literary criticism in order to assess the effects of these stories on the listeners (Powell, 1990:239). Luke-Acts is narrative in nature, and it is believed that the truth resides in narrating the story. Thus, retelling the story enhances how the story's meaning is conveyed, and it gives the story a new lease of life for the modern hearer or reader (Lombaard, 2014:2013). The narratological analysis of a text foregrounds the text's intrinsic value. This approach aims at discovering the text's meaning.

Kayumba (2017:13) argues that narrative criticism applies to the study of Luke-Acts because it explicitly works with three worlds: the world in a text (narrative world), world behind the text (text's referential world), and contextual world of the text (context of intended hearers). This



becomes relevant in this study that seeks to find the text's meaning in the contemporary context of a reader which is socio-economic situation in Southern Zimbabwe after understanding the meaning in and behind the text. On the other hand, Powell (1990) asserts that narrative analysis does not situate a text within its historical context, but focuses on the front of the text. As a result, the Historical Critical method is used to deal with the limitations of Narrative Critical Hermeneutics as it does not give much consideration to the historical context that informs the text.

Narrative Critical Hermeneutics becomes a suitable hermeneutic approach in this study because Luke-Acts as a Biblical text is a narrative. Personal narratives can construct identity. The Narrative Approach focuses on all the four constituent parts of hermeneutics: the author, text, subject and the targeted reader/listener. Of the four, the text is critical because meaning resides within it (Lombaard, 2014:213). Different narratives and contexts can be analysed against each other to examine if there are overwhelming similarities so that one can work as a hermeneutic bridge to explain the other. Similarities can be in the form of similar intentions/meanings of the authors and or readers, reference to the text and similar message of the text. Such similarities are used to assess Luke-Acts' mission paradigm's relevance in addressing socio-economic issues in Southern Zimbabwe.

It is important to note that Narrative Criticism considers the implied author, implied readers, and a normative process as some of its key principles. Narrative Criticism interprets texts by referring to their implied authors, but not to the real historical ones (Powell, 1990:240). The implied author refers the perspective informing the text that readers must reconstruct according to what they find in it. This principle always evinces certain beliefs, values and perceptions that can stand as representing the text's implied author. Powell (1990:241) also asserts that Narrative Criticism utilises this principle of an implied reader that seeks to assess the expected effects that stories can have on the imagined audience without considering their potential effects on the actual audience. The implied reader actualises the capability of the meaning in a text and responds to it in ways that are consistent with expectations that may be ascribed to its implied authors. Narrative Criticism can discover varied meanings that can have different applications in diverse contexts. The implied reader in this study is the church or community in Southern Zimbabwe or the audience who attempts to understand Luke-Acts from the Southern Zimbabwe context.

As Meylahn (2009) says that a Biblical narrative cannot apply to realities alone, but that they can also be used to create realities. This is one of the reasons why narrative analysis is used in this study. In other instances, narratives from Luke-Acts can be used to construct a novel reality even if what it says is different from what it is in the historical context of Southern Zimbabwe. What Luke intended to achieve in his context can also be achieved in a different context, like Southern Zimbabwe, through the ability of Luke-Acts narrative to create a reality. Its ability to create a new reality makes it relevant in bringing socio-economic solutions to the region. Since it is critical to first establish the author's intended meaning and the text's significance, narrative analysis also allows the interpretation from the reader's or audience's perspective according to his or her context. Therefore, some of the interpretations of Luke-Acts are influenced from the Southern Zimbabwe context. This supports what Meylahn (2013) says that when interpreting a scripture, one can start with the context and then move to theology. This implies that t one can interpret tradition and Scripture from the point of view of his or her context. This has been a bone of contention among practical theologians as to whether one should start with scripture or with context or praxis.

According to Meylahn (2013), theology is circular or spiral, without the starting point as the Scripture and the context continually influences each other, or one can even say that the one interprets the other. Therefore, it does not matter where one starts from in the interpretation. This is also because of the fact that how we view or interpret the world is influenced by many things like current life situation or context, socio-economic status, political orientation and religious views. The socio-economic context in Southern Zimbabwe can be influence the interpretation of Luke-Acts. The Triune God's story also helps to interpret life experiences in Southern Zimbabwe as the community is situated in other stories such as economic and social status, politics, religion, gender, culture and others. This means that the Bible is read involuntarily from specific historical and social contexts and after one's projection of their own convictions back into the Bible (Meylahn, 2013). However, theology should be worked out deductively first to precisely establish what the scripture says to a specific matter or in a certain text so that the normative guidelines will be used to influence the reader's present situation. Both the context and the text are hermeneutical keys that make possible the correct understanding of the Bible. The Word of God and the situation matter, as God's Word is not outside the situation. However, Meylahn (2013) argues that because

of this, theology remains risky as there is no guarantee that the interpretation of the Bible or the situation is done correctly.

In addition, Banana asserts that any effort to make theology apply to the Zimbabwean context should recognise the African worldview and situations (Gunda, 2015: 33). He says this because theology is specific to place and time (Banana, 1991). Problems that are faced today may differ from future ones as they may be different from those encountered in the past. As a result of these differences in the nature of problems, their solutions have to be sought from the local context. This supports interpretation from the perspective of the text's audience within a particular, and in this study, from the Southern Zimbabwe context. On the other hand, it is not always the case that problems of the past are different from today's as some problems that affect these different contexts may be similar. In the case of similarity, the Luke-Acts mission paradigm is used the same way it was used in the author's context.

In cases where there are differences, the text can be interpreted according to the current context to see if it can be applicable. This is in line with Banana's argument that local experiences are foundational in developing relevant theologies for Africa (Banana, 1991). This makes it possible for the current study to explore the applicability of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm to Southern Zimbabwe. He challenges the Bible's supremacy, arguing that revelation should not be viewed as a unique Israelite phenomenon because relevant theology is to be related to people's past and present experiences and their collective future vision (Gunda, 2015). On the other hand, the Bible can be held supreme whilst accommodating revelation that comes in the interpretation of a particular context. For Banana, doctrines developed outside the context of Africa are almost irrelevant and meaningless to Africa. It is like providing answers for questions that are not posed or asking wierd questions about current challenges (Banana, 1991). Therefore, to make Luke-Acts relevant in Southern Zimbabwe, interpretation has to begin from experiencing the socio-economic challenges. Banana also reverts to the Bible as carrying a meaning that can be applied in all contexts.

### **1.8.1.2 Historical Critical Hermeneutics**

This is a process that unveils the text to unravel its meaning. It intends to recapture and retrace the original meaning of a text in ancient context. Where possible, it can validly convey the meaning for today (Lombaard, 2014). Books of the Bible are often treated more as resources for historical

reconstruction than as works of literature in their own right (Frei, 1974). Historical Criticism views the Biblical narratives as windows enabling the study of something in another time and place. It is, therefore, important to also understand what was happening in Luke's context. This is because Historical Criticism usually seeks to assess intended effects of a text on an imagined targeted audience. Thus, the focus is on the original audience, a community to which a text was written (Powell, 1990:242). Historical-critical Hermeneutics is important in addressing shortfalls of Narrative Critical Hermeneutics because Narrative Criticism ignores potential responses that a real reader actually brings to texts and that the adoption of an implied reader's perspective presents a dialogue with what is objectionable in texts. After discussing Narrative Critical Hermeneutics and Historical Critical Analysis, this study used them in analysing the relevance of Luke-Acts mission paradigm in addressing the socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe.

### **1.8.2 Missiological Research Method**

Missiological research method was also used in this research to examine the church mission's relevance in dealing with socio-economic challenges affecting Southern Zimbabwe. Wan (2003) defines the missiological research method as the systematic, integrative and dynamic way of conducting a missiological study. This methodology creates a complete method of doing theology, giving concern on the value of theology's sub-disciplines. Missiological research method was developed by scholars who had interests which were theological, theoretical and practical in nature. Hendriks (2004:17) asserts that congregations are, in their essence, missional driven organisations; therefore, congregational theology becomes crucial in missiological studies. This study uses it as part of missiological research where the aim is to empower congregations to address challenges facing societies, such as pandemics, sexism, corruption, economic injustice, abuse of power and many others. There are socio-economic issues that this research is investigating to find out whether the Luke-Acts mission paradigm is relevant to address them or not. From a *missio Dei* perspective, this is a way of understanding God's will in a particular situation by emphasising on the critical understanding of the local congregation, its identity, context, resources and processes, investigating how we can participate in what God is busy doing. An analysis of the context in the case of this study, Southern Zimbabwe, helps to comprehend the needs, situations, and challenges of both the community and congregation. Results from this analysis are brought into a hermeneutically sensitive dialogue with the Scripture and issues that affect local

communities to understand what God wants the church to be and how it can be involved in God's work in a local context (Hendricks, 2004:13).

### **1.8.3 Contextualisation method**

This method says that texts do not have neutral or absolute meanings (Draper, 2001). The call for contextualisation scouts for relevance and applicability of a biblical text or a certain theology. In the present study, the Luke-Acts mission paradigm is the form of the theology of Christian mission. Mugambi (2012:23) talks of at least three possible methods of using contextualisation approach, namely, "from text to contexts, from context to particular texts and a two-way movement between texts and the contexts".

### **1.8.4 Theological Method**

Belief is the core assumption in our approach of doing theology. The understanding in this study is that theology is both a discipline and missionary enterprise (Hendricks, 2004:21; Bosch, 1991:389-393). Understanding theology as one discipline is important to consider all theological sub-disciplines when applying theology to a context like Southern Zimbabwe. Understanding theology as a missionary by nature in the epistemological core focuses on the Trinitarian God as He reveals Himself in the Bible and through the Holy Spirit's continuous non-manipulative and life-giving work (Hendricks, 2004:21). The church is the *ekklesia*, the called out and holy people of God, a Godly institution living under the authority of Scripture and with Jesus Christ as its only head. As such, Christians believe the triune God, keeps and builds the church, dwells in it so that it fulfills his mission. In this scheme, the church becomes His institution living under the authority of Scripture and with Jesus Christ as its only head. These beliefs about God, Scripture and the church have implications on how theological research should be conducted. It implies that as Christians, we live in obedience to God, according to our faith. Scripture is taken as the authoritative source and God's divine revelation to the world, described by humans in human language. The theological method now analyses the situation within which God's people operate and is relevant to the socio-economic context of God's mission. Theology aims at providing a coherent explanation of doctrines and life-styles of Christian faith primarily based on Scriptures situated in a context of life experiences.

### **1.8.5 Inclusivity Approach**

Mugambi (1995) asserts that theology needs to be all-encompassing. Societies in Africa demand a kind of theology that overcomes Christian denominational and ethnic bias but is universal to bring genuine transformation. All disciplines of life are to be involved for theology to be relevant. Excluding other societal members on the community development will negatively affect the results. This method is closely linked to the multidisciplinary approach. Theology of Christian mission involves other disciplines for the transformation of the society. This argument justifies the relevance of this method.

This thesis analyses the socio-economic realities in Southern Zimbabwe and assert the theology's demands of Christian mission through the Luke-Acts paradigm for it to impact the livelihoods of the generality of the population. Christian mission in Southern Zimbabwe is complex. Accordingly, it cannot be addressed with a single approach. The study uses several approaches, and this calls for extensive data collection and interpretation.

### **1.9 Ethical Considerations**

Throughout this research, the writer follows the ethics of modern scholarship and the University of Pretoria research ethical standards. This research process will ensure that the integrity of the research process is maintained by promoting ethical responsibilities towards participants (O'Leary, 2004:49). In the process of generating new knowledge, the research will try to bring a balance on subjectivities, give accurate research information, act within the law and acquire the required knowledge of research. Falsification of data as well as plagiarism, will be avoided. All sources of information will be acknowledged.

### **1.10 Classification of Terms**

At this stage, it is important to clarify some keywords' meanings used in this study, although they will be defined further.

#### **1.10.1 Christian Mission**

The word mission comes from a Latin term *mittere*, which means the act of sending (Hirsch, 2016). The term mission is amorphous. It is difficult to define what it entails in explicit terms because it has undergone a paradigm shift in history and indexes several meanings (Mwaura, 2006). This is because everything about the church and God is missional. The common meaning given to mission is the evangelistic preaching of the Good News and efforts in establishing churches. However,

there is *missio-Dei*, a transformation in the understanding of God's mission (Bosch, 1991). Christian mission is witnessing the engagement to the gospel in multiple life situations. It has to be contextually active, biblically relevant, appropriate, and transformational. Engen (1994) argues that the centrality of mission is not only what the church does in its missional activities but also in the centrality of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments. The triune God creates the church and sustains it through giving gifts of Word and sacraments by the Spirit. This kind of a missional church comprehends its participation in God's mission as contextual by dealing faithfully with challenges in a comprehensive and holistic manner. To be precise, mission captures what God does and his identity. Mission is about God's redeemed people and what He sends them to do into the world. It cannot be denied that the Zimbabwean economy has deteriorated whilst the church is growing. Therefore, this context questions how the church does its mission that enhances the transformation of human life.

### **1.10.2 Luke-Acts Mission Paradigm**

It is important to begin by providing a general definition of a paradigm before defining it in the context of Luke-Acts. A paradigm is a pattern of reference for the development of a way of viewing a given topic or a reality (Franklin, 2016:52). Franklin (2016:52) also says that a paradigm is an important instrument to explore solutions in a number of subjects. In this research, we are dealing with the theology of Christian mission as a topic. Therefore, the Luke-Acts paradigm is the understanding of the theology of mission from the Gospel of Luke and the Acts's perspective (Bosch, 1991:67). In simple terms, it is how Luke presents Christian mission through his books, the Gospel of Luke and Acts. This understanding of mission covers the period of Jesus' life on earth and the time of the establishment of the early church. The interpretation of Luke's projection of mission can be applied to mission in the church today as Luke's writings are still being used to minister the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Bosch (1991) informs us that Luke, unlike Matthew and Mark who wrote one book each, wrote two books, the Gospel of Luke and Acts. This is because he wanted to show the relationship between Jesus's mission and that of the early church (Bosch, 1991:67). Among other themes, the key themes of Luke-Acts mission paradigm are forgiveness and solidarity with the poor (Bosch, 1991:42).

### **1.10.3 Socio-economic Transformation**

It is the process of economic and social development in the society. Socio-economic transformation is achieved by overcoming factors that negatively affect individuals or society's social and economic activities. Poverty shows one's socio-economic status that is, the individual's or group's position on the hierarchy of social structure depending on many variables, such as education, income, occupation, wealth and place of residence (Cone, 1997). Socio-economic wrongs are caused by factors which include cultural and religious discrimination, lack of education, unemployment, overpopulation, natural disasters, economic and political exploitation and corruption, to mention but a few. Acts of mission that brings socio-economic transformation today is the humanisation of the society by providing service to mankind through reconciliation with God, our neighbour and the environment. The church needs to participate in the diaconal ministry of Jesus to serve mankind unselfishly, thereby making life on earth more human. Christians use the Triune God's revelation to interpret life experiences. Meylahn (2012) argues that other life stories like culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, economic and social status, family, friends and others are also needed to fulfil the welfare of creation.

### **1.10.4 Church**

The term is highly debated because it attracts several explanations and ambiguities (Manyonganise & Chirimuuta, 2011:288). Christianity in Africa is characterised by denominationalism. The word church can be used in varied ways and for several objectives. It can mean a structural institution, place of worship, building, group of people who believe in Christ or Christian mission agency. According to Shambare (2018:66), there are six manifestations of the church as identified by Smit (1996) as a local congregation, an ecumenical fellowship of different churches at different levels, a community of worship, a particular denomination, Christian organisations operating in a society and life of individuals reflecting their faith in Christ. These sociological differentiations are a result of differences in purpose and needs. They are theologically correct and important because they assist in understanding the church's role in society (Conradie, 2007). The missiological value of the church is shown through its interaction with existential realities the society is facing and coming together with mankind in its challenges (Shambare, 2018). Meylahn (2012:27) describes the church as God's gift to the world as an alternative community. It is a social system which is also part of other political, cultural, economic systems. All these systems are continually changing throughout history. Mugambi (1995) views the church as an organisational framework used to



reflect and appreciate people's worldviews. It is then the embodiment of Christ's presence and in action. The church has a mandate from God and to the world since it is in the world to minister the goodness of God. As a result, Christians should not avoid participation in political, economic and moral issues affecting their economy.

In this research, the term church is used in its general sense. However, when referring to particular denominations, they are mentioned by their names. According to Nkansah (2017), the term church is used in five different senses today which are; as a building designated for worship, people who have faith in Christ despite theological differences, a denomination, single organised Christian groups, such as a local church and as the body of Christ being the universal church. Although these are contemporary people's understanding and descriptions of the church, there is also a need to look at the Biblical meaning of the church. This is important in discerning the purpose and nature of the church, as well as its function in the society. The term Church is derived from the Greek term *ekklesia*, meaning "the called out ones" (Harrison, 1996), or comes from *kuriakos*, "belonging to the Lord" Erickson (1998:1041). However, Erickson indicates that *kuriakos* should be understood in relation to the New Testament Greek term *ekklesia* (Erickson, 1998). When *kuriakos* and *ekklesia* are joined, it helps to define the term church. Thus, the church is described as a people who are called out of the world and who belong to the Lord, meaning those that live in obedience to Him. This description stresses that people are called out for a purpose and should obey the Lord. When defining the church, one should recognise what the church is called for or the guiding principles.

The church is called out of the world into becoming the followers of Christ (church) so that they can obediently participate in the mission of God (*missio Dei*) in the world where the purpose is to participate in establishing the reality of the kingdom of God. The church, therefore, has a dual function of being called out and sent back. Its duty is summed up in God's love and of one's neighbour that needs to be demonstrated in the world. This defines the church in the secular sense of the term *ekklesia* that signifies the assembling of citizens to conduct the affairs of the *polis* (Harrison, 1996). Thus, the mission (purpose of conducting affairs) and nature (assembling) are connected. In its secular sense, the word *ekklesia* refers to an assembly or gathering of people. This meaning is found in Acts 19:32, 39 and 41 (Erickson, 1998). The name was given to the city council in the Greek city-states where all males were invited to congregate for the community's

business (Dudley & Hilgert, 1987). In the New Testament, the term *ekklesia* indexes the Christian church as in Acts 15:41, and the universal church, as in Acts 20:28 (Nkansah, 2017:282).

Dudley and Hilgert (1987) say that the Bible's Septuagint version provided a bridge for using the term *ekklesia* from secular to Christian use. This is enhanced by how the translator of the Greek version of the Old Testament selected a secular term when describing a religious congregation of God's people. To understand *ekklesia*, one should consider both Hebrew and classical Greek contexts. There is a relationship between the classical Greek use of the term *ekklesia* and its meaning with the Old Testament assemblies. The Old Testament uses two terms in this regard: *qahal* and *edah*. *Qahal* indexes the act of assembling (Erickson, 1998:1042). A special attention should be given to the fact that *ekklesia* never refers to *edah*, a gathering that represents the people as a national unit. The Old Testament church continues to the New. Dudley and Hilgert (1987) point out that in using *ekklesia* to refer to their communities, Christians thus selected a term that was meaningful to both Gentiles and Jews. In the Old Testament, God called people to Himself, the same way Jesus does in the New Testament. The church, in the context of the New Testament, is the congregation of believers, as in Acts 5:11, Antioch in Acts 13:1 and 1 Corinthians 1:12, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:2, as well as specific churches in Revelations 1-3 (Nkansah, 2017:282). It is not only the church in specific places but also the different churches in unity, like the gathering in Acts 15, where the leaders of the churches met. The term church and believers can be used interchangeably.

### **1.10.5 Southern Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is a landlocked nation that shares the border with Mozambique on the east, South Africa to the south, Botswana on the west and Zambia on the north (Shambare, 2018:68). It is a former British colony that gained independence in 1980. This political transition indexed the black people's triumph over settler apartheid system and racism (Chitando, Taringa & Mapuranga, 2014:174). It is characterised by communal and commercial lands, mines, recreational places, towns and cities. Bulawayo, Masvingo, Gweru, and Mutare are some of examples of cities in Southern Zimbabwe. Southern Zimbabwe is a region in Zimbabwe that is frequently affected by drought as it is in dry climatic regions three, four and five. Southern Zimbabwe, especially the Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands areas, was once affected by political challenges in the early 1980s where a big number of civilians were killed by government troops, dissidents and

youth brigades in what is termed *Gukurahundi* (Muzondidya, 2011:32). Southern Zimbabwe is constituted by a number of tribes that include the Kalanga, Khoisan/Tjwa, Nambya, Ndebele, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda, Shangani, Shona, and Ndau. There are other African ethnolinguistic groups of Zambia and Malawian extraction, such as the Ngoni and Chewa. These are mainly found in mining areas. Different religions including African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity represented by multiple denominations, Hinduism and Islam are also part of this region. In this research, Southern Zimbabwe refers to Matabeleland provinces, Masvingo province, south of the Midlands and south of Manicaland provinces.

### **1.11 Literature Review**

In this study, it is acknowledged that there are several unpublished and published literature on Christian mission towards the transformation of societies. Literature review surveys existing knowledge in the study area, know major scholarly voices and methods employed in conducting research and also identify knowledge gaps in that particular research area (Fink, 1998:3). This section reviews literature on the Luke-Acts mission paradigms, and related issues. The ultimate goal is to identify points of convergence and divergence with extant literature on Biblical mission paradigms.

Bosch (2006) argues that in doing Christian mission, Biblical foundation must be firmly laid down first. Once the foundation is laid down from the Bible, one may move ahead to elucidate on the practice of mission and critically analyse it in the light of the Bible. On the other hand, Bosch (2006:43) says that the Bible is just one of the several sources of the theology of mission. It is true, as he says, that apart from Biblical and dogmatic foundations, missiology can be propounded ecclesiastically, historically, ethnologically and many more as well. This now means that mission can be understood differently throughout denominations, in different times and places. This calls for the continued need for conducting research on it to close gaps that these factors create. Luke-Acts mission paradigm is a Biblically-based theology of mission which in this research needs to be evaluated within the Southern Zimbabwe context.

The main focus of this research is to explore the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in transforming the socio-economic situation in Southern Zimbabwe. As a result, it is key to understand the socio-economic situation in Southern Zimbabwe. Bourne (2011:25) argues that the history of Zimbabwe is narrated within three main epochs: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial.

It is from this history that we can understand the socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe up to this contemporary time. Colonisation from the 1880s affected the normal life of Zimbabweans, like other nations throughout the African continent, where indigenous Africans were dispossessed of their land by the Western colonisers (Banana, 1991). However, there was a significant economic development during the colonial era. Haslam and Lamberti (2014:27) asserts that in the 1960s, going forward, Zimbabwean economy developed rapidly as its agricultural produce was exported to South Africa, other African nations and Europe. Local farms developed knowledge in farming major grains, cotton, tobacco, and timber. Mining activities were also doing well. Zimbabwe is endowed with minerals like chrome, lithium, nickel, iron, coal, silver, platinum, gold, diamonds, and others. Its economic success resulted in the development of sophisticated infrastructure, roads, hospitals, water systems and others. As Zimbabwe's production level exceeded the needs of its population, she became Africa's breadbasket.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Zimbabwe's socio-economic situation began to deteriorate (Bourne, 2011:160). Some state-run institutions collapsed, and the state could no longer provide citizens with basic goods and services. It also stifled dissenting voices and violated political and civil rights. Instruments of coercion remained strong. Chitando (2002) also posits that soon after independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was doing well in education, health, agriculture, mining and others. Later on, Zimbabwe began to struggle due to many challenges such as economic meltdown, International Monetary Fund (IMF)-sponsored economic structural adjustments, corruption by government officials, political violence, ethnic conflicts, scarcity of land, natural disasters like drought, cyclones and HIV and AIDS pandemic (Chitando, 2002). Bourne (2011:161) asserts that other factors like the Zimbabwe's chaotic land redistribution exercise in 2000 caused damages to the socio-economic life of Zimbabweans. Both farmers and farm workers were affected. Many farm workers lost livelihoods, while some were killed and assaulted. The majority of them were Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political party. As a result of this, there was a loss of agricultural production and exports.

Other causes for the socio-economic decline are Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 which was directed to urban areas where opposition party MDC had its key support base. It was a forced eviction of families living in shacks that did not meet the planning requirements. These houses were destroyed to clean the cities (Bourne, 2011:194). Political violence around the years 2000

and 2008 elections caused much damage to the citizens' welfare. Currently, like the whole part of the world, including Zimbabwe, is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which is a threat to social and economic life in several ways. Companies have been closed due to lockdown regulations in an effort to curb the pandemic. In addition, some social gatherings have been banned or regulated.

Antone (2008) argues that the language paradigms and paradigm shifts entered the theological discourse in the 1980s. Bosch (1991), through the use of Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) who first worked on paradigms, did a study of major paradigms of mission throughout the history of the church. Kuhn (1970) posits that a paradigm is a universally-recognised scientific progress that provides model challenges and solutions to a particular community of practitioners for a particular time. A paradigm reveals a consensus view of a particular community by its members intentionally and unconsciously or unintentionally acknowledged. Kuhn (1970) also says that a society's reality is determined by a paradigm it uses to interpret the world. Thus, Bosch (1991) came up with different mission paradigms as the church used them at different times and contexts. The Luke-Acts mission paradigm is one of the Biblical paradigms that the early Christian church used.

Juma and Vorster (1998:116) say that the theory of paradigms is very broad as it is discussed in different fields like science, religion and history. The theory helps to explain changes that have occurred throughout the church's history. The evaluation of paradigms assists to know the historical structures and changes by emphasising on both the key constants and decisive variables simultaneously. Changes in circumstances may result in a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift is a replacement of a former valid paradigm by the new one. The shift may not necessarily be a major replacement but minor adjustments (Juma & Vorster, 1998). When beliefs and values of a particular community can no longer adequately provide solutions to problems of that particular society or have become irrelevant, it calls for an alternative way to address the society's problems. This phenomenon has been noticed throughout church history, where there were shifts from one epoch to the other, resulting also in the change of personal perspectives, scriptural interpretation and the spread of the church from one community to another. This means a paradigm relevant in one community and at a particular space of time may be irrelevant in a different setting.

Juma and Vorster (1998:118) argue that theology and science are different in a way in which paradigm shifts occur. This agrees with Bosch's (1991:186) view that, in theology, a new paradigm does not immediately replace the old one, and the two paradigms may even co-exist. Throughout

all the periods of church history characterised by different paradigms, it is acknowledged that some key issues and even the influence of the main models remain in existence throughout all epochs, thereby uniting the church with its origin (Kung, 1996). This means the Luke-Acts mission paradigm, as one of the foundational paradigms used at the beginning of the Christian church, may need to continue in use when key issues that originally influenced it exist. If the Luke-Acts paradigm is not adequate to address all problems, other paradigms may also be used to complement for the transformation of society.

Esler (1996:1) argues that when Luke was writing Acts and the Gospel of Luke, he was providing the general position of the church in the world. His writing is not simply a work of an armchair theologian answering mere religious questions. However, his intention was to make fellow Christian believers have the right attitude which together with their community, should adopt in relation to their political, economic and social environment. Luke was concerned with the life of his community in all its spheres: economic, political, social and religious (Esler, 1996:2). Social and economic factors had greatly influenced Luke's theology. Luke formed the Gospel traditions in response to political and social challenges faced by his community, although these factors may not constitute the complete reason for the authorship of Luke-Acts. Predito (1997:8) shares the same view as Esler (1996) that Luke's theology intends to demonstrate the relation of personal salvation to social transformation. Luke believed strongly in both personal and social aspects of salvation. His perspective towards the hope for the marginalised, challenge to the powerful and theological themes on salvation, reign of God, repentance, conversion, and Holy Spirit helps the reader to gain an insight for complete evangelism that transforms both personal and social life. Predito (1997:9) also asserts that Luke's writing challenges Christians to minister the Gospel in different contexts and times in all its transformational fullness. He further says that the socio-economic, political and personal transformation of individuals and corporate structures is at the centre of Luke's theology. Bosch (1991:42) also says that Luke's theology equips the church into an all-inclusive mission for the sinner and devout, oppressed and oppressor, rich and poor and crosses boundaries to break walls of alienation and hostility between individuals and groups.

Esler (1996), Predito (1997) and Bosch (1991) agree that Luke's view of salvation is mainly about the elimination of injustice, dealing with the suffering of the poor and destitute and not merely the eschatological reality, but welfare in this world, here and now. Esler (1996:33) says there is a

universality theme in Luke-Acts where Jesus is recognised as the salvation prepared for all people. This universal theme makes the Southern Zimbabwe context relevant in applying the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. Bosch (1991:112) also talks about the correlation of the Jewish and Gentile mission. Since Luke's theology is related to the social realities of his communities, it is reasonable to make use of the same theology when addressing social realities in contemporary Southern Zimbabwe as factors that were affecting Luke's community which are social, political, economic, among others are also causes of socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe today. There is even politically sensitive material in Luke-Acts, such as the judicial context of the Gospel, mention of significant politicians and others to mean that it can also be used to deal with political issues.

Bosch (1991) is the leading theologian to explicitly discuss the Luke-Acts mission paradigm among other paradigms. It is, therefore, key that, at this stage, I provide a brief description of his view on the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. He classifies mission paradigms into three main categories, which are Biblical mission paradigms, historical mission paradigms and postmodern mission paradigms (Bosch, 1991). His biblical mission paradigms comprise his interpretation of mission according to the Gospel of Matthew, Luke, apostle Paul and shortly Old Testament. Historical mission paradigms consist of mission according to the Early Eastern Church, Medieval Roman Catholic church, Protestant Reformation and the influence of the Enlightenment period. The last class of paradigms is the postmodern mission paradigm which is about the end of the modern era and the ecumenical mission paradigm. Bosch (1991:32) argues that missiology should begin with Biblical foundations, and it is upon this foundation that the author can move on to develop his theology of mission. It is because of this reason that the Luke-Acts mission paradigm, as a Biblical mission paradigm, is to be utilised first in addressing the needs of the society and then move to other paradigms if the gap still exists.

In brief, I am providing the major ingredients of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm according to Bosch (1991:111-117) as one of the leading theologians to interpret this paradigm from Acts and the Gospel of Luke. Firstly, Luke has much concern on pneumatology, where the risen Christ is present in the community through the Holy Spirit. His presentation shows that there is no immediate return of Christ, and the Spirit is now the driving force for mission as the power of the Spirit gives boldness to witness. This empowerment enables the church to challenge social,

economic, spiritual and political structures that are against the welfare of God's creation. Secondly, Luke presented the correlation between the Jewish and Gentile missions. Jesus is presented by Luke as the first Messiah of Israel, and salvation is also extended to the gentiles. Since, according to Luke-Acts, salvation is extended to the Gentiles, Southern Zimbabwe, as a gentile community, can use the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. Another key point on Lukan mission paradigm is about the church as the witness of the Gospel. The gospel refers to suffering, death, resurrection of Jesus and its significance.

In addition, Luke talks about repentance, forgiveness of sins and salvation as other key themes in his writings. Salvation is interpreted as liberation from all bondages to new life in Christ (Bosch, 1991:114). Luke insists on repentance and conversion of Gentiles. Conversion then moves a believer into the community of believers and experiences a change in life that comes with moral responsibilities to those inside and outside. Therefore, it means the Luke-Acts mission paradigm enhances a change in social life. Another key ingredient to the Luke-Acts mission paradigm that is crucial in this study towards socio-economic transformation is the meaning of the concept salvation. According to Luke, salvation has six dimensions which are spiritual, physical, political, social, economic and psychological. Bosch (1991:115) says that among these, Luke seems to give much focus to economic salvation, that is, the relationship between the poor and the rich. Matthew focuses on justice in general, while Luke has a particular interest in economic justice. This is mainly shown in Jesus's mission statement in Luke 4: 16-30. Jesus drew the listeners' attention to the real conditions of the poor, blind, captives and the oppressed and not only on heavenly matters. By so doing, Luke championed God's preferential option for the poor.

Luke also gives emphasis on the preaching of peace and good news by Jesus Christ as in Acts 10: 36. Peace-making is a key element of Luke's mission paradigm where there is no room for vengeance in the heart of Jesus' followers as projected in Acts and the Gospel of Luke. Luke also presents his understanding of ecclesiology in his paradigm. He views mission as the church's enterprise where apostles are witnesses for the continuity of Jesus' history and the church. Luke's church is both inward and outward. Inward is when the community devotes itself to the apostles' teachings, fellowship and prayers. The outward side is when the church engages in mission to those outside the gospel and the church's inner life and outer life are connected. The last ingredient to Lukan mission paradigm is that mission encounters adversity and suffering; therefore, the



church should be bold in the context of this adversity. These are the major elements of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as Bosch (1991) indicates. This study evaluates them within the context of Southern Zimbabwe to find out whether they are relevant in addressing her socio-economic issues and also try to find out if existing authors have left out some key ingredients.

Bosch (1991) argues that in an attempt to revise the meaning of mission there is a need to look at the regular changes of missionary ideas and mission in the twentieth-century Christian church. He traces the flow of successive missionary paradigms from the first to the twentieth-century. Bosch says that the world in the 1990s is not the same as the world out of Edinburgh in 1910 that believed that the entire world would abruptly be made Christian, and the world of mission in the 1960s that predicted that all humankind would be delivered from want and injustice. The harsh realities compel Bosch and other theologians to re-conceive and reformulate the church mission, but with the continuity of the form of the mission already in existence in the past decades and centuries (Bosch, 1991). Existence of different types of mission does not lead to the exclusion of another. Mission needs to be multicoloured, complementary and mutually enriching. Therefore, multiple views of the mission should be produced instead of one pattern of mission. This means that the Luke-Acts mission paradigm may still have a role to play in the field of mission. Even if it may fail to be relevant in other areas of human need, other paradigms are welcome to assist. According to Bosch (1991:63), the study of the early church and the New Testament enables a clear understanding of mission during that time and today. Luke-Acts paradigm is another method to understand mission during the time of Jesus, early Christian church and now. Through this paradigm, we understand how the author interpreted mission in his community and how church can use it as a model for mission today.

In his interpretation of Christian mission according to the New Testament, Bosch (1991) uses only the book of Matthew, Luke, Acts and Pauline epistles, ignoring other books. He also gives little concern to the Old Testament form of mission. Transforming mission is the presentation of the theology of mission by David Bosch from the New Testament times to contemporary times. Bosch writes from the background that mission was in a crisis from within due to a loss of purpose and motivation and from outside as it was becoming irrelevant to the purpose of the society (Brueggeman, 1991). What Bosch says is that mission needs transformation. Since Bosch's writing about mission paradigms until now, the same problems that were affecting the world and the

church are still in existence. Amura (2015:191) argues that a new paradigm, when produced, grows, generates new knowledge and matures in the context of various factors experienced and, at last, becomes a problem-ridden paradigm which needs to be abandoned. He says this as a justification for the production of new paradigms. Amura (2015) also asserts that old paradigms remain the same as other groups may continue to use them and can be rediscovered. This led us to a position that influenced this study to do a critical evaluation of the Luke-Acts paradigm to ascertain its relevance towards transforming socio-economic life (Amura, 2015). The old paradigm can also be used simultaneously with other paradigms as they will complement each other. Amura (2015) says that according to Bosch, mission and the source of paradigm shifts can only be done according to the gospel at all times. Theology needs always to be relevant and in line with God's revelation throughout Israel's history, and Jesus Christ event (Amura, 2015:191). This provides a fertile ground for this study of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as the biblical books concerned are about the event of Jesus. Luke also in his writing gives reference to Old Testament events concerning Israel.

When Bosch (1991) interpreted the new mission paradigms he refers to as relevant in addressing contemporary challenges in the world, he had a mentality of producing a form of theology that helped to eradicate challenges from the changes taking place in the world. However, his work is criticized by other scholars for a number of weaknesses. Kim (2000) says that gender, ecological and multi-spiritual issues, among others, are at the centre of the world's major problems, but Bosch failed to deal with these issues in his study. He hardly touches on the global environmental crisis. In his chapter concerning postmodern paradigm, he simply notes about eco-feminist dimensions where one should see self as mother earth's progeny and a sibling to other humanity. He does not mention feminism as a theological or philosophical movement. This means his theology is retrospective. It addresses issues that are already addressed, leaving the debates of today. As a result, it creates a gap that influences this study also. Predito (1997:75) posits that Luke's theology is universal and it challenges the status quo on issues like gender discrimination. There are many events recorded by Luke as he tried to bring a balance between men and women. These include birth narratives where Luke presents Mary being talked to by the angel and not Joseph, parallels of Mary with Zachariah in angelic communication, temple scene bringing a balance between the man Simeon and woman Anna, queen of Sheba, widow of Nain, to mention but a few.

A need for the reevaluation of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm now arises. This is done to find out whether Luke's perspective on mission leaves out issues like ecology, interaction of the gospel or church with multi-faith societies and gender issues or that they are involved but Bosch (1991) omitted them in his interpretation. The books of Luke present mission as an endeavor of God through the church to reach to the gentiles. It is without doubt that when we talk about the spread of the gospel to the whole world, communities with different faiths are included as they are part of the world. There is, therefore, a need to analyse, according to Luke, how the church interacted and Christianity is to interact with other religions. In Acts and the Gospel of Luke, issues to do with the ecological environment and participation of women in life are included.

Goheen (2014) writes on, 'historical paradigms of mission'. Mission to him is the people of God's participation in the mission of God for the welfare of His creation. According to Goheen (2014:117), mission takes various shapes according to the cultural and historical context and time. He further says that for us to know how mission is shaped by the context today, we need not to rush to produce new paradigms without going through the forms of mission that were used throughout the history of the church. It is ahistorical to rush to new paradigms as we try to deal with the contemporary situation. The scripture should be addressed whenever we are treating current prevailing situations. Tracing the history of Christian mission through paradigms is important in giving the church a chance to know its failures and successes throughout history. Therefore, the study of historical paradigms gives the church a chance to get correction and enrichment through knowledge of church mission throughout its historical eras in different cultural contexts. As a result, Goheen (2014) laid it clear that it is important to study mission paradigms used by the church, and in this case, the Luke-Acts mission paradigm has been chosen.

Goheen (2014) asserts that this is the excellent of telling the Christian mission's story. Further, he concurs with David Bosch's mission paradigms in his discussion of mission history. Mission paradigms are tools for tracing the history of the church, as she reasoned, and participated in its missional roles through several ways of gospel ministry from Jewish to Gentile settings. Myers (2003) came up with six main categories of Christian mission paradigm in the history of the church, like Bosch (1991). These are the early church paradigm, patristic orthodox paradigm, medieval Roman Catholic, protestant reformation, modern mission era and the emerging mission paradigm of the third millennium. These are similar to Bosch's, which are: early church, eastern church,

Roman Catholic or medieval, reformation, mission in the work of enlightenment and ecumenical or postmodern paradigms (Goheen, 2014:121). The Luke-Acts paradigm falls under the early Christian church mission paradigm.

The exclusion of biblical paradigms means that Goheen (2014) does not give attention to the foundation of the Christian mission, that is, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, as he later handed over the ministry to the early church. Doing theology of mission without these biblical paradigms as a base is a futile exercise because the church's ministry is anchored on the gospel of Jesus Christ. What Goheen (2014) does is the evidence that these biblical paradigms are, in many occasions, omitted in the study of mission as theologians and churches quickly rush to new paradigms. If the history of mission is to be understood and appreciated fully, the study of mission has to go back to the times of Jesus. In addition, Goheen (2014) does not apply these mission paradigms into contexts so as to justify the reason for the emergence of new paradigms. This can also help appreciate the work performed by old paradigms, thereby reviewing or applying them to contemporary situations if found still relevant. The inherent problem of using the old paradigm because the term 'old' may index that such paradigms have no relevance to the present. This may invite negative sentiments pointing to the Bible as an old book that does not apply to the current milieu. In addition, historical paradigms are contextual so they never disappear within certain contexts as they might function again. On the other hand, I agree that paradigms are not complete, therefore, new paradigms are always developing as the context changes.

Goheen (2014) presents that Alan Kreider suggests the following three primary mission paradigms: pre-Christendom, Christendom and post-Christendom. He presents that Lamin Sanneh came up with five phases of Christian mission: Jewish phase, gentile breakthrough with the Hellenistic culture, reformation, nineteenth century liberalism and a more ecumenical phase during when the gospel was spread to African and Asian cultures. These different phases provide different means of understanding the church's mission. The study of the Luke-Acts paradigm is, therefore, aims at knowing the relationship of the gospel with other cultures in this particular context, Southern Zimbabwe in Africa.

## **1.12 Structure**

### **1.12.1 The different chapters and their headings:**

**Chapter 1:** Introduction of the Research

**Chapter 2:** Analysis of the current context of Southern Zimbabwe

**Chapter 3:** Critical engagement of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm context

**Chapter 4:** The history of the socio-economic situation in contemporary Southern Zimbabwe

**Chapter 5:** Church Ministry in Southern Zimbabwe

**Chapter 6:** The relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in bringing socio-economic transformation in Southern Zimbabwe

**Chapter 7:** Summary, findings, the study's results, recommendations for future studies, and the general conclusion.

## **1.13 Conclusion**

The church needs to participate in processes that bring transformation in all domains of life in the face of rapid social change affecting its well-being. This can be achieved through the production and application of relevant theologies of mission. To achieve this, theologians have come up with different paradigms of mission. David Bosch is believed to be the leading missiologist who presented several mission paradigms that the church used throughout its history. The challenge with some theologians and the church today is to rush and produce new mission paradigms and abandon existing ones even without evaluating them in particular contexts. The need for putting mission paradigms to test motivates this study to evaluate the Luke-Acts mission paradigm within the Southern Zimbabwe context. Qualitative research methodology through existing literature, Narrative Critical Hermeneutics and Historical Critical Analysis were used to analyse data. The chapter has also reviewed relevant literature, including David Bosch, the primary theologian on the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. The next chapter is now going to explore on the background of Southern Zimbabwe.

# Chapter Two

## Analysis of the Current Context of Southern Zimbabwe

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the current context of Southern Zimbabwe. It is important to begin by appreciating the environment within which the research is conducted, and the church is operating. There are several factors influencing the socio-economic life in this region; therefore, a need to analyse these different factors that characterise Southern Zimbabwe as we are also going to link the Luke-Acts mission paradigm to what is happening in this area.

### 2.2 Geographical and Demographical Characteristics

Zimbabwe is a landlocked nation that shares the border with Mozambique on the east, South Africa to the south, Botswana on the west and Zambia on the north (Shambare, 2017). Zimbabwe consists of ten provinces: Bulawayo, Harare, Manicaland, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Midlands, Matebeleland North, Matebeleland South, and Masvingo. In this study, Southern Zimbabwe comprises of the following: Bulawayo, Masvingo, Matebeleland South and the Southern parts of Midlands, Southern parts of Matebeleland North and Southern parts of Manicaland. Zimbabwe's population is distributed between urban and rural areas. Its population redistribution occurs due to internal migration, resettlement and geographical boundary shifts (Zimstat, 2013). Provinces are divided into administrative districts and wards.

From the 2012 national population census, urban areas were described according to the following criteria: designated urban areas are places with at least 2500 inhabitants, a majority of at least 50 percent employed persons in non-agricultural occupation and a compact settlement pattern. All provinces have both urban and rural settlements. According to the 2022 census preliminary report, 38.6% of the total population dwelled in urban centres and 61.4% was in rural areas against 33% in urban centres and 67% in the countryside in the 2012 census to show growth in urban population and a decline in rural population. However, the majority of the population is still in rural areas (Zimstat, 2013; Zimstat, 2022). According to the 2022 population census for Zimbabwe which is the latest so far, the total population of the country was 15 178 978. The total number of males was 7 289 558, which is 48% and females were 7 889 421, which is 52% of the population (Zimstat, 2022).

**Table 1: Population Distribution by Province (ZIMSTAT 2022:7)**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total/Province</b>	<b>% population</b>
Bulawayo	307 983	357 957	665 940	4.4
Matabeleland South	370 713	389 632	760 345	5
Masvingo	763 537	875 002	1 638 539	10.8
Manicaland	965 532	1 072 230	2 037 762	13.4
Midlands	870 664	941 244	1 811 908	11.9
Matabeleland North	400 188	427 438	827 626	5.5
Harare	1 159 543	1 267 666	2 427 209	16
Mashonaland West	934 821	958 575	1 893 578	12.5
Mashonaland Central	681 313	703 578	1 384 891	9.1
Mashonaland East	835 264	895 917	1 731 181	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 289 558</b>	<b>7 889 421</b>	<b>15 178 979</b>	<b>100</b>

Although the majority of the population resides in the countryside, the country is undergoing some remarkable urbanisation as evidenced by the growth of existing urban centres in the Southern region such as Bulawayo, Gweru, Gwanda, Beitbridge, Masvingo, Zvishavane, Mutare, Chipinge, Plumtree, Chiredzi. Growth points in this region, such as Chivi, Mberengwa, Filabusi, Shurugwi, Nyika, Birchnough, Chimanimani, Nyanga are also developing, as the need for urban housing increases. Some of them have since acquired a town status. A case in point is Gutu. A range of formal and informal activities sustains livelihoods in urban settings. According to Daniels (2004),

formal activities are paid labour, employment, and other income-earning opportunities guided by rules and regulations of the state, such as minimum wages, health and safety at work and social security rights of employees and employers and working hours. Urban livelihoods are supported by non-agricultural activities, waged employment, formal trading and self-employment (Grant, 2006).

Mawere and Mubaya (2014) say that the greater part of the Zimbabwean plateau is dominated by granite rocks that contribute significantly to the country's cultural landscape. The stones were used to build the Great Zimbabwe National Monument. It is believed to have been built by the Karanga people's ancestors, and is now a major tourist resort centre in Southern Zimbabwe. Southern Zimbabwe is mainly in the lowland regions of the country, except the Eastern Highlands. This region is very hot, making it prone to perennial droughts. It receives very low rainfall that cannot sustain agricultural activities well. Drought resistant crops like sorghum, millet and others are mainly grown in the area, although some crops like maize and groundnuts are also grown in some parts of the region which are in many cases affected by droughts (Manyanga, 2006:38). Agriculture sustains the Zimbabwean economy. Commercial livestock farming is mainly practiced in the Matabeleland region.

Climatically, Zimbabwe has two distinct seasons: the summer rain season from October to May and the dry cold winter stretching from June to September. December, January and February are mainly the wettest months, while June, July and August are the driest and coldest months. Zimbabwe, including the Southern region is blessed with fauna and flora due to the large pieces of land used as sanctuaries for wildlife or nature reserves. The region has large game reserves like Hwange National Park, Matopo National Park, Nyanga National Park, Zambezi national Park and others. However, the amount of wildlife was reduced by deforestation and poaching (Chipika & Kowero, 2000). This was influenced by population growth, urban expansion and lack of fuel where firewood is used as a major source of energy. This also resulted in erosion and land degradation, where the amount of fertile soil diminished.

### **2.3 Ethnicity in Southern Zimbabwe**

Mawere and Mubaya (2014:2) argue that Zimbabwe is a melting pot of many cultures and people of various ethnic settings. Each ethnic group has its unique history and customs, while collectively, they form the Zimbabwean culture. Ethnicity is when a group of people of common descent share



similar customs. The Bantu ethnic-speaking groups are the majority. The Shona-speaking group is dominant because it constitutes 78%, and the Ndebele ethnolinguistic group is second largest group, constituting 20% of the population. There are other Bantu ethnic groups forming the third largest with 2 to 5 percent of the total population. These are; Tonga, Venda, Kalanga, Tsonga, Ndau, Nambya, Tswana, Xhosa and Shangani. White Zimbabweans also constitute a minority ethnic group with no more than 1% of the total population. Asian ethnic groups, mostly the Indians and Chinese, constitute 0.5% of the nation's total population (Zimbabwe International Religious Freedom Report 2005). There was a drastic decline in white population between 1999 and 2002 (Wiley & Isaacman, 1981). This could be attributed to the evictions on farms during the land redistribution exercise. The 2012 census showed an insignificant number of the White population, at 28 782. This figure constituted about 0.22% of the total population in 2012 (ZIMSTAT, 2013).

Most white people left the country because of sociopolitical issues, moving to countries like Australia, Botswana, Canada, Mozambique, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Zambia, and others. In the country, coloureds make up 0.5% of the total population. An influx of refugees into neighboring nations was caused by the nation's economic collapse and restrictive political climate (Meldrum, 2007). By the middle of 2007, a quarter of Zimbabwe's population of around 3.4 million had reportedly left the nation. Others were internally displaced for various reasons, such as political unrest, drought, floods, Operation Murambatsvina, and others, in addition to those who relocated to neighboring countries (Bourne, 2011).

In present-day Zimbabwe, the largest ethnolinguistic group is Shona. The Korekore, Karanga, Ndau, Manyika, and Zezuru are some of their sub-ethnic groupings (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:48). Other ethnic groups include the Venda in Beitbridge, Gwanda and Plumtree, Kalanga in Plumtree and Xhosa in Mbembesi. Manicaland is controlled by the Manyikas and the Ndau, Masvingo and the Midlands by the Karanga, and Matebeleland mostly by the Ndebele. The Shangani ethnic group predominates in parts of Beitbridge, Mwenezi, and Chiredzi. In Zvishavane and Mberengwa, the Lemba are also present. The Chewa are predominant in mines, plantations, and farms; they arrived in the 1950s as migrant laborers from Zambia and Malawi (Mawere & Mubaya, 2014:17). They can be found in many old townships, including those in Bulawayo, Hwange, Shangani, and Zvishavane. They are prevalent in main mining towns. Since Zimbabwe is a multi-ethnic country,

Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) contend that ethnicity is still a major factor that affects the country's social, economic, and political life.

Prior to Rhodesian colonial independence in 1980, the state established laws and institutions that classified the population into ethnic and racial groups, with Asians, Europeans, Coloureds, and native Africans making up the majority of these groups. From the colonial conception of origin and physical location, the natives were further split into sub-groups (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:278). The social and political relationships were based on how a person's race and ethnicity controlled their access to resources and social standing. As their alternate identities were disregarded, the various minority languages were combined into these major ethnic government groupings. Ethnic citizenship was enforced in Rhodesia by issuing national identity cards or passes. A legal system was used to categorise Africans according to their villages and districts of origin. This system was maintained even after the country gained its independence. A specific numeric code currently denotes the bearer's district of origin, and every adult is expected to possess a national identity card with information about their district and village of origin and chief. Native Africans may access resources like communal land in the countryside, depending on their ethnicity. African residents were given varied rights and benefits in urban areas, including restricted access to some geographical spaces and racially-determined remuneration (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:279).

#### **2.4 The Religious Context in Southern Zimbabwe**

Southern Zimbabwe is a multi-religious society. Christianity contributes 84.1% of the total population, African Traditional Religions (ATR) constitute 4.5%, Islam constitutes 0.7%, people with no religion constitute 10.2% and 0.5% of others (Religion in Zimbabwe 2017). Christianity is mixed with some traditional beliefs in some areas of the region. The most practiced non-Christian religion is ancestral worship. The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency's 2017 Inter-Censal Demography shows Protestant Christianity's membership in Zimbabwe standing at 69.2% Roman Catholicism constitutes 8% of the total population. The total of 84.1% follows one of the Christian denominations (Inter-Censal Demography Survey Report, 2017). In recent years, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has grown rapidly and is critical to the nation's public, social and political life. There are also many African Independent Churches (AICs) in the region. The rise of Pentecostal Charismatic and African Independent Churches has made the indigenous ATR

which predates colonisation relatively marginal even though it remains important in Zimbabwe's religious field.

It is critical to state that Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, and Robert Mugabe was the first African leader of the post-colonial Zimbabwean nation. While many Zimbabweans are Christians, Zimbabwe promotes religious pluralism (Vahakangas & Lauterbach, 2019). Christian churches have indigenous or foreign roots. Most indigenous churches support the government, while the foreign ones are seen as pursuing the regime change agenda (Manyeruke & Hamauswa, 2013:284). There are continuous differences between AICs and those with foreign roots that cause a shrink in the democratic space. Oftenly, this has resulted in the problems facing the nation where several people live in abject poverty (Pondani, 2019). There are some religious or ecumenical groups like the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop Conference (ZCBC), and Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) that are bringing an alternative ideology to the nation but are treated with dislike by the ruling government and a number of strategies are employed to silence them. They usually communicate to government through letters challenging issues of poverty, undemocratic practices by the state and other related themes.

In 2020, the Catholic Bishops in Zimbabwe wrote a letter entitled "The march is not ended" to the government of Zimbabwe in addition to several letters that had been written before. The letter speaks against the state's heavy-handedness when dealing with citizens and abuse of state power. It supported the struggle for a better Zimbabwe so that religion should contribute to democratisation as a way of respecting humanity, thereby bringing political and economic justice. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops is a group of bishops representing the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, including Southern Zimbabwe. Another aspect that the bishops challenged was corruption at micro- and macro-levels of society. The government castigated the Bishops for penning this letter and labelled them a third force seeking to remove a democratically elected government (Dube, 2020).

In Zimbabwe, religious instruction is not a legal requirement, but a standard for morality. Religion is part of the school curriculum, especially in public schools up to tertiary level. One of the components of the courses is predominantly Christian instruction related to key concepts of Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and traditional faiths. In the absence of a state religion in Zimbabwe, the nation can be described as a Christian state because of the general dominance

Christianity has over other religions (Mutangi, 2008). The state designates Christian ceremonies as public holidays. The Bible is used to swear into public offices and schools normally start with a prayer. This dominance by Christianity communicates a belief that people should recognise the God of the Christian faith in everything they do. Mainstream Christianity is mainly associated with elderly people because it is tolerant to syncretism and Pentecostal Christians are generally the youth who think that syncretism dilutes their faith (Mutangi, 2008:533). The historical fact that most schools and colleges of higher education in Zimbabwe were (and are) built and run by churches explains the huge Christian population in the country since most people passed through these institutions.

### **2.5 Church and the Bible: Southern Zimbabwe as a Bible Community**

The Bible was one of the instruments utilised in the colonisation of states in Africa. Due to the manipulation of the Bible to further the colonial mission, it came to be viewed as questionable by traditionalists, who thus began to treat Christianity as an enemy religion (Shambare, 2017:61). According to the colonial agenda of the West, the Bible was misused to justify wrongs like resource exploitation and racial segregation (Gunda & Mtetwa, 2013). Although Christianity was stigmatised as a colonial religion, several individuals upheld its principles to the point where they were impacted and given the strength to envision a bright future. Thus, Zimbabwe has more Christians than other religions that use the Bible as their holy book to guide their worship and daily lives.

The Bible has been used to solve societal challenges and concerns in the entire history of the church. According to Vengeyi (2013), Zimbabweans started reading the Bible from their own cultural, racial, and socio-economic perspectives rather than from the perspective of colonialists. In various circumstances, it now serves as a weapon of emancipation and motivation for a better future. The Bible has been used throughout Zimbabwean history to justify and offer guidance during difficult times. The Bible continues to define values and has an impact on Zimbabwean society today. It is utilised by politicians and the church in Southern Zimbabwe and with other people in society. The Bible is used by biblical scholars and even ordinary Christians to bring about spiritual and societal change. Therefore, according to West and Dube (2000), the Bible offers instruction and direction for living in Zimbabwe, and even non-Christians appreciate its

authoritative status. The Bible is still recited during official oaths and in courtroom proceedings. The Bible is revered as the foundation of morality in Zimbabwe.

Due to the existence of a biblically-based Christian church in Southern Zimbabwe, the Bible's relevance and impact have continued as this Bible community has committed to live in accordance with Biblical teachings. Regardless of the reader's perspective, the Bible is revered as holy in the church. The church still regards it as a trustworthy source of God's word. Some casual readers of the Bible appreciate its role in providing answers to problems the community faces. The church continues to be a highly esteemed organisation, because it is regarded as the keeper of morals in Southern Zimbabwe (Kinoti, 1997:119). The community also views the Bible as providing the society with a moral compass. According to Togarasei (2009), the church community uses the Bible to promote social virtue. As a result, the church has taken on the role of a moral institution, and morality in this context refers to behavior based on biblical revelation.

Shambare (2017:65) argues the Bible is a narrative that provides a theological meaning for the church. According to Mbiti (1986), Africans see and hear the conformity of their own cultures, tales, religious practices, social structures when reading the Bible in church. Therefore, the church needs to persuade theologians and less-initiated Bible readers to interpret the Bible with missional hermeneutics that incorporates a comprehensive evangelism that considers contemporary realities. The church's reflection and the biblical revelation are influenced by and interpreted via societal events and experiences. In every situation, the Bible is viewed as the declaration of the mission of God. The church's theological responsibility is to deal with a lack of moral judgment, incapacity to bear witness authentically, and immaturity (Hendricks, 2004). Local congregations need to have the tools necessary to practice theology that can address problems in their communities. For instance, Luke's writings in the books of Luke and Acts are examined in their original context in this study to develop a mission paradigm appropriate for the socio-economic setting in Southern Zimbabwe.

The Bible continues to be misused in numerous ways in Zimbabwe to further political objectives and tyrannical regimes that are supported by biblical principles. According to Chitando (2013), the Bible is selectively employed as a political tool to advance political agendas. People are viewed as unconverted and government opponents if they raise concerns about the officials' selective use of their power and criticise instances of injustice committed by the government. Not just politicians

but also certain religious leaders could misuse the Bible. Due to potential rewards from the government for their support, some church leaders use the Bible to defend the government's injustices against its people. Since the year 2000, as the country has faced more socio-economic issues, prosperity gospel has gained popularity. However, some Gospel ministers had been twisting Scripture for their financial benefit, giving politicians license to denigrate Christian authorities and the church even in public settings. In Zimbabwe, where 80% of the population professes faith in Christ, the church and the Bible continue to hold control over a sizable portion of society. This makes it possible for the church to take part in God's transformative mission, but it must begin with the conversion of the church.

## **2.6 Society and Culture**

Zimbabwe is home to numerous cultures, each with its own set of rituals, traditions, and beliefs. According to a 2014 United Nations (UN) report, patriarchal attitudes, ingrained cultural ideas, and religious practices that threaten women's independence and rights in society. Women in Southern Zimbabwe suffer in social, political, economic domains because of gender-based violence (Manyonganise, 2015). Such unfavorable attitudes toward women and societal conventions are hampering women's participation in the economy. In the Zimbabwean culture, women are frequently considered inferior and seen as constantly having minor roles in history and philosophy. According to the spiritual principle of the Ubuntu African philosophy, boys carry the family line and the religious system grants a greater priority on venerating one's departed forebearers. Thus, boys should, therefore, be valued more than girls. Although things are changing in some modern homes, boys usually get greater chances than girls, including access to higher education. In traditional African courts, the phrase "Vakadzi ngavanyarare", which translates to "women should keep quiet" is frequently used to degrade women. Consequently, decision-making processes usually excludes women (Manyonganise, 2015). They are always expected to carry out the desires of males.

As a result of societal pressures and women's subjugation to play feminine roles as mothers and wives, professional growth for women in Zimbabwe is sacrificed (Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009). The ordination of women is still an issue in churches because so few women are ordained for Gospel service. Even if they are aware that their husband has a sexually transmitted diseases like the Human Immune Virus (HIV) from being unfaithful or participating in polygamous

marriages, women are taught not to decline their husband's demands for sex. On the other hand, it should always be taken into cognisance that HIV and AIDS is not transmitted through sex only. As a result, women in Zimbabwe between the ages of 15 and 49 have a 16.1% HIV prevalence rate, accounting for 60% of the country's overall HIV infection rate (Manyonganise, 2015). However, the 2013 Zimbabwean National Constitution includes provisions to encourage greater gender equality. However, evidence shows that implementation and uptake have been gradual.

## **2.7 Government and Politics in Southern Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is a republic state with a presidential governance system. In addition to the House of Assembly (the Lower Chamber), the constitutional amendment in 2005 reinstated the Senate (the Upper Chamber) (Government of Zimbabwe, 2005). Since independence, ZANU PF has been the governing party in Zimbabwe (Mugabe, 2007). There are a number of political parties in Zimbabwe, such as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), ZAPU and others including the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC). CCC was recently formed in February 2022.

### **2.7.1 Administration Divisions**

Zimbabwe has eight provinces and two cities which are Bulawayo and Harare have a provincial status meant for administration purposes. There is a provincial city in each of the provinces (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013). Provincial capitals in Southern Zimbabwe are Bindura for Mashonaland Central, Gwanda for Matabeleland South, Masvingo for Masvingo, Lupane for Matabeleland North, Gweru for Midlands, Marondera for Mashonaland East, and Mutare for Manicaland. A provincial governor appointed by the president leads a province. The Provincial administrator who is a Public Service Commission appointee, runs the provincial government. The provincial offices of national government departments preside over other government functions at provincial level (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013).

Provinces are further divided into districts which sometimes are called municipalities. The District Administrator is the head of district. Rural district councils appoint Chief Executive Officers (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013). The ward councillor and kraal heads constitute the Ward Development Committee at ward level. These are subordinates to chiefs and representatives of Village Development Committees. The wards are divided into villages which are led by a headman (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016).

### 2.7.2 Politics

Numerous political parties operate in the multi-party state of Zimbabwe. Since Zimbabwe's independence, ZANU PF has held the position of government, and ZAPU, MDC, CCC are some of the big political parties that have been the opposition at different phases of history. However, the political landscape in Zimbabwe has shown to be unfavorable for all political parties, since there are difficulties that the populace must deal with because the governing administration is using its authority to repress the opposition to maintain its grip on power. The Unity Accord was signed in 1987 by Mugabe of ZANU PF who was mainly associated with the Shona tribes and Nkomo of ZAPU who was mainly associated with the Ndebele tribes in response to an attempted extermination of the Ndebele people by Mugabe's Fifth Brigade. Joshua Nkomo was from the Ndebele tribe while Robert Mugabe was from the Shona tribe. Coltart (2016) claims that the Fifth Brigade tortured and killed thousands of civilians between January and March 1983, burned several villages, and raped women. This episode sparked a long-running dispute between the Shona and the Ndebele people in the country, which is still impacting the country today.

In addition, this state-sanctioned violence created long-standing differences between the Shona and the Ndebele and caused the Ndebele to develop cultural nationalism and radical politics (Lindgren, 2005). This stance manifested through the formation of Ndebele pressure groups like, Imbovane Yamahlabezulu, Vukani Mahlabezulu, among others centred on Gukurahundi and the government to be answerable for it (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003). They also argued against the marginalisation of Ndebele-speaking regions on development issues. In 2000, ZAPU proposes for a federal state that would bring economic and political autonomy for provinces.

The 2000 constitutional referendum, which was supposed to replace the Lancaster House Agreement constitution, is another event that threw the country into a state of political instability. This coincided with the birth of MDC, in 1999, as a formidable opposition. The rejection of the draft was ZANU PF's first electoral defeat in the country's history. When the draft was rejected, the government was enraged and attributed its defeat to the MDC and the white community who were believed to support the MDC. The fast-track land redistribution policy caused white farmers to lose their land and possessions as a result. As a result of the land invasion, farm laborers also lost their jobs and houses, and some of them were killed, attacked, and raped in what is referred to as the Third Chimurenga or "*jambanja*" to denote ferocious mayhem. State institutions fell apart,



but the means of coercion remained effective. The state failed to guarantee its citizens' rights to socio-economic security, basic services, and civil and political liberties. Despite the government's control of the media and political space, civil groups, church organisations, human rights activists, lawyers, and journalists were now involved in political issues, indicating the growth of a culture of debate and participation in Zimbabwean politics (Bourne, 2011:160–166).

In 2002, Zimbabwe entered into a national crisis as it experienced an economic meltdown, and the ruling party militias terrorised citizens in the run-up to the 2002 elections held in March. Robert Mugabe of ZANU PF and Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC contested in presidential election. Democratic principles were not followed, which left the country as the government failed to bring political challenges to an end (Bourne, 2011). There was another political crisis in 2008 due to political violence where ZANU PF lost to MDC in disputed elections which led to an election run-off. It then led to formation of the coalition government in 2008. The MDC T, ZANU PF and MDC constituted this inclusive government. During the time of the inclusive government, there was a remarkable improvement to the economy, general living standards of the average person, and a decrease in political violence.

In November 2017, Mugabe was ousted in a military-assisted political transition that catapulted Emmerson Mnangagwa, his former deputy in government and party, to power. This ushered in a new political season for the nation. Mnangagwa was elected in a disputed 50.8% 2018 general election win. There have been widespread reports of systematic violations of human rights by the ruling government throughout the country's history (Howard, 2010). The United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, on 24 July 2020, expressed concern over allegations that Zimbabwe authorities may have been denying people their right to protest in streets by applying the COVID-19 regulations to. The state also persecuted and harassed health workers who protested for better working conditions and remuneration. Some members of the journalists and opposition party members were arrested for participating in the protests. The Zimbabwe Lives Matter Twitter campaign on 5 August 2020 attracted the attention of international politicians and celebrities for human rights abuses who responded to arrests and abduction allegations of political activists, such as Hopewell Chin'ono and Tsitsi Dangarembga (Guardian 2020). These are some of the political struggles the nation is facing.

## **2.8 The Economic Context of Southern Zimbabwe**

The Zimbabwean economy mainly depends on mining and agriculture, which constitute Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of around 30%. Mining and agriculture enable the growth of secondary sectors. However, the fall in infrastructure and general investment negatively affected economic performance. Zimbabwe was successful in health, agriculture, education, mining, manufacturing, and many other sectors in the early post-independence era (Chitando, 2002). However, the economy experienced a sharp economic decline in the period between 2000 and 2008 of nearly 50% in actual GDP due to decline in agriculture productivity and de-industrialisation due to the Government's Land Reform Program, low investment and capital flight. There was an economic recovery between 2009-2012 and 2017-2018 in mining and agricultural sectors. In 2019, the economy continued to deteriorate due to structural deficiencies and climatic challenges like droughts and cyclone Idai. Climatic challenges and the impact of COVID 19 in 2020 and 2021 also made the economy continue suffering (United Nations Zimbabwe, 2021).

### **2.8.1 De-industrialisation and the Rise of the Informal Sector in Zimbabwe**

De-industrialisation has a significant negative impact on several developing economies, including Zimbabwe's (Chirau, 2014). Zimbabwe's southern region is not exempt. According to Magidi (2018:55), it was mostly due to the collapse of its industrial sector as a result of poor economic policies. For more than 20 years, the nation's socio-economic predicament has been primarily caused by deindustrialisation. The crisis in Zimbabwe has multiple facets, including a political problem brought in by the state's and the government's authoritarianism through frequent incidents of political violence, economic upheaval brought on by mismanagement of the economy, and structural limitations in the international and domestic economic systems. Chapter 4 of this research will examine the reasons for Zimbabwe's socio-economic problems historically, with a particular focus on Southern Zimbabwe. De-industrialisation placed many employees in despair as mines, factories, and mills were shut down and abandoned, having a significant negative influence on the country (Cowie & Heathcott, 2003). Now that communities and families were facing financial difficulties, it was difficult for them to meet their fundamental demands. The level of poverty rose as a result of the ongoing loss of jobs and other revenue sources.

Magidi (2018:79) posits that Zimbabwe's de-industrialisation led people in the urban areas to invent their own economies and establishing work for themselves. As a result, the informal

economy in Zimbabwe rapidly expanded because it was the only choice available (Watt, 2000). According to Potter and Lloyd-Evans (2014), there are four major types of informal economies. The first is the provision of necessities, primarily produced by family labor for consumption within the family and the sale of surplus. The second group comprises small-scale producers and merchants who manufacture and sell in exchange for payment. Although they mostly rely on self-labor, they occasionally hire additional staff, usually during periods of high business volume. The third group includes petty entrepreneurs starting enterprises in the unofficial sector to get around rules and legal restrictions. The final one concerns unlawful commercial activities that take advantage of the somewhat unorganised character of the informal economy to generate cash.

Backyard or home industries exploded in Zimbabwe after its de-industrialisation (Chirau, 2014). Unauthorized traders occupied every accessible space in cities and towns and converted them to trading locations. Vendors later infiltrated Central Business Districts (CBDs), which were hubs of vibrant commerce, and took over the streets. The specified sites were no longer big enough to hold them because of their growing number. Foreign exchange, small-scale manufacturing, vending, flea markets, retail microenterprises, illicit trade operations in industries including shoe repair services, building, metalworking, and carpentry are all examples of informal economic activity (Dube & Chirisa, 2012). In order to augment their husbands' income, which was currently quite low, many women engaged in informal trading. Some engaged in cross-border trade, traveling to nearby nations, including South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, and Tanzania to purchase cheap goods, such as footwear, clothing, kitchenware, furniture, electrical equipment, and used cars for resale. Due to consumers' preference for these less expensive goods, this further harmed an economic sector already in trouble.

For the growing number of unemployed people, the informal sector developed into a source of work (Tekere, 2001). In the early years of independence, informal employment was relatively infrequent, making up just around 10% of the overall labor force in the country. When ESAP was introduced in 1991, the percentage increased to 27% (Ndiweni & Verhoeven 2013). By the year 2000, this number had risen to almost 50% of the country's labor force (Coltart, 2008; Mudamburi, 2012). Even though the industry is still expanding, it has always had to deal with difficulties, including antagonism from local authorities and government. The percentage of impoverished households has remained high, at about 70.5% in 2017 (Zimstat, 2017). The number of people

living in abject poverty was expected to rise from 4.5 million in 2017 to 6 million in 2019. The value of people's incomes decreased as inflation rose, especially for the elderly and those working in the unorganised sector. In 2020, 7 million people in Zimbabwe needed humanitarian aid due to rising levels of hunger, according to the Zimbabwe Humanitarian Response (HRP). According to the United Nations (2020), 2.2 million people in urban areas and over 4,3 million people in rural regions experienced food insecurity. Poverty, illness, economic hardships, and low agricultural production impacted the availability and accessibility of sufficient food sources.

### **2.8.2 The Economic effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic came with many hazards and vulnerabilities for the country and the entire world starting in 2020. The already stressed health system of the country was put under additional strain by this pandemic. As the government began prioritising the COVID 19 response, other crucial health services, like immunisations and mother and child health services, were disrupted. Food insecurity resulted from the disruption of economic activity in rural areas and mostly informal economies in urban regions, as well as difficulties in getting to places of employment owing to lockdowns (United Nations, 2021). The effect was most severe in urban areas where the fall in economic activity had a significant influence on people's incomes.

### **2.8.3 The Key Economic Sectors**

There are several economic sectors that contribute to the sustenance of the economy of Southern Zimbabwe.

#### **2.8.3.1 Agriculture**

The economy of Zimbabwe heavily relies on raw materials. Agriculture is the primary factor in the country's economic expansion. It is the largest employer in the country, producing 60% to 70% of all jobs and serving as a major exporter. The sector has been failing for a number of reasons. These include droughts brought on by climate change, underuse of land, and difficulties in accessing finances. Zimbabwe had to import food due to the government's Land Reform Program's destruction of the industry (Bourne, 2011:164). In 2018, agriculture's economic contribution to the country's GDP dropped to 9.8%. The manufacturing sector, which relies primarily on about 60% of agriculture, was also impacted by this reduction in agricultural input (United Nations Zimbabwe, 2021). Southern Zimbabwe is the region mostly impacted by heat and aridity in terms of agriculture.

Climate change is believed to bring in unfavourable weather conditions causing the nation to suffer from droughts and floods. Southern Zimbabwe has been frequently affected by droughts leading to food shortages. (Yale Environment, 2019). Cyclones are also a problem to the nation, with parts such as Manicaland and parts of Masvingo being the most affected areas. In 2019, over 270 000 people were affected by Cyclone Idai in most parts that fall under Southern Zimbabwe. The Cyclone destroyed an estimated value of US\$ 1.2 billion that constitutes 6% of the country's GDP. This increased the level of poverty (World Bank, 2019). Cyclone Ana also affected the nation in January 2022 especially the Southern East part. All these cyclones caused a lot of problems, such as the death of people and livestock, displacement of people, loss of crops, destruction of infrastructure and other sources of livelihoods and environmental degradation. Climate change is a challenge to development in the region, especially in rural areas. There are risks of gender-based violence, food insecurity, threats to human health, water shortage and also a reduction in power generation as water levels will be low in dams like Kariba where the hydro-power is generated for the nation.

### **2.8.3.2 Mining**

Due to the abundant mineral riches in southern Zimbabwe, numerous groups of people have settled there over the course of its history (Mawere & Mubaya, 2014). These include coal in Hwange, platinum and asbestos in Zvishavane, gold in several locations, nickel in Shangani, diamond in Marange, chrome in Mberengwa, and lithium in Bikita, to name a few. In various areas of the region, both before and during the colonial period, mining was a major force in the growth of human settlements. Mining towns, including Zvishavane, Shurugwi, and Hwange have grown up as a result of the region's capital-intensive mining activities. Despite harvesting the world's greatest platinum deposits, the mining industry is nevertheless unprofitable as Impala Platinum and the Anglo-American corporation mine the reserves. The Marange diamonds, the largest diamond discovery in more than a century, were found in 2006 and are among the numerous diamond resources in the area. Diamonds have the potential to alter human lives in the region by enhancing the country's financial status.

### **2.8.3.3 Tourism**

Southern Zimbabwe has a lot of tourist attraction centres that contribute to the nation's economy. The travel and tourism industry creates up to around 5.2% of the national employment. Tourist

centres in Southern Zimbabwe include Great Zimbabwe Ruins, Matopo Mountains, Hwange and Victoria Falls National Parks in Matabeleland South, in the Eastern Highlands, there is Mount Nyangani and Nyanga National Park. Zimbabwe is unique among other African countries because it has several ruined places built in a dry-stone style. These include the Great Zimbabwe, Khami, Dhlodhlo and Naletale ruins. All these are in Southern Zimbabwe. The Matopo Hills are characterised by granite kopjes and wooded valley around 35 kilometers South of Bulawayo. These mountains have become tourist attraction centres. The remains of most key figures of the colonial project in Zimbabwe, such as Cecil John Rhodes and Leander Starr Jameson were interred at these hills (Dinerstein, 2017). However, due to the impact of COVID-19 during the period stretching from year 2020 to 2022, this industry was on a decline. This is because of the lockdown regulations that prohibited people's movement. The people also feared for their lives during such a threatening environment. Some workers were retrenched while some went on half salary in order for companies to manage this economic situation.

#### **2.8.3.4 Education, Science and Technology**

Zimbabwe is among the top African nations with the highest literacy rate. The United Nations Development Program reported that, in 2012, the country's literacy rate was 92%. The sector was impacted by the economic difficulties that affected the country since 2007. According to the education department, there is an outflow of teachers who are moving to other nations (Nkepile, 2009). Due to financial difficulties, some parents are choosing not to continue their children's education past the primary level. At the same time, the well-to-do segment of the population typically sends their children to private and foreign schools, abandoning the government-run schools that the majority attend. Some people, particularly in rural areas, struggle to send their kids to school, even to these government schools, the tuition is still expensive given Zimbabwe's socio-economic situation.

Since 2000, economic issues have threatened the education system. Teachers frequently go on strike because of inadequate salaries, and some pupils struggle to focus on their studies due to hunger and the expensive school uniforms (Bourne, 2011:43). Teachers were the principal targets of political attacks under Mugabe's rule since they were thought to be the MDC's main source of support. In February 2022, teachers went on strike again, this time claiming they were incapacitated to execute their jobs. However, they were warned that they would be suspended and

not paid. Additionally, COVID-19 posed a difficulty to the educational system because it resulted in school closures because of frequent lockdowns. Virtual learning was employed as an option, but not all learners had the requisite gadgets. Some who had the gadgets lacked the technical knowledge to benefit from digital learning. Poor network also affected virtual learning, especially in rural areas.

On tertiary education, Zimbabwe has six state and three church-owned universities in Southern Zimbabwe. As a result of the nation's solid base of knowledge and availability of natural resources, there is a potential for the country to be among those leading in growth on the African continent. In 2020, Zimbabwe was ranked the 120<sup>th</sup> in the Global Innovation Index. However, standards have since deteriorated in tertiary institutions because of lack of funding, poor remuneration and conditions of service for staff (Lemarchand and Schneegans 2014). Consequently, large number of tertiary students from Zimbabwe, especially in natural and human sciences, engineering, are doing their studies abroad.

#### **2.8.3.5 Health and Well-being**

Disease outbreaks have occasionally occurred in Zimbabwe. The country experienced a remarkable rise at the outset of independence in areas like immunisation coverage and availability of medical services (Davies & Sunders, 1998). The HIV/AIDS pandemic's effects, structural adjustment initiatives, and economic hardships since the year 2000, however, caused the development to gradually disintegrate in the 1990s (Marquette, 1997). Zimbabwe had the lowest life expectancy in the world in 2006, according to United Nations data. As of 2015, it had increased to a life expectancy of 60 years after falling to 44 years for males and 43 for women in 1990. The HIV/AIDS pandemic mainly contributed to this decrease. Also, infant mortality increased to 12.3% in 2004 from 6% in the 1990s. HIV/AIDS decreased from 40% in 1998 to 13.5% in 2016 (United Nations Zimbabwe, 2021). The healthcare system continues to disintegrate due to hyperinflation, and hospitals cannot supply essential prescriptions and medications. The nation's health service standards declined as a result of the exodus of medical professionals, including doctors (Bourne, 2011: 187). Furthermore, the general harsh economic climate in Zimbabwe that resulted in decreased investment in infrastructure, industry, water, energy, and transport adversely affected the production of goods. The manufacturing industry is on a decrease now.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter gave an overview of the environmental context of Southern Zimbabwe to understand its nature. The key areas believed to characterise this region are: geography and demographics, ethnicity, religion, Bible and the church, society and culture and politics. Economic issues, such as de-industrialisation and growth of the formal sector, analysis of key economic sectors like mining, tourism, agriculture, health and education were also looked into. The chapter also discussed the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the life of the inhabitants of Southern Zimbabwe. Since this chapter has looked the environmental context of Southern Zimbabwe, chapter three focuses on thge Luke-Acts mission paradigm as a mission paradigm which is going to be applied to the Southern Zimbabwe context.



## **Chapter Three**

### **The Luke-Acts Mission Paradigm**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the Luke-Acts Mission Paradigm as given by Bosch (1991). It discusses the general meaning of paradigm in relation to church mission. It also examines the Luke-Acts mission paradigm focusing on its key ingredients and how the author and the church during the time when the Acts and the Gospel of Luke were written, viewed their problems and provided solutions within their context. The key content of the Luke-Acts paradigm includes; the Holy Spirit, Jewish and Gentile mission, call to witness, repentance, forgiveness of sins and salvation, the six dimensions of salvation, preaching Good News by Jesus Christ, the church and that mission of necessity encounters adversity and suffering as Luke used them in his community and during his time.

#### **3.2 Paradigm**

Science, religion, and history frequently address the theory of paradigms as a crucial topic (Juma & Vorster, 1998:116). As it describes changes that have occurred throughout the history of the Christian church, it is a hypothesis that is helpful to the study of church history. Thomas Kuhn popularised the term paradigm in scientific study in 1962. According to Kuhn, (1970), a paradigm is a widely acknowledged scientific effort that offers model challenges and answers to a community of practitioners for a specific period. Additionally, according to Kuhn, it is the collection of ideas that are held in common by people who belong to a specific community (Kuhn, 1970). The term paradigm can also be used as a point of departure for developing a perspective about a specific subject. (Franklin, 2016:52). A paradigm's scientific origins imply that a theory is accepted as true once all efforts to disprove it have been unsuccessful.

According to Franklin (2016:52), a paradigm develops when a group accepts a particular approach, style of thinking, or fundamental worldview. It aids in identifying and describing the experiences, viewpoints, ideas, and values that influence people's perception of reality. A paradigm might be illogical and have a finite number of answers because it is a theory. However, it can be a helpful tool for figuring out answers to a variety of problems (Franklin, 2016). Even in church mission procedures, it is helpful. By focusing on important constants and variables simultaneously, a

paradigm analysis aids in the construction of historical structures and transformations (Kung, 1995).

### **3.3 Paradigm Shift**

A paradigm shift is the substitution of an old, previously accepted paradigm with a new one (Juma & Vorster, 1998:118). The change could involve a substantial replacement of all aspects of life as we have known it or only slight modifications. When the beliefs, methods, and values of a specific community can no longer adequately address its problems or when they are no longer relevant, an alternative method of problem solving is formed. When significant events take place and one style of thinking supplants the other, a paradigm shift can also occur (Franklin, 2016). As new theories develop over time, a paradigm will therefore inevitably alter. Bosch (2011) concurs that significant contradictions emerge, resulting in a progressive accumulation of fresh or additional information in the dominant paradigm. As a result, the dominant paradigm experiences a crisis since it can no longer explain reality.

The new paradigm must address issues that the previous one was unable to solve. The ability to solve problems using the old paradigm must also be added. A shift is not a correction to the current course; it is a full change of direction. In the history of the church, paradigm shifts have been observed, resulting in long-lasting changes in people's perspectives, how the Bible is understood, how the church is spread from one community to another, and other things (Juma & Vorster, 1998:118). Historical paradigm shifts in the church demonstrate characteristics related to Christianity and distinct from science. The church's history has been marked by a variety of endeavors, notable individuals, many theories, and new advances. Bosch (1991:186) asserts that, unlike in natural science, a new paradigm in theology may coexist with an older one rather than immediately replacing it. In his analysis of the six significant stages in church history that made contributions to mission paradigms development. Kung (1996) notes that some key concerns and the major models' influence persisted through all six periods, tying the church back to its foundation.

Kung outlines six major periods in church history representing the main paradigms in the history of the Christian church (Kung, 1996). Periods as described by Kung include: early Christian as the Apocalyptic paradigm, the early church as the Hellenistic paradigm, medieval as the Roman Catholic paradigm, reformation as the Protestant paradigm, enlightenment as the Modern

paradigm, contemporary as the Post-Modern paradigm and emerging Ecumenical paradigm. In the same way, Bosch (1991) presents the six epochs of the mission paradigm changes in the history of the church. He calls them the historical mission paradigms. In addition, Bosch (1991) presents the New Testament mission paradigms consisting of Matthew's mission paradigm from the Gospel of Matthew, Lukan missionary paradigm, also known as the Luke-Acts mission paradigm from the Gospel of Luke and the Acts and then Pauline missionary paradigm from the epistles of Paul. Bosch (1991:88) sometimes refers to them as sub-paradigms of the early Christian mission paradigm.

The Apocalyptic paradigm rose from the Jewish context in the first century. This is the same time when the Luke-Acts mission paradigm existed and was used by the church, but Bosch (1991) distinguishes it from the historical paradigms by calling it a Biblical mission paradigm in the New Testament. Key figures like Jesus, Paul, James and Peter are models who shaped the apocalyptic paradigm of the early Christian era. These figures are major players in the books of Acts and the Gospel of Luke that produce the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. The study focuses on the Luke-Acts mission paradigm only as a Biblical paradigm that is to be applied on the Southern Zimbabwean socio-economic context. The next section critically discusses the Luke-Acts mission paradigm.

### **3.4 Luke-Acts Mission Paradigm according to David Bosch**

Luke-Acts mission paradigm is a set of concepts, values and practices that constitute how Luke was seeing the reality in his community. He used it to discover problems affecting the community and ways to provide solutions to them. Luke wrote two books which are the Gospel of Luke and the Acts to articulate his theology of mission (Bosch, 1991:91). The Gospel provides a basis for gentile mission, while Acts provides greater details of that story (Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:18). In his presentation of church mission paradigms, Bosch (1991) made use of various scholars who wrote about Luke's writings. To deeply analyse Bosch's exposition of Luke-Acts mission paradigm, the researcher used other scholars for further inquiry.

#### **3.4.1 The Main Theme of Luke-Acts**

Solidarity with the poor and forgiveness have been considered the main theme of the Luke-acts mission paradigm according to Bosch (1991).

### **3.4.1.1 Luke-Acts: Practicing Forgiveness and Solidarity with the Poor (Bosch, 1991:88-100)**

Luke's understanding of mission is different from that of Matthew and Paul. His central themes are love, prayer, repentance and forgiveness, justice and fairness in inter-human relationships, the Holy Spirit and, acceptance of enemies. The prominent group of people in his writings are women, the poor, Samaritans, tax collectors and others. Luke crosses the religious and social barriers of his time by reaching to these people. He believes that the church should emulate the ministry of Jesus. Luke presents the idea of the history of salvation in three epochs: that of Israel to John the Baptist, the ministry of Jesus that Luke regards as the past and also constituting the middle period of salvation, and lastly, the epoch of the church inaugurated at Pentecost, where the church has to live in the continuity of Jesus Christ's life and work.

### **3.5 Key Ingredients of the Luke-Acts Mission Paradigm**

While giving a summary of the Luke-Acts biblical text, Bosch (1991) identifies the following as outstanding and key themes of the Luke-acts mission paradigm.

#### **3.5.1 The Holy Spirit**

Due to his emphasis on the action of the Spirit's action and the person, Luke is singled out as the Holy Spirit's theologian (Bosch, 1991). Compared to twelve in Matthew and six in Mark, Luke acknowledges the Holy Spirit fifteen times in Gospel of Luke and fifty in Acts. The Holy Spirit is one of the central themes in Luke's writings. The primary characteristic of the early Christian society was the expectation of an impending eschatology, which Luke had toned down in his writings (Bosch, 1991). No longer considered the eschatological gift, the Holy Spirit stand-in for having access to eternal redemption. The Holy Spirit resolved the issue brought about by the parousia's delay. Luke demonstrates that Jesus Christ will not return shortly because the Spirit made the risen Christ accessible to the people.

##### **3.5.1.1 The Holy Spirit Initiating Mission**

In Luke's view, the Holy Spirit occupies a central position in church's mission. Hence, Jesus' disciples were forbidden or unable to start their ministry before receiving the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal event in Acts when the disciples received the Holy Spirit marked the genesis of the church mission. The Spirit's role in launching mission is described on the commissioning accounts, the Pentecost account, and the apostles' subsequent memories. The commissioning accounts in

Luke 24:46–49 and Acts 1:4–8 clearly demonstrate the Spirit's starting role in connecting the global witness to the promise of the Pentecostal event of receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–4). Participants in missions are not required to carry out their own plans but are instead expected to wait for guidance from the Spirit (Bosch, 1991:112). Luke describes Pentecost as the beginning of the mission to the entire globe as a result of the assembly of Jews from every country (Acts 2:5). Acts 1:8 states that the missionary program's launch was postponed until Pentecost. Luke's theology of mission is pneumatological in nature; he believes that the Spirit is necessary for mission (Tyra, 2011). Jesus had to begin his public ministry, and his disciples had to start their own missions after receiving the Spirit.

### **3.5.1.2 Guidance of the Spirit**

Luke indicates that the Holy Spirit assists in reinterpreting Jesus's mission for the church during his lifetime. After Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit's role is to continue his ministry (Bosch, 1991:111). Since the day when the apostles received the Holy Spirit on the Pentecostal day, they started performing whatever Jesus did to his disciples during his earthly ministry. Briefly stated, the Holy Spirit leads, instructs, and empowers the church. The catalyst, the one who directs and propels us toward our mission, is the Spirit. Spirit manifestations encourage and validate the ministry of the church. The Holy Spirit enhances one's participating in mission (Bosch, 1991:112). Luke's pneumatology implies the promise of the disciples participating in mission. Therefore, God still maintains sovereignty over mission through believers who are filled with His Spirit (Bosch, 1991).

### **3.5.1.3 Empowerment of the Holy Spirit for Service**

The Mission's Spirit is the Spirit of Power (Bosch, 1991) because its purpose is to empower for Mission. It gives believers the confidence they need to share Jesus Christ's gospel. The Holy Spirit is portrayed as God's dynamic power acting on and through people or groups. Luke asserts that the Spirit's primary function is for service and not to bring about salvation or sanctification, as Paul suggests. Due to numerous allusions to the Old Testament, Luke's writings are obviously influenced by Old Testament tradition (Marshall, 1978). The portrayal of the Spirit acting as the summons to action is one of the ties between Luke and the Old Testament (OT), presenting the Spirit's role of call to vocation, in which the Spirit descended upon people and gave them the power to do a specific task or ministry. Acts 6:3-5, 20:28, and Balaam's architecture in Exodus

31:3 and 35:31, judgment in Numbers 11:17; 25-29, and Joshua's military prowess in Numbers 27:18 are just a few examples of the various duties that the Spirit inspired people to carry out. The Holy Spirit grants people the confidence to speak the words of God boldly in both the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT).

Among all the Gospels, Luke is the only one that reveals that the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to do mighty works, especially on his baptism, temptation and the first Nazareth sermon as in Luke 4:1,14,18; 10:21;24:19; Acts1:2; 2:22 and 10:38. The infancy and Pentecostal narratives are the key themes which describe Jesus' mission and also help to show that Jesus will continue to do his mission because of the Holy Spirit that was upon him. The disciples' complementary empowerment and their future mission were introduced in the Pentecostal narrative. To have the Spirit means to have power to do whatever necessary to promote the mission of Jesus through various means like miracles (Moore, 2003). Spiritual empowerment can also be manifested through speaking in various forms such as tongues (Acts 2:1-4; 10:45-46), bold preaching (Luke 4:18, Acts 4:8), prophecy (Luke 21:20-24, among others).

#### **3.5.1.4 Spirit poured upon all flesh**

All the works through the Spirit can be performed by both men and women, Jews and Greeks, young and old, apostles, prophets, deacons, priests, preachers and the laity without any discrimination. The Holy Spirit can use anyone as he or she pursues the mission of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is fervent concerning the preaching of the Gospel and utilises his ability to proclaim Jesus' good news. (Bosch, 1991:112). This is according to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29 that found fulfilment in Acts 2:39. Male and female, rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free now have equal access to God and to participate in His ministry by receiving the Holy Spirit. This confirms a shift of the new covenant from the old one. For Luke, the concept of the Holy Spirit reveals the worldwide mission of the church, Jesus liberating ministry and God's universal will to save (Bosch, 1991). God is in charge over mission to the whole world through the Spirit.

Turner (1996) uses the metaphor of the New Exodus to explain the work of the Holy Spirit, teaching that the Spirit led God's people into a New Exodus where they are purified and restored as an eschatological community. According to the theological themes of Jubilee, the Spirit-endowed person becomes a prophetic figure, akin to Moses and the Davidic Messiah, through whom the Spirit of God is working to preach Good News to the poor, proclaim liberty to the

captives and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the oppressed, and to announce the acceptable year of the Lord (Wittenberg 2016). Both Peter's Pentecost speech in Acts 2 and Jesus' inaugural address in Luke 4 function as the fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament Spirit of Prophecy is a metaphor for the Holy Spirit, who makes God's presence known via revelation, knowledge, and miraculous power. Turner (1996) holds a firm belief that salvation involves continuing to participate in worship, living, and witness in addition to being freed from sin and guilt. All of this is accomplished by the Holy Spirit working through the believer. This is for the community's benefit as well as the spiritual well-being of the believer. In Luke and Acts, the Holy Spirit's role is to purify and revitalize each believer as well as the community, enabling them to become God's empowering presence on earth. The exact scriptures pertaining to the Spirit's promise are Acts 1:4–8 and Luke 24:47–49. It is commonly acknowledged that these sections bring Jesus' career to an end in the Gospel and begin the church's ministry in Acts (Menzies 2004).

According to Menzies (2004:130), the Spirit is identified with Luke and Acts as the Spirit of Prophecy. Menzies (2004) interprets this to suggest that Luke views the Spirit as the source of prophetic inspiration, which gives God's people the capacity to serve effectively. The story of Luke and Acts is interpreted through the lens of the prophetic Spirit and then applied to modern-day Christians and the church. Spirit baptism is perceived as witness empowerment, as demonstrated by increased engagement in exceptional Spirit-given gifts (Wittenberg 2016:43). It was intended that the sanctification experience would come before the empowering experience (La Hkawng 2013:6). Menzies (2004), defending the Classical Pentecostal worldview, contends that the Holy Spirit's role extends beyond soteriology and includes empowerment for mission. The Pentecostal gift given to the disciples in Acts is understood to be a model for all believers, and it is conceptualized in parallel to Jesus' experience in Jordan, which is solely empowering for mission. The saved disciples are always given the gift of the Spirit. The gift always comes with an empowering endowment witness. Luke therefore believes that the Spirit always prefers to work through the believer for the good of unbelievers and even other believers.

### **3.5.2 Correlation of the Jewish and Gentile Missions**

The universality theme is considered as one of Luke-Acts' central themes (Esler, 1987:16). It confirms the correlation between the Jewish and Gentile missions. Luke's writings were done in a context where members of his community were mainly Gentiles and Jews, some were Romans

who frequented synagogues prior to their conversion to Christianity (Esler, 1987:16). Some of them were rich while some were poor, but they were in serious need of assurance that their decision to convert into Christian faith was the correct one. Luke's religious community was Jewish at the beginning, but later on, Gentiles joined and were accommodated (Bosch, 1991:112). Bosch (1991) argues that during the time of Luke, very few Jewish conversions took place, if any. He also asserts that many Gentiles dominated Christian communities. This Gentile church still recognised its Jewish origins. The existence of the Gentile-dominated church, and its acknowledgement of Jewish origin shows Jews-Gentile relationship in Christian mission. Luke planted the Gentile church in Israel as Jesus is presented as the Messiah who came in the Jewish context, but to save both the Jews and Gentiles (Bosch, 1991). The Christian church was born from the Jewish womb and had now designated itself as new Israel. An understanding of intended audience of Luke is of paramount importance to the description of Jewish and Gentile missions. This can be discussed in light of the composition of the Christian community, approximate time and geographical context, ethnic and religious background of Luke's community membership.

### **3.5.2.1 Theophilus and the Theme of Gentile Inclusion**

The audience to which Luke was writing is first shown through his preface's dedication of the Gospel to Theophilus in Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-2. It is presumed that Theophilus was a leading figure in a community Luke had in mind as his audience (Esler, 1987:24). Some believe that Theophilus had received some teachings about Jesus and now needed verification of facts on matters concerning Jesus and the rise of Christianity. Esler (1987:25) posits that Theophilus might have given Luke the funding to write the book. It is also argued that Luke wrote the Gospel in order to convince pagan authorities of Rome that Christianity was not a political threat. Bock (2007:52) argues that Theophilus would have been a Gentile instead of a Jew because it was unlikely for a Jew to occupy such a political office. According to Creamer, Spencer, and Viljoen (2014), In the Gospel, Luke includes the theme of God's Kingdom through Christ and, in Acts, his key subject of breaking in of Gentiles, support of the likelihood that Theophilus was a Gentile and God-fearer who was converted to Christianity. On the other hand, some argue that Theophilus might not be a person but a symbolic figure of Luke's reader because of the meaning of his name. The name means lover of God (Johnson, 1991:28).



### 3.5.2.2 Universality Theme in Luke-Acts

Esler (1987) justifies the view that Luke's audience was a Christian community comprising Gentiles and Jews. There are three views about the composition of Luke's audience, which are that the community was predominantly Gentile with insignificant or absent Jews, each group significant, and predominantly Jews with absent or insignificant minority Gentiles (Esler, 1987:30). However, many scholars like Esler (1987) prefer the view that Luke's community was predominantly Gentile with Jews absent or insignificant. The reason is that there is more of the Gentile character of Luke's audience. The increase in the number of Gentile converts and the decline in the number of Christian Jews caused the Gentile believers not to conform to the religion that had roots in Israel and were boasting to the Jews of their imagined new faith (Bosch, 1991:112). The audience in Luke's community were Gentiles who had previously attended the synagogues and were pagan worshipers and Jews who were brought together around the table fellowship of the Christian congregation (Esler, 1987:31). On the other hand, Luke's writing in Acts abandoned Jewish Christianity. It gave much recognition to Gentile Christianity as the dominant element in the church. The gentile audience in Luke resulted from his desire to relate salvation given through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to non-Jews.

Repeatedly, Acts demonstrate that salvation is for both Greeks and the Jews and there was no exclusive nature of Judaism (Creamer *et al.*, 2014). Bosch (1991:112) also asserts that Acts is read at the expense of the Jews as it shows much concern on how salvation was spread to the Gentiles. However, some references to Old Testament texts might mean that the audience of Luke had knowledge of Jewish Scriptures and may be Jewish in nature. An example is a quotation of Isaiah 61 in Luke 4. Bosch (1991:113) argues that Luke gives reference to the Jewish tradition as a way of telling his audience that the church should not forget about the people of the old covenant. The universality tendency in Luke's writings moulded the tradition that presented the original Christian mission in the diaspora, including the conversion of gentiles and Jews, leading to the establishment of their fellowship as a Christian congregation (Esler, 1987:31). This he did to legitimate the same balance and unity in his own community. He also reports the expansion of Christianity beginning with the Jews in Jerusalem and the mission continues to the Gentile nations. It chronicles about Christianity and how it crosses Jerusalem's geographical boundaries to other Gentile nations.

In addition, the universalist tendency of Luke is seen through a number of his texts. In Luke 2:31-32 and 3:5-6, Simeon presents Jesus as the salvation that was prepared for all peoples. According to Luke, Jesus' genealogy is traced back to Adam, who links the whole of the human race (Luke 3:23-38). Simeon includes Israel in the divine plan of God for salvation as well as all humanity. In Luke 13:29, Luke presents those who will feast in the kingdom of heaven as coming from every direction that is from North, South, West and East, whereas Mathew, in his presentation, talks of East and West only. This reveals Luke's interest in universal salvation. Mission to the Gentiles is said to occur after Jesus ascended to Heaven (Esler, 1987). This confirms the view that salvation began with the Jews, but a time has to come when the Gentiles are going to be incorporated. Jesus' association with the Gentiles during His lifetime is the evidence of His interest in Gentile salvation or mission. Luke also mentions Gentile figures in his writing, such as the Gentile widow in Luke 4:25 and Naaman in Luke 4:27, a sign of his interest even in Gentile mission.

Luke's view on the Parable of the Great Banquet in (Luke 14:15-24) differs from Matthew 22:1-14 as Luke explains how the host sent out his servants to gather two groups of other guests after the original guests had declined. The first group to be collected are the crippled, poor, lame and blind belonging to the host's own city. The second class consists of people from the roads. The original guests represent the righteous Jews, and the first of the new guests represent the lower religious classes like the publicans and sinners. In contrast, the second group of new guests, coming from beyond the city boundaries, represent the Gentiles. Before his ascension, Jesus told his disciples that forgiveness of sins and repentance would be preached to the whole world (Luke 24.47). This evidence suggests an openness of salvation to non-Jews, although it should not be to the exclusion of the Jews (Luke 2.31-2; 14.15-24).

Although the results of Paul's preaching in the synagogues in Salamis (Acts 13.5), Athens (Acts 17.7) and Ephesus (Acts 19.8) are not made clear, Luke's presentation of the evangelism in three other cities brings out clearly the success of the Christian missionaries among both Jew and Gentile synagogue attenders. These are the accounts on the cities of Iconium (Acts 14.1), Thessalonica (Acts 17.1 -4) and Beroea (Acts 17.10-12). The Gentiles who converted in Thessalonica are described as a multitude of dedicated Greeks (Acts 17.4). However, Luke mentions that in Iconium and Thessalonica, many Jews did not convert and were hostile to the missionaries (Acts 14.2; 17.5-

9, 13). The ministry of the Gospel to these Gentile places is the evidence of mission of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem.

### **3.5.3 Called to Witness**

Acts has thirteen instances of the word "witness" (martyr), while Luke's Gospel only contains one (Bosch, 1991:113). A witness is introduced as the representative of the message of forgiveness to all peoples. As a result, the phrase "mission" should be changed to "witness" (Gaventa, 1982). With regard to the sending of the twelve disciples (Luke 9:1-6) and the seventy-two (Luke 10:1-24), the mission mandate of the church through witness, as presented in Luke's writings, reveals that Jesus intended to make His message of the coming of the Kingdom of God be spread across the nation of Israel. They were sent to testify because they had complete authority to act as the sender's agents (Liefeld, 1984). Missionaries could find directions in Luke's writings containing the empowerment details and mission content. According to Buttrick (1976), historians contend that these passages on testimony were not preserved for historical reasons but rather to serve as models for use in early Christian evangelism and to be viewed as fundamental truths and eternal principles for the church.

In order for one to understand the notion of witness in Acts, there is need to know its variety of usages within the first century historical context (Jonathan, 2015). The verb, to bear witness (*martureo*) meaning to make a declaration of something one has experienced or understand to be true is used commonly in a legal setting in the classical Greek and Septuagint describing an act of providing evidence (Lidell, Scott & Jones, 1940). *Marturia* is a Greek noun describing the testimony itself. It can refer to actions, statements, or objects that serve as evidence (Trites, 2000). *Martus* is a person who gives testimony. Jonathan (2015) argues that the idea of confirming or testifying about the truthfulness of a particular thing goes beyond the legal spheres to the defence of one's moral or philosophical convictions. He also says that it can mean demonstration or confirmation of the facts about an event. This word refers to the proclamation of Christ Jesus' Gospel to gentiles and Jews in the New Testament (Trites, 2000). One of the early Christian church's main responsibility was to testify to the historical realities about Jesus. The apostle's testimony to Jesus' resurrection is considered the theological interpretation of Jesus' historical events (Marguerat, 2011:171-173).

Schneider (1999:97) indicates that the Christian faith places a high value on history. Hence, it is appropriate to acknowledge certain of the New Testament writings as historical and to acknowledge that their historical content is not incidental or unimportant but rather a fundamental part of the scripture. The four Gospels were primarily created basing on eyewitness' reports of Jesus' life (Bauckman, 2006). The Christian faith places a high value on historical accuracy, and this is related to the disciples' crucial role in bearing testimony to Jesus' reality. In Luke's writings, the term "witness" alludes to the disciples' role in bearing witness to Jesus' death, burial, and miracles. To put it in another way, it is the activity of announcing Jesus and His Gospel. As evidenced by Peter's words to the gentile, Centurion Cornelius, that all the prophets testify that there is forgiveness to those who believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 10:43).

### **3.5.3.1 Witness as a Christian Identity and Vocation**

The relationship between a believer's identity, that is, his or her being and vocation, which is doing, is very important in understanding the concept of Christian witness. Some believers have a tendency of giving more emphasis on the being than doing (Jonathan, 2015:1). Noumen (2011) argues that who a person is in God is more important than his/her actions because God is the source of encouragement and comfort for him or her. It is also imperative to know that the person's identity in relation to God is closely linked to his or her purpose and vocation that is to be fulfilled by correct action. Luke 24:44-48 tells of Jesus calling His disciples that "You are witnesses of these things". In the book of Acts, early Christians were mandated to become Jesus' witnesses. This was one of their key duties. This is because Christ came in order for Him to suffer, be resurrected and then to be preached. Jesus, as the Messiah in Luke and Acts, is directly linked to His death. The message of forgiveness of sins and repentance is to be preached as the message of hope showing that God is not an enemy of humankind.

The message of salvation is to be preached to the entire world, Jerusalem being the starting point. Luke wants to show that the message of universal salvation Jesus, a Jew, originates in Jerusalem but is to be presented to all humankind. This is related to his effort to give a detailed genealogy of Jesus that traced it to Adam, the father of the entire human race. According to Luke, in the Gospel, the message of salvation is given to the whole of Israel, while in Acts, this hope is extended universally to all nations (Jonathan, 2015). The climax of Luke's Gospel is of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem as the City of God and the peak in Acts is the arrival of the Gospel of Jesus in Rome as

the greatest city in the world of that day. Luke, at the end of his Gospel, reports about Jesus telling His disciples that forgiveness of sins must be preached from Jerusalem going out to all nations. In Acts, Luke reports of Jesus instructing His disciples to be His witnesses starting from Jerusalem and nearby cities (Judea and Samaria) until they reached all nations of the world (Jonathan, 2015:6). Acts presents the early Christians being faithful towards the proclamation of the message of forgiveness of God in Jesus' name to the nations through the guidance and the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the help of the Holy Spirit to witness, salvation is possible for the whole world. Jonathan (2015) asserts that Luke's perspective of the identity of a Christian is to be a witness of Jesus and His Gospel to the world an identity that is clearly missional in nature. This identity is defined by its God-given task and cannot exist apart from it.

### **3.5.3.2 Empowerment and Commissioning of the Twelve Disciples**

Luke reports that the apostles were equipped with power (*dynamis*) and authority (*exousia*) over physical illness and demons. Luke's use of the word *dynamis* in Luke 10:9 reflects that Jesus' ministry is in deeds and words through a combination of the proclamation of the kingdom and healing (Leifeld, 1984:921). The casting out of demons demonstrates the coming of Kingdom of God. It reinforced the gospel of salvation that the church preached (Lenski, 1964). According to Luke, the Gospel is validated among other means by the miraculous power as the messengers of God. Nwaomah (2012:99) asserts that Christ provides the power to perform this and demonstrated the power he has over the devil. Leifeld (1984) argues that the disciples of Jesus have both the authority and power to distinguish them from other Jewish exorcists who were claiming supernatural powers. Power and authority are the spiritual weapons the disciples needed to subdue every evil force in their witness (Abogunrin, 1998).

### **3.5.3.3 Proclamation of the Kingdom and Healing**

In his writings, Luke shows the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the Gospel to be preached. Some scholars make a distinction between the term "the kingdom of heaven" (commonly used in the Gospel of Matthew) from "the kingdom of God" (Nwaomah, 2012). The Gospels take turns in the use of this terminology (Luke 13:18-19; Mtt. 4:17; 13:31-32 and Mk. 1:15). Different kinds of meanings are given to the term, the kingdom of God which are; the divine rule of grace through the Messiah and how it enters and saves man's soul, benefits which God released due to Jesus' work (Lenski, 1946; Bock, 1994). This term is also mainly used for God's

action in intervening in the history of man in establishing His rule. It is important to note that this future physical establishment of the kingdom was to be heralded by the disciples in words and demonstrated in their missionary assignment. Throughout their ministry, Jesus ensured their protection and well-being.

**The missionary mandate as in Luke 9:1-6 revolves around these key aspects:**

- ✓ That the church was mandated to witness through healing the sick and preaching the good news of redemption in Jesus Christ
- ✓ The substance of the message to be announced is God's presence through their action and teaching.
- ✓ Preachers should trust in God wholeheartedly for their daily provision and security.
- ✓ That they do not force themselves where they are not welcomed, but condemn such an attitude and leave.

The kingdom message brings the new and transformational values to life. White (1950) argues that the church needs to teach reliance on God for healing and not see it as a sign of a lack of faith. The balanced understanding of healing and mission is critical for the church. The church needs to understand that what is fundamentally important is health itself either through prayer or use of other remedies. He also argues that true religion and laws of health work together. Witnessing has key themes extracted from Luke-Acts as described in this section of the study.

**3.5.3.4 Continuity with the Command of Jesus**

One of the key reasons why witnessing is a key theme in Acts is because it joins Acts with the end of Luke's Gospel (Keener, 2012:692). It is the continuation of the command of Jesus for witness in Luke 24:45-49 and has these three important parallels; the disciples would receive power after receiving the Holy Spirit, disciples are to be Jesus' witnesses and they are to do it beginning from Jerusalem going out to all nations (Nolland, 1993). As the Spirit anointed Jesus to announce God's salvation during His life and ministry (Luke 4:21), the same has to be done by His disciples. Luke's report in Acts emphasises that the message of Christ Jesus is the fulfilment of the Jewish Scriptures (Acts 10:43 and 26:22-23). This shows that the message of Jesus began to be announced in the Old Testament times and continued to the time of Jesus, who then handed over the work to His disciples.

### **3.5.3.5 The Coming of the Spirit**

In Acts 1:8, Luke talks of the coming of the Spirit which is connected to the power the apostles will receive to be Jesus' witnesses (Keener, 2012:689). The power Jesus' apostles are going to receive is linked to their mission as witnesses. The Holy Spirit has to come for their empowerment and guidance thereafter. Although the apostles first received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4, there are a number of records about the Holy Spirit's presence and work after this event. The description of the Holy Spirit's empowerment of individuals shows His importance to individuals and the community in critical times. The apostles' testimony and the power of the Spirit are connected as their words were confirmed with mighty deeds because of the Spirit.

### **3.5.3.6 You Will be my Witnesses**

During the first century, the meaning of witness referred to someone who is called to make a declaration of what he has observed or know that it is true. In Acts, it has to do with the theme of hearing and seeing, the content of the witnesses' testimony and their identity. The theme of witness is associated with the physical actions of sensory perception of seeing and hearing in Luke-Acts (Jonathan, 2015). Luke gives references to several events that confirm this view. The shepherds are the witnesses to the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:20). John's disciples are also witnesses to Jesus' ministry (Luke 7:22). In Luke 10:24, Jesus tells His disciples that they were privileged to hear and see what many kings and prophets wished to hear and see, but did not. At the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:33, men in Jerusalem saw and heard what happened. Peter told the chief priests and elders in Jerusalem that the disciples were not going to stop witnessing the Word (Acts 4:20). The apostles claimed that they were witnesses to God's resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:32). They saw the risen Jesus with their eyes, touched Him, ate with Him and watched as He ascended. The disciples testify that Jesus is the Messiah because of His resurrection.

The witness of Jesus also serves as the confirmation of the Jewish Scriptures, which according to Luke, the laws of Moses and the prophets foretold about the coming, suffering, death and the resurrection of the Messiah that were all fulfilled. Christian faith lies in the belief in the continuity between Jesus and the Scriptures as indicated in the New Testament (Bock, 2007). As reflected in the New Testaments text, the good news of salvation through Jesus is for all people, not just Jews, because of this continuity. According to Luke, Jesus' resurrection is the cornerstone of the plan of God to save the whole world according to the Jewish faith as revealed in the Scriptures.

Resurrection and its witnessing are the unfolding of the universality of salvation (Bosch, 1991:113). The apostles' mission of witnessing Jesus affirms the plan of God's salvation, through Christ. This was meant to convince both Jews and Gentiles to respond by repentance and faith. One of the key debates in the subject of witness is who is to witness? Jonathan (2015) posits that Jesus' initial instruction on witness was directed to His disciples, who were eyewitnesses of His earthly ministry and resurrection. However, considering the prophecy of Joel, as quoted in Acts 2:17 by Peter, witnessing is not restricted to Jesus' disciples only. There is also reference to some key figures in witnessing, such as Paul and Stephen performing the role of witnessing Jesus' resurrection, as are many other members of the early church. In Acts, the content of witness involves the whole church proclamation of the Gospel. According to Luke, witness is about Jesus's resurrection and His ministry and life.

### **3.5.3.7 To the Ends of the Earth**

The narrative, according to Acts 1:8, presents Luke having an interest to present the systematic spread of the Gospel to all nations. After the Spirit was upon the apostles, they performed the role of witnesses of Jesus through the empowerment of the Spirit, beginning in Jerusalem going to other places and moving to the earth's ends. The book of Acts can be divided among these geographical lines showing how the apostles witnessed Jesus from Jerusalem to other parts of the world (Jonathan, 2015:17). This narrative is presented in six panels: Acts 1:12-6:7 indicates the early church in Jerusalem, Acts 6:8-9:31 is about Judea, Galilee and Samaria, then Palestine and Syria in Acts 9:32-12:24, to Asia in Acts 12:25-16:5, then Europe in Acts 16:6-19:20 and lastly to Rome in Acts 19:21-28:30. Jerusalem is presented as the starting point of the Gospel advancement because of Luke's belief that salvation to the world is revealed through the Jewish Scriptures by the Jewish Messiah who came through Israel. The Gospel of Luke explains Jesus's journey to Jerusalem. Acts describes the journey of the Gospel to the world. However, to both Luke and Acts, Jerusalem becomes the focal point of the Gospel. Luke joins the news of salvation to the entire world. The ends of the earth refer to the universal mission as the phrase does not describe a particular region but is an expression of the idea of universality. No group or region is to be excluded from the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



### **3.5.4 Repentance, Forgiveness of Sins and Salvation**

Bosch (1991:114) asserts that missionaries must emphasise the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins to gain salvation (Luke 24:48 & Acts 2:38). He also explains salvation as liberation from all bondage, including new life in Christ. The researcher will explain the meaning of repentance and forgiveness of sins showing how they are related to the church's mission.

#### **3.5.4.1 Repentance**

According to Bock (2011:262), one of the key concepts in Luke's writing is repentance. This is communicated by the verb "to repent" (*metanoeo*) or noun repentance (*metanoia*). Luke is referred to as a theologian of repentance because he used the verb and noun in his writing than any other writer in the New Testament (Bock, 2011). Repentance means to change the mind, but according to its usage by Luke, it is closely linked to the verb in Hebrew that means "to turn, turn around". This Hebrew sense of the word is clear in its use in Luke 24:44-47 where repentance is presented as a fulfilment of the Old Testament promises where the message is to be preached to all nations (Goppelt, 1981). Repentance is also explained to mean a reorientation or the total shift of perspective taking away the one who has repented from his previous state of mind. The meaning of this term is clear as used in Luke 3:3 when Luke presented John the Baptist preaching about baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins. The Gospel provides an ultimate basis of repentance more clearly as it also points to forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ Jesus. In Luke 5:30-32, Jesus told the sick sinners to repent. Just as Jesus used it to describe His mission, it is also a relevant notion to use in mission today seeking man's response to Jesus.

Repentance is like a situation when a person recognises that he or she is sick and cannot serve themselves. It is, therefore, a decision to turn to Jesus for healing, recovery of one's heart and life (Bock, 2011:263). Repentance to sin is likened to a physician's cure of a disease. In Acts, Luke strengthened this by presenting the apostolic preaching that forgiveness of sins and repentance are available to gentiles and Jews through Christ (Acts 20:21). Apostle Paul is recorded telling Agrippa that when one repents, they are obliged to confirm the transformation through their works. There is a remarkable resemblance between this message and John's sermon in Luke 3:3-14. This parallelism demonstrates the continuity between John the Baptist and Paul. Repentance is done as a result of faith directed towards Jesus when a person changes their mind concerning God and sin and turns to God for salvation (Bosch, 1991:114).

According to Bock (2011:264), repentance is sufficient to express God's offer of salvation. As in Acts 26:20, Paul was not an antinomian but is expressed as being against a person who has faith but continues to act in a manner that pleases them without considering moral standards of God. Repentance results in the transformation of a person's moral behaviour. Throughout his preaching, Paul always challenges his listeners to live in response to grace by exhibiting grace's fruits as evidence of the change in direction as called by forgiveness. Good works are not required to attain salvation but are an inevitable result of the authentic experience of believing in God through Christ. Good deeds are the natural, expected result of true repentance (Bock, 2011). In Acts, repentance summarises one's invitation to forgiveness (Bosch, 1991). In Acts 8:22, Peter advises Simon the sorcerer to repent and look for forgiveness. The Gospel of Luke presents repentance in these three key ways: the calling of the sick to repent (Luke 5:30-32), the return of the prodigal son to his father (Luke 15:11-32) after his realisation that what he had done was wrong and was now trusting in his father's mercy and care and also when the tax collector is contrasted to the Pharisees (Luke 18:1-14) which is similar to the prodigal son's story. Repentance is the relevant reaction to Jesus' message, Christ and applies to both gentiles and Jews.

#### **3.5.4.2 Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is the removal of barriers between persons or persons and God as a result of real or imagined wrongdoings. People forgiven of their sins after repentance were sent away and relationships restored (Kruschwitz, 2001). Luke gives a reflection of forgiveness when he narrates what happened in Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus when he began his ministry (Luke 4:16-30). Jesus started by reading from the book of Isaiah 61:1-2 where the Greek word used "*aphesis*" means forgiveness. In Luke 4:18, he substituted the word forgiveness and into forgiveness with the words "release" and "free" (Kruschwitz, 2001). Forgiveness is presented as the work of Jesus as the anointed one of God. Luke reports more stories concerning forgiveness more than other Gospels, especially when Jesus is presented in association with sinners such as the tax collectors, women and the prodigal son who were supposed to be treated as outcasts (Siker, 2012). According to Luke, Jesus' main concern is extending God's forgiveness to sinners. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, forgiveness of sins is a dominant theme that climaxes with Jesus on the cross, forgiving people of what they had done to Him. The theme of forgiveness of sins stretches to Acts in Paul's message and Peter that talks about repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus's name.

Luke-Acts presents that forgiveness is God's initiative as God does the forgiving in twenty-four of the twenty-eight instances. On other instances, Jesus instructs His followers to forgive others as God has forgiven them. Forgiveness is the action of God through Jesus of Nazareth and also God's gift to all humankind (Bosch, 1991). God offers His forgiveness to the whole human family without any restriction. Luke's depiction of God's forgiveness begins in Jerusalem with the Jewish people (Luke 1 and Acts 2), but the plan was for it to be universal. The universal picture is shown especially at Pentecost, where Jews from all corners of the world were gathered (Acts 2:5). After they returned to their nations, that the word of God's forgiveness was spread to the Gentiles according to Luke-Acts., Luke presents God forgiving foreigners and even His enemies from the Nazarene episode. This is evidenced by the story of the widow of Sidon when Elijah fed her (1 Kings 17) and the healing of Naaman the Syrian commander by Elisha (2 Kings 5:1-19). This confirms the fact that forgiveness is for all humankind without any restrictions.

According to Bosch (1991:114), personal conversion is not a target on its own. Luke's conceptualisation of the mission's purpose is beyond treating the church's work as winning souls, thereby making conversion a final product. Conversion is not a mere conviction and commitment of an individual, but has to take a believer into the community of faith that carries with it moral responsibilities in the community. These moral responsibilities differentiate Christian believers from those still outside due to transformation after repentance and forgiveness of sins. At the same time, attention should be given to turn those who are still outside. The mission of those already saved is, therefore, to spread the message of forgiveness and repentance to those still outside so that they receive salvation too.

### **3.5.5 The Six Dimensions of Salvation**

Luke's Gospel has been one-sided by many scholars regarding it as the Gospel of the poor and marginalised people, but Scheffler (1988:57) came up with a holistic approach in his view of suffering in Luke. Scheffler (1988) identifies the different dimensions of human suffering from Luke's writings. Bosch (1991) asserts that the concept of salvation is another ingredient for the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. Luke-Acts produces six dimensions of salvation (Scheffler 1988). These dimensions are social, physical, political, economic, psychological, social, and spiritual. However, Luke seems to show much concern to the economic dimension (Bosch, 1991:115). In his writing on salvation, Luke focuses on eliminating injustices, removing sufferings of the poor

and the destitute and not a mere eschatological reality instead of Christianity in this world here and now (Esler, 1987:193). Luke's writings are not a work of an armchair theorist who simply answers religious questions but that he intends to enlighten fellow Christians so that they have a correct attitude towards situations in their community. It seems Luke was deeply rooted in the life of his community at all levels. Hence, he wrote to equip believers on how the Gospel should be properly interpreted and applied as the message of salvation across the whole range of challenges. The next section discusses Bosch's six dimensions of salvation he derives from Scheffler (1988).

### **3.5.5.1 Salvation from Economic Suffering**

Throughout his writings, Luke consistently focuses on poverty and riches with reference to the term "*ptochos*" to communicate his perceptions on poverty and attitude towards the rich and other related themes such as renunciation of possessions and charity (Scheffler, 2011:62). In order to understand the meaning of salvation relative to economic life, it is critical to be familiar with the context within which Luke wrote his books. His books were written within a Roman economic context. The section also looks at the literal and theological meaning of Luke's message in relation to economic context.

#### **3.5.5.1.1 The Roman Economic Context as a Background for Luke's View**

Scheffler (2011:117) argues that the ancient Roman economic context during the time Luke wrote cannot be considered homogeneous. Although the Romans were in control of the inhabited world, they did not have ways of enforcing economic policies that had a universal application in the entire empire. Luke's emphasis on the poor was due to persecutions under Emperor Titus Flavius Domitian during 81-96 AD (Schimithals, 1975). This mainly applied to Christians. The persecutions that resulted in deaths were mainly economic in nature, through financial punishment and confiscation of property (Constable, 2003). Constable (2003) also posits that it is because Emperor Domitian needed money for military campaigns in Germany that were expensive to get rid of potential rivals spent lavishly on buildings and to increase the salaries of his legionaries. This could ensure their allegiance and loyalty. One of the debates around Luke-Acts is on which context it has to be written among Rome, Palestine, or both.

Jeremias (1974) asserts that the Gospel of Luke is to be understood against the Palestinian background and Acts against the background of Rome. He also argues that Luke knew that Palestine was under the Roman Empire. He confirmed this by mentioning Augustus and the world

under Roman domination in Luke 2:1. On the other side, Luke also gives Palestine as the setting of Jesus' stories, as in Luke 2:4. The Palestinian economic climate can be considered on the backdrop of its history and or even of the broader Roman empire (Jeremias, 1974). Luke's work should be considered from the backdrop of the world and neither Palestine nor Rome. This is because of Luke's emphasis on universalism in his writings like Luke 13:29. The view is also supported by Luke 24:4 and Acts 1:8, where it is stated that the Gospel should be spread to the remotest part of the world, starting from Jerusalem, then the whole of Judea and Samaria. However, in supporting Luke's universal vision, Scheffler (2006) cautions that the support should consider the historical contexts within which Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts and the issues he addressed in the two books. If Luke was in Rome the time he wrote the Gospel, the prevailing circumstances in the Roman economic environment might have influenced him or since Rome was in control over the world, the Roman economic context still had influence on Luke. Several scholars agree that various economic classes existed in the Roman empire (Scheffler, 2011:120).

**Table 2: Economic Classes in the Roman Society (Friesen 2004, cited in Scheffler 2011:119)**

<b>Economic Class</b>	<b>Class Description</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Imperial Elites	Imperial dynasty, a few retainers, Roman Senatorial families, local royalty, and few free persons.	0.04%
2. Regional or Provincial Elites	Equestrian families, Provincial officials, some decurial families, some retainers, some retired military officers, and some freed persons.	1%
3. Municipal Elites	Most decurial families, wealthy men and women without offices, some retainers, some freed persons, some veterans, and some merchants.	1.76%
4. Moderate Surplus Resources	Some merchants, some traders, some freed persons, some artisans, especially	7%

	those employing others, military veterans.	
5. Stable close subsistence level (with the hope of remaining above the minimal level)	Many merchants and traders, regular wage earners, artisans, large shop owners, freed persons, and some farm families.	20%
6. At subsistence level (often below the minimum level to sustain life)	Small farm families, laborers (skilled or unskilled), artisans (especially those employed by others), wage earners, most merchants and traders, and small shop or tavern owners.	40%
7. Below subsistence level	Some farm families, unattached widows, orphans, beggars, disabled, unskilled day laborers, and prisoners.	28%

Although it may not be perfect, this socio-economic class structure gives us a general understanding of the Roman society. Scheffler (2011:120) argues that there are some variations according to different scholars, mainly on the lower categories that constitute over 80% of the population (class 5-7). This class structure reveals that most of the population belongs to lower economic classes to man that wealth is in the hands of very few citizens. Many people were small-holder farmers in class 5-6. They engaged in trading and met their tax obligations. Class 4 consisted of wealthy merchants that were in existence in the first century after a stable currency was introduced (Constable, 2003). This development promoted trade. Plumbers, carpenters, blacksmiths, spinners, dyers, wheelwrights, boot makers, button makers, architects, among others, shared the wealth (Constable, 2003).

After discussing the economic structure, the key question one may ask is that to which layer of the economic class was the Gospel of Luke addressed and also which class the poor (*ptochoi*) he targeted. The Gospel of Luke is addressed to Theophilus, the most excellent official (Luke 1:3). The salutation, “the most excellent” indexes that he was not poor, but one of the super-rich during

that time. If Theophilus is considered as the audience of Luke's writings, then it means that it was addressed to the rich to show them how they were supposed to do to those in economic suffering. Luke focussed on the poorest in the Roman Empire; therefore, he was mobilising the other layers on how they can support the dying or the begging poor (Scheffler, 2011:120). Due to Luke's consistent focus on poverty, it is critical to analyse his reaction towards the rich and renunciation of possessions and charity and the semantics of the word poor (*ptochos*).

### **3.5.5.1.2 Luke's Perspective of the Poor in its Literary and Economic Context**

The term poor as Luke uses it in his writings can be interpreted in different dimensions which are according to literary and economic context.

### **3.5.5.1.3 Use of the term Poor (*ptochos*)**

In the New Testament, the term poor appears thirty-four times. Luke uses it ten times in his Gospel. The Gospels never used the word *penes* that means average poverty. When Luke mentions different groups of suffering people, he seems to use *ptochos* like in Luke 4:18; 6:20; 14:13,21 or 7:1 as a climax. An impression that is given is that the word is used as a generic term for all disadvantaged individuals (Busse, 1978). However, in some instances, the term can be deprived of its economic meaning where the concept poor is spiritualised. Nothing in Luke that may cause any other meaning to be given besides the basic economic relation to the destitute and poor (Rienecker, 1970). Luke used the term for the first time in his Nazarene episode (Luke 4:16-30) where Jesus quoted Isaiah 61 when He indicated that His mission targeted the poor. A contrast between the hungry and the rich in the Magnificat also related to this narrative (Luke 1:53). Although, the term *ptochos* is not used, but there is an implication of those facing hunger.

Luke uses the term in the first beatitude (Luke 6:20b), which is different from its use in Matthew 5:3 but allows a literal interpretation, especially when looking at the second beatitude (Luke 6:21/Matthew 5:6) which is against the first, semantically reducing it to hunger defining poverty like in Luke 1:53. On another case it was used when Jesus responded to John the Baptist's disciples (Luke 7:22) where the issue of ministering to the poor comes right at the end of the suffering people, He mentioned the blind, lame, lepers, deaf and the dead. Bosch (1991) says that, when Jesus was addressing these issues, He brought His audience to the lived experiences of those living in suffering, such as the oppressed, captives, poor, and blind. He did not focus on issues of heaven. According to Luke 7:22, the correct attitude toward riches and the charity work has a religious

significance for Luke (Scheffler, 2011:121). A similar argument is also used in these other two uses of the term; Luke 14:13 on whom to invite to the meal and Luke 14:21 on the parable of the great banquet, where these instances give convincing support to the literal meaning of the concept of poor according to Luke. This is because the meal and the banquet provide a materialistic theme of food and wealth to be shared with the poor who cannot payback, referring to lack and extreme poverty (Luke 14:12-14).

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man also explains Luke's view on poverty (Luke 16:19-30). The story portrays Luke's view on the poor when he was using the word *ptochos* in Luke 16:20 and 22. Both cases refer to Lazarus who was living in abject poverty and extreme ailment. He was so desperate that he begged to eat whatever fell from the rich man's table. He is also compared with a super-rich man who led a lavish and opulent lifestyle (Luke 16:21b). Another parable is used in the context which deals with economic matters is in Luke 16:1, 5-7, 13-14a which shows the correct use of money. Luke 16:9-13 agrees that not serving money does not refer to discarding it but it should be befriended if it is rightly used. This parable helps to explain the proper way of understanding the poor in Luke-Acts. The story of a rich ruler is also used where selling goods has an economic sense but to keep treasure in heaven (Luke 18:22, 28; Acts 4:32). Luke's reference to the poor widow in Luke 21:3 uses a term that means the same as *ptochos*. The passage expresses economic meanings, where the poor widow had nothing, but made a sacrifice to give. Accordingly, she got positive comments (Scheffler, 2011:122). In all the discussed examples, the poor, according to Luke, means basic and materialistic poverty.

#### **3.5.5.1.4 Concern for the Poor Without Using *Ptochos***

Scheffler (2011) argues that there are some cases where Luke does not use the term *ptochos* when talking about poverty. Hunger is equal to poverty according to the Magnificat. On the beatitudes, Luke indicates that the hungry are totally destitute. The hungry and poor in Matthew is spiritualised as the poor in spirit, hunger and thirsty for righteousness, while there is no link to this in Luke (Luke 6:22). Another reference to the poor is when Luke talks about giving to all individuals that ask and that if anyone takes any of your possessions, you should not ask them to return it to you. He also talks about loving the enemies, and lending to them, not expecting anything from them (Luke 6:30,35). When Luke talks about almsgiving in Luke 12:33-34 he is implicating the begging poor. John the Baptist's teaching on ethical teaching in Luke 3:10-14 gives reference to extreme



poverty but without using the term *ptochos*. In addition, Luke's narration of the behaviour of the Good Samaritan towards a man who was attacked by robbers and left half dead, he does not use the term *ptochos*. The response of the Samaritan towards him serves as an economic function (Luke 10:34-35).

In Acts, there is less reference of concern with the poor and marginalised than in the Gospel of Luke (Bosch, 1991:115). Compassion and sharing in Acts are practiced within the Christian community where many believers are poor. An example is when Paul appealed to the Gentile churches to meet and help the poor brethren in Judea. Also, in Acts 2:44-4:34, Christian believers shared everything to eradicate want in their midst. Therefore, rich Christians in these contemporary times need to practice solidarity with the poor Christians and non-Christians as this would be a good missionary testimony and even the fulfilment of Jesus' mission to the world (Bosch, 1991).

#### **3.5.5.1.5 Luke's View of the Rich**

After it has been demonstrated that Luke had a deep concern for the poor, it is also important to know the attitude he had towards the rich. We need to find out whether Luke was condemning the rich and their riches or his teaching to the rich on the role they need to play to alleviate the suffering of the poor. According to Luke, this will lead us to the theme of renunciation of possessions and charity to the rich.

#### **3.5.5.1.6 Renunciation of Possessions and Charity**

In his writings, Luke gives emphasis on the swift relief from suffering because he used the term "today" as in Luke 2:12; 4:21; 13:22; 19:5,9; 23:43 and "immediately" as in Luke 4:39; 5:25; 8:44,45,55; 13:13; 18:43; Acts 3:7 and the word "now" in Luke 1:48; 2:29; 17:21. The eschatological state of the promise of God's kingdom to the poor becomes a problem now on whether the ultimate salvation of the poor from poverty is prepared for the afterlife. Another question that can be asked is whether Christian believers should live in poverty in this life looking forward for the treasure in heaven as suggested in Luke 12:33. Luke's desire for the poor is connected to his perception of view of personal possessions and charity (Scheffler, 2011:128). Luke is called the theologian of the poor and rich. His theology is not exclusively for the poor because of his perception that the rich should assist the poor. According to Luke's writings, Jesus used to tell His followers to use their possessions to benefit the poor.

Luke's perspective on renunciation of possessions and work of charity is described by the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, although, it also means that salvation was apocalyptic. In relation to Luke 16, the parable was used to encourage the Pharisees, who were referred to as the lovers of money, to exercise charity on people in extreme poverty like Lazarus, even in this life (Scheffler, 2011:128). Luke also uses the early Christian church as a sharing community to teach believers to use their possessions to share with the needy (Acts 2:44-47). The church in Jerusalem is also presented as poor and the collection was done by the Hellenistic churches to give them support. In the Jerusalem church, rich and poor Christians shared material possessions. Giving did not take place in a unidirectional manner where the rich simply gave to the poor. Renunciation of possessions and charity should happen simultaneously. The parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:21) demonstrates the richness towards God and not the accumulation of wealth. Scheffler (2011) argues that Luke left out all possible references to Jesus as an owner of a house to demonstrate this view. Luke is viewed as a theologian who strives for a classless society where none is to be rich or poor (Scheffler, 2011). This is because of his reference to the instances where Christians sold their possessions and distributed the money among the congregation to meet their collective needs.

#### **3.5.5.1.7 Liberation Theology according to Luke-Acts**

Since the 1970s, the Gospel of Luke appeared outstandingly in liberation theology that address political persecution (Scheffler, 2011:129). Liberation theologians single out the theme of setting at liberty those who are oppressed. Those who are poor are said to be poor because of political oppression by those with political powers. This scenario results in suffering in all dimensions. Bosch (1991:115) posits that Luke has championed God's preferential option for the poor. This is mainly because of Luke's reference to the Nazareth episode where Jesus mentions the freedom of the captives and the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25) that are politically related to what was happening in Jewish context. Jubilee would mean changing the situation of the dispossessed, oppressed and persecuted by encouraging the rich and the healthy to share what they have with the victims of political exploitation. The time of Jubilee meant the period of returning annexed land to original owners, cancelling debts and freeing slaves, and (Predito, 1997:71). The day of Jubilee is considered the day of justice. The fulfilment of Luke 4:21 means the new era of justice for the poor and marginalised, freedom from slavery, love conquering greed, hope triumph over despair and light over darkness (Predito, 1997). In other words, we can say that it was an announcement of the birth of a peaceful and just world. Luke's reference to Stephen's narration of the history of

Israel and how they came out from the Egyptian captivity in Act 7 is of political significance that points to the destiny of Israel out of political bondage.

### **3.5.5.2 Salvation from Social Suffering**

Social suffering is when people are excluded from the community because they belong to a particular group in the contemporary or Hellenistic society (Scheffler, 1993). The poor were treated as social outcasts because of their poverty but social suffering is differentiated from economic suffering because it means people who are not necessarily poor but belong to a certain group. It is also different from political suffering where people were rejected because of their membership to a particular race or nation, like Samaritans and Gentiles. According to Scheffler's analysis, Luke appears to be putting much emphasis on key three despised professions: toll collectors, soldiers and shepherds, and then other groups, including women and children (Scheffler, 1993:71).

#### **3.5.5.2.1 Toll Collectors**

Toll collectors were those collecting indirect taxes such as tariffs, tolls, import and customs duty at local toll houses (Luke 5:27; 19:2) and had to pay the expected revenue to the Romans in advance and now seek to recover the amount, including the expenses and profits after assessing and collecting the tolls (Fitzmyer, 1986:469). Toll collector is a better term than tax collectors or publican as these refer to collectors of direct taxes such as land tax and poll tax as direct employees of the Roman Government. Due to the abuses and dishonesty the system was exposed to, their fellow Jews had hatred towards them to the extent that they were required to make restitution and give up their possessions when they wanted to belong to a certain group, either of the Pharisees or Sadducees (Jeremias, 1971:113). Luke reports about the positive response of the toll collectors to Jesus' words concerning John the Baptist (Luke 7:29). Luke reports only the positive traditions about the toll collectors from his *Sondergut*. According to Luke 3:13, in John's ethical teaching, the toll collectors are admonished not to exploit ordinary people through toll tariffs to enrich themselves. The picture given to them is that they responded positively to John's message when compared to Pharisees and Sadducees but were expected even to continue as toll collectors. In another case, Jesus' communion with sinners and toll collectors in Luke 15:1-2 shows Jesus' unconditional welcome of the toll collectors.

The toll collectors are dominantly featured in Luke's Sondergut passages. The parable of the Pharisee and the toll collector (Luke 18:9-14) reversed their traditional roles as the toll collector confesses that he was a sinner and was justified, unlike the Pharisee who claimed to be justified. In addition, the story about Zacchaeus, the chief toll collector (Luke 19:1-10), appears that it was written against the backdrop of the toll collectors who were usually despised. The social theme of contempt is interconnected with the economic one. Zacchaeus was socially ostracised, although he was rich. Instead of quitting his profession as the Sadducees and the Pharisees demanded, he decided to make restitution and share with the poor. Jesus also accepted him even before his repentance (Luke 19:5). Luke only provides positive stories about the toll collectors.

#### **3.5.5.2.2 Shepherds**

During Luke's time, the shepherds had a negative tag, being viewed as untrustworthy, in the courts, they were not allowed to testify as their evidence was deemed untrustworthy (Jeremias, 1974:304). The role the shepherds were assigned in the narration of Jesus' birth needs to be evaluated against this background (Luke 2:8-20). The despised shepherds are the ones who bore witness to the birth of Jesus and the significance of His coming. The response by the listeners to the shepherds in Luke 2:1-12 that they were surprised by their witness that is different from Mary's positive response could indicate their view of shepherds as witnesses who were not trustworthy (Scheffler, 1993:73). In narrating the story of the shepherds' visit to the baby Jesus, Luke demonstrates his positive attitude to the shepherds during their visit, supernatural guidance and locating the baby. The shepherds did not provide splendid gifts like the gifts of the Magi, nevertheless, they were the first to receive the good news (Luke 2:8-20/Matthew 2:1-12/). In Jesus' teaching using the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-6), the shepherd cares for a single sheep rejoicing after he found it. The position of the shepherd in the parable metaphorically refers to God.

#### **3.5.5.2.3 Soldiers**

According to Fitzmyer (1986), toll collectors and soldiers in Herod Antipas' army, who were likely Jewish mercenaries, were detested by their fellow citizens (Luke 3:13-14). Despite being forewarned like toll collectors, they are shown as accepting John the Baptist's message and not being forced to give up their line of work. Jesus praises the centurion's faith and comments that he had not even encountered such faith in Israel in Luke 7:1. Luke also downplayed the soldiers' derision of Jesus during the events of the Passion Story (Luke 23:36) when compared to what

Matthew and Mark did (Matthew 27:27-31a, Mark 15:16-20a). The first person to admit that Jesus had been killed unjustly is the centurion (Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47). In addition, in Acts, the conversion of Cornelius the centurion is reported to show his positive response to the Gospel (Acts 10:1-45, 16:23-40).

#### **3.5.5.2.4 Women**

Women are frequently despised in the Bible. Due to his thorough treatment of the subject of women, The Gospel of Luke is occasionally described as the Gospel of Women (Schithals, 1980:13). In his first story (Luke 1:39–45), Mary and Elizabeth are portrayed as the major characters. Elizabeth is depicted as being faithful in contrast to Zechariah since she accepted the angel's news that her social stigma was lifted (Luke 1:25). When the angel visited Mary, rather than Joseph, to herald the birth of Jesus, Mary is also shown as being the one who is most well-treated. Mary gives thanks to God and declares that future generations will refer to her as blessed. Luke introduces the widow named Anna who made a prophecy about the coming redemption in Jerusalem, considering that in modern society, women were not taken as trustworthy witnesses, were typically not allowed to preach, and were not expected to participate in religious matters (Tannehill, 1986). Mary's posture at Jesus' feet represents that of a disciple, and Martha and Mary are depicted in a way that demonstrates that women were actively participating in religious labour (Luke 10:38-42) (Predito, 1976:75).

Additionally, Luke's account of the wicked lady (Luke 7:36) demonstrates his concern for women because, in contrast to the judgmental Pharisee, the woman is lauded for having a great deal of love. Women were present among Jesus' disciples (Luke 8:1-3), and it appears that the same group of women followers was responsible for informing the apostles of Jesus' empty tomb (Luke 24:10–11). Therefore, it is implied that women were crucial to the discovery and proclamation of Jesus' resurrection. Scheffler (1993:75) says that we are also pointed to several examples of men and women who stand together side by side before God (2:25-38; 4:25-28; 4:31-39; 7:1-17; 8:1-3; 12:45; 15:4-10; 17:34-36; 18:1-14; 23:55-24:35; Ac 5:1-11; 9:32-42; 16:13-34; 17:34). By balancing the standing of men and women, Luke is seen to challenge the status quo of how women were treated in society (Predito, 1993:75). The widow of Zarephath mentioned alongside Elijah, the temple scene between Anna and Simeon, the Queen of Sheba (Luke 11:31–32), the mustard seed being compared to the yeast where women perform domestic duties such as baking bread

(Luke 13:18–21), and the parable of the lost sheep and the shepherd compared to a woman seeking and finding a coin where both the shepherd and the woman represent God, and all serve as examples to support the viewpoint that Luke projects women as central in his narratives.

According to Luke, Jesus showed special consideration for women. Jesus healed a paralytic woman on a Sabbath day in Luke 13:10-17. Jesus told the ladies weeping at His suffering to instead weep for themselves and their offspring. Luke also portrays Jesus showing special concern for widows because they were the women in society who were suffering the most (Luke 2:37; 4:25; 7:12; 18:3; 20:47; 21:2) (Stahlin, 1973). Jesus intended to highlight the grief of the widow of Nain who had lost her only son when He revived her son. In Luke 20:47, Jesus chastised the Scribes for stealing widows' homes and demonstrated His good nature toward the needy widow who gave out of her poverty (Luke 21:1-4).

#### **3.5.5.2.5 Children**

In Luke's Gospel, children take centre stage. Luke 1:17 that talks about John mission aiming at turning fathers' hearts to children has been misinterpreted. Oespke (1954:639) claims that it was uttered because of Luke's concern for children and the decline of parental love in modern culture, which results in children living in agony. The idea that family love will be restored in the messianic period explains why Luke did not mention that children should also turn their hearts to their fathers, as what Matthew does (Matthew 4:6). The father who cares for his suffering child without imposing any restrictions is emphasised in the prodigal son tale as well (Luke 15:11–33). The interest of Luke also displays his interest in children in the story of his early years. Luke includes the well-known account of how Jesus' knowledge astounded everyone in the temple when He was twelve and served as an example of obedience (Luke 2:48–51). His emphasis on the birth story of Jesus centres on His infancy and the position He holds in Simeon's hands in the temple. Luke also describes the early life of John the Baptist, telling Zechariah that he will receive the Holy Spirit from his mother while still in the womb. This demonstrates that God was with John before his birth. On the Benedictus, John's father tells him that he will be the prophet God (Luke 1:76). According to Luke 18:15–17, Jesus chastised the disciples for their lack of tolerance for young people. Children are often portrayed as role models for adults to follow to attain the kingdom. In Luke's view, children should get saved just for being children. Children are shown obtaining healing in several texts in Luke (Luke 7:11–17; 8:40–46; 9:37–45).

Although Luke placed much focus on the groups mentioned above as social outcasts, it is also possible to infer his social concern from other contexts. He seems to have a deep care for those who are victimised, particularly for Jesus' cause. Other social aspects include compassion for the underprivileged, sinners, and sick, especially lepers (Luke 7:36–50), who were frequently left out of mainstream society due to their infirmity.

### **3.5.5.3 Salvation from Political Suffering**

Political suffering includes individual suffering brought on by one's nationality as well as suffering experienced by an entire nation or group of nations at the hands of another nation. Suffering can also refer to genuine political oppression, such as what the Jews experienced under the Romans, and disrespect and hostility between nations. In addition to emphasising universalism as a political principle, Luke's Gospel also shows his sympathy for the political hardship that both the Samaritans and the Jews were subjected to under the Romans and the Samaritans under the Jews (Scheffler, 1993:77).

#### **3.5.5.3.1 The Jews (Israel)**

The idea that Luke was apathetic to the political misery or tyranny of the Jews as a political entity may arise from his condemnation of Jewish exclusivism. This is false, as is evident from the Magnificat, the Benedictus, and the announcement of Jesus' birth. The angel tells Mary to name the baby Jesus, which means "Yahweh saves," just as he tells Joseph in Matthew 1:21 when announcing Jesus' birth to him (Luke 1:26-38). This salvation is more comprehensive than the story found in Matthew. Jesus' permanent dominion over the people of Israel is what Matthew 1:32–33 claims is the real purpose for His birth (Luke 1:16–17). Given that Luke's universalism character may have prevented Luke from indicating that the words (Luke 1:33) should be understood in a spiritual sense, one can infer that the term has nationalistic and political overtones in the annunciation narrative rather than simply referring to an individual or spiritual level. Because Jesus will ascend the Davidic throne and rule over Jacob's family, this still has political meaning for Luke and makes the Israelites the political target of God's deliverance.

The above interpretation seems more likely in light of the Magnificat (1:46-55). The Magnificat begins with Mary referring to God as her savior (1:47), and then describes God's soteriological action in verses 48–55. The song's first section (verses 48–50) focuses on Mary's lowliness and the promise of her future blessing; however, the second section (1:51–55) expands on numerous

social groups and ends by discussing the rescue of Israel. The power imbalance seems to have nationalistic undertones rather than global ones. Since it contrasts with the powerful from their thrones as in verse 52a, the allusion to people of low degree in verse 52b should be construed politically rather than economically. As a political symbol of suffering, Israel the servant (1:54a) contrasts with the arrogant or foes who will be dispersed (1:51). Though his theory which has political connotations and portrays the people of Israel as being oppressed cannot be substantiated, it is believed that the Magnificat was originally a Maccabean battle hymn (Winter, 1954). One could contend that by selecting the Magnificat and including it in his account of Jesus' early life, the author purposefully highlighted the political significance of the baby Jesus' birth for the Israelites.

Luke also used the Benedictus (1:68–79), a political hymn that he borrowed and bears much more overt allusions to Israel's political subjugation. The song's central theme is salvation, and the poem's main target for salvation is Israel's population. God is believed to have paid his people a visit and redeemed them in verses 68–69 by erecting a horn of salvation, the Messiah. The type of salvation intended for national rescue from their enemies is mentioned in verses 71 and 74. Visitation is another way that deliverance is depicted (1:68, 78). The second half of the Benedictus, according to Schweizer (1975), is a Christian addition to the original Jewish song and indicates a reworking of the hymn (1:68–75). We can infer that Luke's understanding of salvation includes a spiritual component from his translation of John's sermon in 3:3-6. Luke explained the spiritual aspect of salvation and its political ramifications. Although Scheffler (1993) acknowledges the political connotations of the Benedictus, she believes that this song, like the Magnificat, is not a militant hymn representing the zealot sympathies in Luke's Gospel. According to Cassidy (1980), the Jesus shown by Luke was not apathetic toward the Jewish people's suffering under the Romans. His opposition to the political authorities as the cause of suffering is demonstrated, among other things, by his words in which he refers to Herod as a fox in 13:32, his lack of cooperation in the face of Herod and Pilate, his acceptance of the poor and social outcasts in contrast to Roman custom, and his criticism of political alliances. Although, it appears that he had no interest in acquiring political power himself (22:35–38,49–51), he does not rule out the idea of establishing the kingdom of Israel again, as demonstrated by Acts 1:7-8 (22:29–30; 24:21a) (Cassidy, 1980). Luke's sympathy for Israel's political suffering is therefore qualified by his understanding of its spiritual suffering (1:74,77) and his universalism (4:25-27).



### 3.5.5.3.2 The Samaritans

Samaria holds a special place in Luke's thinking, as shown in Acts 1:7-8. The first group to benefit from Jewish exclusivism's success is the Samaritans (Acts 8:5). Luke shared the Johannine tradition that Jesus had intimate ties to the Samaritans during his journeys between Galilee and Jerusalem, according to texts like 9:52 and 17:11. The inclusion of three pericopes in his lengthy travel narrative (9:51–19:27), in which Samaritans play a key role, strengthens the sense that Jesus' journey to Jerusalem required him to pass through Samaria (Conzelmann, 1964:58). Luke, therefore, portrays the idea that Jesus began his public ministry in Judea (4:44), followed by Samaria (9:51–19:27), before concluding his public ministry and being crucified in Jerusalem. His apostles travelled the same road from Jerusalem, first preaching in Judea and later in Samaria (Acts 1:8b: 8:5). One can only properly understand the three Samaritan texts in the journey tale if they are aware of the enmity that existed between Jews and Samaritans.

The Samaritans were descendants of Asian tribes that arrived in Northern Israel after Israel was exiled by the Assyrians (721 BC), according to 2 Kings 17:24. They were a mixed blood as a result, and while having acknowledged Yahweh, the Jews nevertheless regarded them as filthy. Jesus' position on the political hostility between Jews and Samaritans is revealed in the parable about him and the Samaritan village (9:51–56). Jesus chastises the disciples for their harsh response to the Samaritan's lack of hospitality (9:51). The fact that the Samaritans' hostility is mentioned rather than the Jews' does corroborate this claim. In addition to telling his followers to avoid despising Samaritans, Jesus also gave them reasons to detest them, but banned them from doing so. The purpose of the parable of the good Samaritan (10:25–37), apart from emphasising the physical misery of the robbed man, is to portray Samaritans in a favourable light. The parable in Luke's writing should be viewed in light of the paragraph on the greatest commandment. In terms of Jews' acceptance of Samaritans, the parable is extremely important. The lawyer, like the Nazarenes, had no issues with an exclusivist interpretation of neighbourly love (4:22 and 10:28–29). The story contrasts the Samaritan's compassion for the abused man with the Jewish religious authorities' callousness (Mazamisa, 1987:86). Second, Jesus' explanation of the passage in which the neighbour compels the lawyer to acknowledge that the Samaritans are also Jews' neighbours and should be loved as such (10:36–37). The story of the thankful Samaritan (17:11–19) and the tale of the good Samaritan share many similarities. The robbed man and the ten lepers in both chapters demonstrate how the behaviour of the Jews and Samaritans is clearly contrasted, in

addition to the topic of compassion with physical suffering. A Samaritan demonstrated the conduct demanded of Jews in both cases.

Luke stands out from the other gospels in speaking well of the Samaritans. In order to facilitate the mission to the Samaritans, Luke's goal may have been to refute or rectify the tradition contained in Matthew (Grundmann, 1974). However, his concern for the Samaritans is consistent with the remainder of the Gospel's favourable attitude toward suffering groups.

### **3.5.5.3.3 The Gentiles**

Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8's account of the mission to the gentiles show that Luke strongly emphasised the rejection of the exclusivist attitudes of the Jews toward the gentiles. Luke-Acts takes a very different approach. The story of Peter's meeting with Cornelius, in particular, makes it obvious that the custom that it is forbidden for a Jew to see or interact with someone from another nation (Acts 10:28) was overturned by the death and resurrection of Jesus (Bertram, 1950:361). The *Nunc Dimittis* is Luke's Gospel's first hymn to expressly depart from what may be seen as the nationalistic viewpoint of the *Magnificat* and the *Benedictus*. Themes from Deutero-Isaiah universalism are applied in Simeon's statement that his eyes had seen God's salvation that he has prepared before all peoples. The salvation was also meant for the gentiles (Acts 2:30-32). Simeon was uttering these remarks while carrying the infant Jesus in his arms (2:14). Therefore, it is obvious that, in Luke's opinion, redemption became available to all people when Jesus was born. If our interpretation of the travel narrative is true, Luke's Gospel primarily focuses on Jesus' ministry in Galilee, Judea, and Samaria, but his universalism is still clear (Scheffler, 1993). In particular, Jesus' mention of the pain being lifted off of the widow of Zarephath and Naaman (Luke 4:25-27) goes against Jewish exclusivism.

Luke's narrative account of the story of the centurion's servant omits the universalist story about people who will be coming from the west and east, found in Matthew 8:11. However, it does exist in a modified form in the paragraph about the narrow door (13:22-30). Luke's use of the phrases north and south emphasises the saying's universality even further. One conclusion might be that Luke sees the message of Jesus as engaging all peoples and not just an abstract idea. According to Luke, the core of Jesus' teaching and salvation is acceptance of all peoples, including Gentiles, sympathy with their suffering like Israel's, and criticism of hostility between peoples like the Samaritans and Jews.

#### **3.5.5.4 Salvation from Physical Suffering**

The Nazareth story clarifies that Luke paid close attention to pain in its most literal meaning. His conception of pain considers bodily suffering, particularly when it occurs in the same sentence as economic deprivation. The impoverished, the blind, the persecuted, and those who are physically ill are all referenced in asyndetic parallelism in the Nazareth narrative, which quotes Isaiah 61:1-2. This occurs on four other occasions throughout the Gospel. The simultaneous ending of every one of these many kinds of suffering denotes the Lord's acceptable year (4:19). Second, it is plain from Jesus' response to the Baptist's query (7:21-22) that he regarded that he brought the dead to life, healed the blind, the crippled, lepers, and the deaf, as well as declared himself to be the Messiah (7:19-20), as clear proof of his Messiahship. Luke emphasises the significance of the latter subject by connecting Jesus' role as the Messiah with his ministry in light of suffering. Thirdly, when eating at a Pharisee's home (14:1-24), Jesus not only healed a man with dropsy while disobeying the sabbatical restrictions (14:1-6), but he also mentioned twice that those with social and physical handicap (the poor, the maimed, the blind, the lame (14:13, 21) should be invited once a banquet has been prepared. Fourthly, Luke adopted the tradition of the blind beggar from Mark (18:35-43/Mark 10:46-52) and in his version, he is seen actively begging at the moment when Jesus was going by (18:35). In Luke's stories of Jesus' healing, the topic of release from physical agony is highly important. Other situations, such as attack, starvation, and danger, do not require the miraculous healing of the ill.

##### **3.5.5.4.1 Physical assault**

In a parable Jesus used (10:30-37) and his account of an event in Jesus' life (22:50-51), Luke shows compassion for those who suffer from physical abuse. In light of the political animosity between Samaritans and Jews, and the good Samaritan's story, the victim's suffering is understood literally and not as a metaphor in another context of the story (Rese, 1985). This is demonstrated by the level of detail used to illustrate both the man's agony and the Samaritan's treatment of him. The man is literally stripped of his clothing (10:30). The same phrase is repeated in a different context in Acts 16:23, where the man is described as being left half-dead. Its significance is also emphasised by the fact that the man's physical anguish is mentioned in the parable's opening sentence. The entire narrative revolves around the right way to treat the afflicted man as a neighbour. The Samaritan's unwavering compassion for the half-dead man (10:33) serves as the impetus for his care. It includes taking care of the man's physical requirements, dressing his

wounds, arranging for lodging at the inn, and providing for his financial security (10:34–35). According to Luke's redactional framework, the Samaritan's physical act of mercy makes him a neighbour and a law-fulfiller (11:41), as the commandment to love (10:25–28) is interpreted in the parable as a commandment to show mercy to those who are suffering (10:37). Apart from political reference, we can therefore rightly differentiate it to refer to physical and even economic (10:34–35) suffering.

Because it is the only incident in which the person who was healed was a victim of violence rather than illness, the healing of the high priest's slave after having his ear severed (22:50–51) differs from the healings mentioned in the Gospels. In Mark's account of the attack on the high priest's slave, there is no mention of Jesus' response (Mk 14:47–48). Jesus' response is described by Matthew and Luke, along with a comparison between the two responses. Luke's account concentrates on the suffering man himself, whereas Matthew (Mt 26:25) has Jesus tell the assailant to put back his sword. The irony of Jesus healing the victim while he was being persecuted highlights his mercy towards the sufferer.

#### **3.5.5.4.2 The hungry**

Despite the dichotomy of the rich and hungry in Luke 1:53, which relates hunger to economic hardship, Luke's persistent focus on this form of deprivation forces it to be included in the current context of physical suffering. In addition to dedicating a separate beatitude to the hungry in 6:21, the variation between Matthew's and Luke's versions is also noteworthy. While Matthew's version understands hunger as having a spiritual component, Luke's version stresses the physical aspect of hunger. Other passages in the Gospel (Acts 2:44–47; 4:34–35) that address the plight of the hungry include John the Baptist's counsel to the multitudes to share food and clothing (3:11), and the passages from the book of Acts, Jesus' defence of the hungry disciples who picked grain on the sabbath (6:1–5), Jesus' feeding of the five thousand (9:10–17) and Lazarus' begging parable (16:21).

#### **3.5.5.4.3 Physical danger**

When comparing Luke's narrative of the stilling of the storm (8:22–25) to Mark's (4:35–41), Luke's account appears to be more understanding of the disciples' peril. While Mark provides further details about the storm's intensity, Luke places much emphasis on the perilous circumstance that the disciples were in. Only Luke (8:23, Mark 4:37, and Matthew 8:24) specifically states that they

were in peril. As opposed to Mark (Mark 4:38), the disciples' cry when Jesus was awakened was an expression of intense worry (8:24). Jesus' query to the disciples after calming the storm, "Where is your faith?" is also kinder than its counterpart in Mark, "Why are you afraid? Do you not believe?" In Mark, it seems that Jesus accused the disciples of having no faith at all, whereas in Luke, Jesus acknowledged their faith and used his inquiry to remind them of it. They were also not chastised for their fear in Luke's story. Thus, Luke appears to have more compassion for the disciples while in peril.

#### **3.5.5.4.4 The Healing of Jesus**

First of all, the volume of healing reports indicates that Jesus gave healing a major place in his work. Seven of Mark's nine healings are shared by Luke, and he adds two more from Q and no less than five from his Sondergut. A wide range of afflictions are healed: fever (4:38-39), paralysis (5:17-26; 13:10-17), leprosy (5:12-16; 17:11-19), a withered hand (6:6-11), death or near-death (7:1-10; 7:11-17; 8:40-42, 49-56), haemorrhage (8:43-48), dumbness (11:14/Matthew 12:22; also 1:64), dropsy (14:1-6), blindness (18:35-43) and physical assault (22:50-51). In addition to the announcement of the healing ministry of Jesus in the Nazareth episode, healing and the proclamation of the gospel to the needy are referenced to disciples of John the Baptist as evidence that Jesus is the Messiah (7:22/Matthew 11:5). Luke specifically highlights Jesus' healing ministry by including 7:21. Luke also gives equal weight to Jesus' teaching and healing, balancing them both (Achte-meier, 1975:551). Peter describes the "word proclaiming" and "doing good and healing" as the pinnacle of his career in Acts (10:37-38). From this, we conclude that the term "healing ministry" adequately captures Jesus' work.

Second, in Luke's account of Jesus' healing, the suffering people are given a lot of attention. In the healing stories, Luke gives his readers more information about the characters experiencing agony, draw the reader's attention away from Jesus and more onto the individuals he heals (Achte-meier, 1975). This includes the lengthy portrayal of the agony of the crippled woman in (13:10-11) and several other occasions where the illness or suffering appears to be more severe in Luke's narrative than in Mark's version (4:38, Mark 1:30 and 5:12, Mark 1:40). In Luke's account, Jesus shows greater compassion toward the sick. For instance, the leper (5:14) is healed by Jesus but only instructed to keep it a secret rather than being sharply accused and driven out (Mark 1:43). The fact that Luke frequently tells that healing took place instantly emphasises this kind of treatment

of the ill. Luke presents the victims in a favourable light because they frequently thank God for their cure (1:64; 5:25; 13:13; 17:15; and 18:43) and do not disobey Jesus' commands (5:15 and Mark 1:45; Luke 8:39 and Mark 5:19-20).

Thirdly, despite the sabbatical laws, Jesus performs healing. In spite of Jewish rules forbidding it, Jesus cured the sick on the Sabbath, demonstrating the depth of his love for people who were suffering. It has been noted that Luke (11:41) views extending pity to the afflicted as fulfilling the law in another context. Although, Luke used Mark's treatment of healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6, 6:6-11), he emphasises it by providing two additional instances of Sabbath healings from his Sondergut (13:10-17; 14:1-6) (Klein, 1987:16). The cure occurred on a sabbath, which is highlighted in the Lucan account of the man with the withered hand (6:6, Mark 3:1). By focusing more on Jesus' thoughts than his feelings, Luke uses the healing to question the Pharisees (6:8, Mark 3:5). The sabbath theme is much more prominent in the healing of the woman who was paralysed and the man who had dropsy. Jesus and the synagogue chief argue during the first of these healings (13:14-16), and Jesus confronts the lawyers and Pharisees for the first time during the second (14:3). These healings also bring to mind Jesus' defense of his followers in verses 6-1 after they had harvested grain on the Sabbath to feed themselves. Here, once more, the alleviation of pain prevailed over observance of the sabbatical regulations.

Fourthly, Luke's description of the healings does not have any hidden theological goals. According to Engelbrecht (1983:117), the healings in Mark define Jesus and the disciples. The healings and other miracles Jesus performed point to his strength, his aptitude as a teacher, and the fact that he is the suffering Son of Man, among other qualities. Although Luke did not completely ignore the topics he gleaned from Mark, it appears that those that do not highlight Jesus' compassionate response to suffering are, at the very least, downplayed. This may also explain why Luke left out two of Mark's cures. The emphasis in Mark's account of the deaf-mute's first delayed cure is not so much on his suffering as it is on the disciples' shock and perplexity (Mark 7:37; 8:21). Luke, likewise, skips over the slow healing of the blind man of Bethsaida, which in Mark's context takes on symbolic significance in light of the subsequent events (Mark 8:27-10:52) (Schweizer, 1975:88). Luke emphasises the public expression of delight rather than the demand for privacy following the healings (5:15-16; 5:25-26; 11:14; 18:43). He also downplays the explicit allusion to Jesus' destruction following the recovery of the man with the deformed hand (6:11; Mark 3:6).

Therefore, it would seem that Luke's Gospel emphasises Jesus' compassion for those who suffer physically rather than just seeing his healings as symbols or revelations of his messianic office, divinity, or power over nature. As a result, Jesus' followers are exhorted to follow suit (10:37), and the apostles began performing healings in his name in Acts.

#### **3.5.5.5 Salvation from Psychological Suffering**

Despite being only a century old, psychology helps identify a different form of suffering mentioned in the synoptic tradition, particularly in Luke's Gospel (Van den Berg, 1973). Because it also takes place in the backdrop of Jesus' healing work, psychological pain in Luke's account resembles physical suffering very closely. It should be remembered that psychological anguish can apply to various conditions beyond just demon possession and epilepsy.

##### **3.5.5.5.1 General affliction**

In the Nazarene story, the terms "captivity" and "oppression" refer to the suffering brought on by things like illness, demon possession, poverty, or any other sort of adversity. Additionally, the third beatitude of Luke seems to allude to a generalised psychological state of sorrow. The suffering could have been brought on by one of the specific sufferings listed in some beatitudes, such as hunger, poverty, persecution, or any other. Again, we must conclude that the dimensions of pain we identify are not isolated categories, but rather broad concepts with a variety of interconnected facets.

##### **3.5.5.5.2 Old Age**

Luke emphasises the elderly more than any other Gospel author. Although there is a physical aspect to aging, Luke seems more interested in the psychological experience of the elderly. Of course, physical aging is most likely a contributing factor to this psychological experience. Every human being goes through eight phases of development, the last of which, at 65 years old or more, is maturity or old age (Scheffler, 1993). Happy aging is characterised by wisdom and 'ego integrity', but a sad one, by desperation and loathing. The root of ego integrity is the potential to reflect on one's past in its whole and modestly but firmly confirm satisfaction. The fear of dying has disappeared (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1976:76). On the other hand, a dejected old age is characterised by a sense of utter failure and an unceasing concern about what might have been. Only Luke introduces two groups of elderly folks into his Gospel. Zechariah and Elizabeth's story (1:5-80) makes it obvious that both were elderly (1:7). Zechariah was a middle-class and conformist priest

(Jeremias, 1974:104). Accordingly, they were not going through any material or spiritual hardship. In addition to the psychological effects, this elderly couple's infertility was seen as a divine punishment in modern thought (Grundmann, 1974:49). In this context, Elizabeth's pregnancy contributes to alleviate acute suffering.

Simeon and Anna are two characters who appear in the scene where Jesus is presented in the temple in Luke 2:25–38. It is inferred that both were among those looking forward to Jerusalem's liberation and Israel's comfort through the coming of the Messiah (2:25–26,38). Simeon may not have been an elderly man approaching death, but this is implied by the revelation to Simeon that he should not die before seeing Jesus (2:26). In addition to bringing salvation to Israel, the birth of Jesus meant Simeon and other expecting people would be relieved of their difficult circumstances. Regarding the prophetess Anna, it is specifically stated that she was elderly and a widow until she was 84 years old. Like Simeon, she was patiently waiting for Jerusalem's redemption and thanked God when Jesus was presented in the temple (2:37).

Regarding Jesus' exorcisms, Luke repeats three of Mark's four exorcisms but adds none from his Sondergut or Q. However, it should be recognised that three instances of physical illness one from Mark, one from Q, and one from his Sondergut have been linked to demonic possession. The fever is rebuked like a demon when Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law (4:38–39; Mark 1:29–31); the dumb man genuinely had a dumb demon (11:14; Matthew 12:22); and the crippled woman is healed (13:11). Jesus' exorcisms are similarly prominent in Luke's account of his ministry, as was previously discussed in relation to the prevalence of healing. Additionally, Luke's account of the exorcisms seems to place more focus on the victims themselves than Mark did. Scheffler (1993) briefly discusses the following paragraphs as an example. The account in 6:17–19 (Mark 3:7–12) focuses on the suffering of the demon-possessed, in contrast to the one in 4:40–41 (Mark 1:32–34), which emphasises the suffering and healing of the ill and Jesus healing everyone.

The presence of demons worried the people, according to Luke (6:18b). According to Mark, the demons bowed down before Christ and acknowledged that he was God's son. Luke, but not Mark, makes reference to the real healing of those under the influence of demons. It appears that in Mark's perspective, the actual healing of a person possessed by demons was subordinate to the primary and most important fact that Jesus had power over the devils, whereas the version in the Gospel of Luke places emphasis on the relief of suffering for everyone who was ill or possessed (6:19b).



Redactional emendations in Luke's account of the Capernaum demoniac's healing (4:33–37; Mark 1:23–28) reveal his compassion for the afflicted demoniac himself. According to Mark 1:26–26, the demoniac was seized by the unclean spirit before it manifested. The casting out method in Luke is portrayed as being less unpleasant; the devil hurled the man in the middle of them and exited him, having done no harm (4:35b). Luke's account makes it very obvious that the demoniac's suffering was lessened because the demon was expelled. Additionally, Luke places greater emphasis on the actual healing (4:36b) than Mark does on the fact that the devils obeyed Jesus (Mark 1:27b). This emphasis is consistent with what we saw in the summary in 6:17–19. Moreover, in Mark's version, the crowd's acclamation is more of a reaction to the exorcism as a demonstration of Jesus' teaching (Mark 1:27), whereas in Luke, it is a response to the exorcism.

By condensing Mark's account of the healing of the boy with epilepsy (9:37–43a, Mark 9:14–27), Luke keeps the emphasis on the boy's genuine suffering and recovery. Luke takes note that the boy was his father's only child. This is different from Mark's account of the same story. Similar to Mark, the boy's suffering from epilepsy is described in depth. Luke describes Jesus' exorcisms by emphasising the suffering of the afflicted people and the relief that Jesus brought them, similar to how he described Jesus' healing of the sick. However, while Luke pays particular attention to old age, demon possession, and epilepsy, he also makes reference to psychological suffering in general.

### **3.5.5.6 Salvation from Spiritual Suffering**

We interpret spiritual suffering to refer to human sin and guilt in the light of Luke's all-encompassing understanding of suffering (Scheffler, 1993). Luke focuses more than any other Gospel on the acceptance and forgiveness of sinners. He addresses the discrimination that sinners experienced at the Pharisees and scribes's hands at some length (7:39; 15:1). However, it does not indicate that he rejects the idea that sinners exist; rather, it just means that he views them differently than most people do.

Luke's tolerance of sinners must be viewed within the perspective of the modern Jewish understanding of sin. Jewish thought considered even the slightest infraction of the commandment to be sin. Jewish tradition defines sin as leading an immoral life, such as committing theft, murder, fraud, or adultery (18:11). Because of who they were, certain members of the society were also viewed as sinners. People who worked as toll collectors and shepherds were shunned as sinners

because various sins were increasingly connected to these vocations (Grundmann, 1973:61). We therefore briefly look at the relationships of God to sin or sinners, of man to sin and of man to sinners.

### **3.5.5.6.1 Forgiveness and release from sin**

By forgiving sins, God gives his people salvation knowledge in Luke 1:77, emphasising the salvific significance of this act. Given that the Benedictus alludes to John's ministry, it is conceivable that Luke had a deeper understanding of the terms "release," "salvation," and "liberation from sins" than just "forgiveness." Luke, likewise, emphasises forgiveness or liberation from sin as the essential message that the apostles are sent to share with the world (24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18). It is possible that Jesus's healing of the paralytic (5:17–26; Mark 2:1–12) functioned as evidence that Christians might pardon sins based on healings done (Bultmann, 1963). However, Luke's context also fits with his all-encompassing understanding of suffering when healing from paralysis is combined with forgiveness or deliverance from sin. Reminding the reader that Jesus can to pardon sins, it is not necessary to draw a sharp distinction between relieving bodily suffering and liberating individuals from sin because both imply the reduction of suffering. Only in the wicked woman's story in Luke is Jesus' capacity and readiness to pardon sins shown.

Jesus cites God's love toward sinners and his gladness when they repent to support his positive attitude toward sinners in the lost sheep and lost coin parables (15:3–10). The lost son story that follows (15:11–32) paints a particularly striking picture of God's mercy for the sinner. In verses 13–16, the suffering caused by the son's spiritual need, which transforms into an economic need, is illustrated. When he had to feed pigs, his situation just got worse because it was about as low as Jews could sink. The son's repentance (15:17–20a) is not as admirable as one might anticipate because what motivates it—rather than regret for sins committed—is the knowledge that he is perishing from hunger (Bornkamm, 1975:112). He comes to realise his sins (15:18-19), but the motivation is somewhat egotistic. This merely underscores the subsequent mercy of the father.

In 15:20–24, the father's boundless kindness and joyous acceptance of the son are expressed. His response is one of compassion, which manifests itself in practical actions. While the son is still far away, he takes the initiative (15:20). He rushes over to the son, kisses him, and embraces him. According to Marshall (1978), the father's sentiment relates to the seeking and searching in the

two preceding parables and comes before any declaration of remorse by the son. Second, the father ends the confession by preventing the kid from speaking. He offers specific orders for a feast to commemorate his joy over a lost son who has been found rather than listening to the confession. The father does not settle old scores, and he does not impose any requirements or a probationary term (Bornkamm, 1975: 112). He also exemplifies his unending kindness and love by inviting the older son to partake in the feast with patience. For Luke's readers, the message is simply that God loves the world the normal, contradictory, morally good and morally bad (Ellis, 1974:196).

In his account of Jesus' crucifixion (Luke 23:33–43; Mark 15:21–33), Luke powerfully conveys God's mercy for sinners. Only Luke mentions Stephen's prayer for his killers in Acts 7:60 and Jesus' last words before going to the cross asking God to forgive their tormentors because they had no knowledge of what they were doing (Luke 23:34). Additionally, only Luke (23:39–43) mentions the repentance of one of the two men that were crucified alongside Jesus. This should not be read from a Pauline perspective, as though Luke is stating that sinners are forgiven due to Jesus' death. It rather underscores Jesus' mercy and love for sinners that he prays for his enemies while they are killing him and assures the penitent robber of paradise in the midst of his suffering.

The statement mentioning God's forgiveness of human sins in the Lord's prayer is contingent upon human forgiveness of one another's sins (11:4, Matthew 6:12). Jesus' disciples should never stop pardoning one another. Luke's translation emphasises this point even further by using the word everyone twice (4:40; 6:19), demonstrating that no one is exempt from the forgiveness. In 17:3–4, Jesus exhorts his followers to pardon a remorse sinner. Luke omits Matthew's narrative, which includes a period where the errant brother starts to be seen as a tax collector and a Gentile (Matthew 18:17). Furthermore, Luke's instruction to love one's enemy (6:27ff) means showing compassion for one's neighbour. Luke's readers should not be like sinners who only love those who love them, but should love and forgive even those who hate, curse and abuse them, in other words, the sinners themselves (6:27; 32-35).

### **3.5.5.6.2 The Social Acceptance of Sinners**

Consistently forgiving others has the effect of preventing Luke's reader from demeaning or socially isolating sinners. The idea of society's acceptance of sinners and the aspect of social misery coexisting once more demonstrates how extensive Luke's understanding of suffering is. Because the Pharisees saw toll collectors as sinners by definition, the terms "toll collector" and "sinner" are

frequently used in Luke. Luke's redactional note in 15:1 makes it very obvious that he valued Jesus' social acceptance of toll collectors and sinners. Jesus' violation of the prohibition against associating with sinners was made worse by eating with them since, in modern Jewish thought, eating together signified a particularly deep bond. Jesus did not just socialise with sinners; his proximity to them was so great that it was considered a religious transgression by the Pharisees and Scribes. Jesus gives a religious justification for his social acceptance of sinners in the prodigal son's parable based on God's unfailing love and his joy over repentant sinners. The parable exhorts the Pharisees and scribes to act similarly, not just an apology for Jesus' actions (15:25-32).

There are more traditions in which Luke alone communicates a welcoming attitude toward sinners. In Luke's account of Jesus, the toll collector rather than the Pharisee returned home justified because the sinner just threw himself on God's mercy (18:14). Jesus' visit to Zacchaeus' home was also received with ridicule from the community when He entered as the sinner's guest (19:7). Jesus' attitude toward the repentant sinner is once again one of acceptance (19:9–10). But, it is interesting to remember that before Zacchaeus became a Christian, Jesus visited his home. Therefore, his conversion was not a requirement for social acceptance. There are number of other cases that demonstrates Jesus' deliverance of man from spiritual suffering.

When Luke's Gospel is examined from the standpoint of the idea of suffering, a recurring pattern in the way he adapts and uses his sources becomes apparent. With exceptional constancy, Luke expresses his entire understanding of pain. It is sometimes questionable if there should even be a distinction between the various dimensions of suffering because of how successfully he integrated them into his portrayal of numerous traditions regarding suffering. This supports his goal because, in his view, genuine religion is characterised by compassion for all suffering individuals and organisations. Jesus spent his entire life helping the suffering, preaching about pain, and going through his own personal suffering for the sake of those experiencing it. According to Luke, this should serve as an example to his followers. These followers include Jesus' disciples and apostles in the Gospel and in Acts but also the Christians of Luke's community.

### **3.5.6 Preaching Good News of Peace by Jesus Christ**

According to Luke, peace-making is a key ingredient of mission paradigm. He shows no room for vengeance by Jesus's followers in Acts and the Gospel of Luke. This is one of the neglected areas of Jesus' mission in Luke by many scholars concerning non-violence resistance to evil, peace-

making, futility and self-destructive hatred and vengeance (Bosch, 1991:116). Since Luke was primarily writing to gentile believers in the Roman Empire in order for them to comprehend the implications of the Gospel, his texts are distinguished by a universal outlook (De Villers, 2008). Because of this, researchers who analyse Luke's works in light of their setting frequently connect them to the idea of Pax Romana. Because Luke associated Augustus Caesar with Jesus's birth (Luke 2:1), Luke describes Augustus Caesar's rule in accordance with Pax Romana (Fitzmyer, 1981). Luke proclaims the peace-filled gospel of Acts 2:36 and the salvation in Jesus. He also intended to present Jesus as a genuine bringer of redemption and peace to the entire globe. This might have caused him to give more references to peace than any other Gospel, like Paul who mentions it more often.

Luke-Acts is rooted in the history of Israel and the Old Testament. Therefore, Luke developed his theme about peace from the Old Testament concept of shalom. The Old Testament's major theme is peace, particularly in the prophetic prophecies that present an eschatological vision of a peaceful future. Luke gave peace a spiritual connotation, such as eternal peace, in addition to the physical sense of the absence of conflict. The concept of peace conveys an overall state of well-being (Isaiah 9:6–10). Luke's knowledge of the idea of shalom or the Greco-Roman use of the word peace (*eirene/pax*), or maybe both, may have had an impact on his writing (Kayumba, 2017:10). The Roman Empire brought peace throughout the time that Luke was writing his works. The Pax Romana concept was central to discussions of peace throughout that era, despite its importance in other contexts that cannot be underestimated. Peace was considered precious during that time (Wengst, 1986). Therefore, what Pax Romana means should be considered in the analysis of Luke's use of *eirene* in Luke-Acts.

### **3.5.6.1 Pax Romana and its Different Aspects**

The varied aspects of Pax Romana may be economic, political, military, and legal (Kayumba, 2017). A detailed examination of Rome demonstrates that despite using violence and military force to bring about and uphold peace, Rome nonetheless viewed it as the antithesis of war. Luke brings up the capacity to enjoy one's assets in peace in relation to the political side of Pax Romana, nevertheless (Wengst, 1986:19). Pax Romana offers people and their property peace and security through its powerful military might. Security from any outside dangers to the empire is what is envisioned (Wengst, 1986). It refers to the Pax Romana, which is true for certain people in the

Roman Empire but not for others. Luke-Acts is thought to have been written during the Pax Romana, before the Jerusalem temple was destroyed. The Gospels were written in the midst of upheaval and its effects in nations other than Palestine, where some Jews lived (Ford, 2010). This background serves as the foundation for the development of liberation theology, which serves as a model for addressing the issue of war and peace in Africa. Africa is experiencing increased conflicts marked by violent protests and wars, which calls for serious concern about maintaining peace (Kayumba, 2017:11). Only Luke seems to have taken the idea of peace seriously among the evangelists. Key figures of human and civil rights use several methods of preaching peace in all dimensions of human friction.

### **3.5.6.2 The Nature of Peace in Luke-Acts**

The character of God is described as a figure who has compassion to His humanity in the socio-cultural context and the universe (De Villers, 2008:4). Luke seems to have emphasised the divine side of this relationship, that is, the divine-human relationship transformative in nature that unfolds over time. God begins this new relationship in Luke by sending Christ and the apostolic mission to the Gentiles. This initiative is occasionally resisted by pagans, such as those in Acts 19:23–41, and even by God's chosen people, the Jews, who persecute Christians. Maintaining a peaceful relationship with God and others is part of this constant change. Even though the word peace is not used explicitly, the early Christian community was of one mind and heart as they lived in harmony with God and one another (Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35). Jesus' broad and all-encompassing teaching of compassion is followed throughout the Christian community (De Villers, 2008). In Luke 4:14–30, Jesus' first speech to the public, Luke shows Jesus exhibiting compassion for the underprivileged and strangers yet leaving out references to violence and judgment. He quotes from Isaiah 61 about how the Messianic reign is described, but he stops before the violent aspects. Jesus' earthly life and work are therefore connected to peace. The angels declared that there would be peace on earth even at the child's birth (Luke 2:14).

In other cases, Luke-Acts defines peace as nothing more than the absence of battle (Luke 14:32; Acts 24:2) or as the reconciliation of adversarial parties (Acts 7:26; 12:20). Luke 6:26–32 discusses loving your enemy as a directive to prevent all types of violence, conflict, or retaliation in favor of coexisting in peace with others. Jesus also exhorts His followers to be kind and to practice virtue, such as responding forcefully to violent attacks. Jesus wants unconditional love for everyone, with

no conditions or self-interested motives. Anyone who wants to love their adversaries provided they do the same for them, must convert (Owzsurek, 2002). God does not accept reciprocity, in His opinion. The good Samaritan story (Luke 9:35–36) demonstrated charity in contrast to the Samaritans' rejection of Jesus when they refused to make accommodations for him (Luke 9:51–56). Jesus rejects the disciples' proposal to chastise the Samaritans by commanding heavenly fire to consume them. Additionally, Jesus showed no retaliation toward the twelve, Peter, Judas, or even the people who apprehended Him. Stephen prayed for his adversaries in a way that helped believers understand how to put an end to hostility and conflict (Acts 7:60). Through imitating the generosity of God and Christ, the peace gospel leads to the reconciliation of adversaries. God touches and transforms people and liberates them from violent nature so that they become ambassadors of peace to all parts of the world.

Because Luke depicts God as a God who changes everyone, without considering their identity, he regards peace as a universal value. God's peace permeates the entire globe via the peaceful proclamation of the Gospel. The Gospel also fosters close connections with other people. According to Luke-Acts, the subject of peace is a theological notion that refers to peace of mind, social peace, and peace with God (Kayumba, 2017:16). Although the absence of persecution is sometimes referred to as peace, its goals go beyond the meaning of peace in the Greco-Roman context (Acts 9:31; 24:2). Although the word "peace" in Luke-Acts has a political connotation, the peace the Saviour provides to His people also depends on politics and how it affects society. Peace, in all its richness and truth, comes into existence as the kingdom of Christ grows. According to Bosch (1991:116), the idea of peace is extremely important in today's world, which deals with issues like terrorism, violence, conflict, and poverty brought on by the actions of others. Luke further explained that the peace that Jesus gives has little to do with peace attained by violence in the Jewish context. Making peace was, in Luke's view, a crucial aspect of the church's global mission.

### **3.5.7 The Church (*ekklesia*)**

*Ekklesia*, in its generic sense, refers to an assembly, that is a gathering of people. The term "church" indexes specific groups of believers rather than the entire body of believers (Bosch, 1991). It alludes to the assembly of Israel at Mount Sinai, where Moses received God's laws. Luke's Gospel does not use the term "church", but it is mentioned 23 times in the Acts (Bock, 2011:303).

According to Luke, the Nazarene's followers and a group of disciples formed a unique identity. While remaining connected to Israel and her story, these people continued to congregate in various locations, increasingly frequently in houses. It was operating in its own community and had its own leadership as a brand-new, distinctive social institution (Saccombe, 1998). This society had to be unique and operate outside of the synagogues and social-religious structures of existing Israel because it had been rejected, but it also kept its roots in God's ancient promises to Israel. According to the community's beliefs and teachings, individuals who embraced the promise made to Israel will join this new movement. The church, according to Luke, is a brand-new organisation with ties to previous promises. These are dynamics that kept the Church active in its outward mission: sitting on the foundation of a strong teaching of Jesus' disciples and scripture, worshiped and broke bread together, engaged in community and fellowship, supported one another across places, prayer when faced with difficulties, careful watch over its spiritual fitness by its leadership (Bock 2011).

The church was a society that constructed a novel family of God. This society focussed on its intended purpose, that is, to get involved in mission and representing God among all people. As a result of this, they garnered the name Christians. In some places, the church is seen at work even without this term being called. Members of the church lived a communal life of sharing everything and ensuring that no one lacked anything (Acts 2:44-46). They had not yet severed ties with Israel and her liturgy even though they were gathering in their own community. They also continued to visit the temple together (Bock, 2011:306).

#### **3.5.7.1 Ethical Dimensions: Virtues of Friendship**

According to Luke, the church strongly emphasises its relationships with God and one another. Luke-Acts illustrates that friends share a single soul and all things (Hume, 2011:77). In Acts 2:42–47, friendship is sought in the framework of faith in God, tenacity in learning, community, worship, hospitality, and sharing of possessions. Similar themes are also found in Acts 4:32–35, which emphasises the importance of speaking up for Jesus and encouraging one another (Hume, 2011). The church's response to persecution was to pray (Acts 4:23–30). The prayer's focus was on being courageous despite opposition, not seeking judgment or retaliation. Their request is to continue in faithfulness to God's call amid resistance and persecution.

The term church was first used when the community was reacting to Sapphira and Ananias's judgement (Acts 5:11). This gives a lesson of accountability before God, it draws the community's



attention and calls Christians to honour and respect the Lord and they now know what is happening in the church (Bock, 2011:307). The word "church" reappears in Luke's description of the intense persecution that the Jerusalem church experienced when Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 8:16). As a result, several Christians were dispersed outside of Jerusalem, which led to the development of new routes. Those who were dispersed as a result of this diaspora began to preach in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8–9), and it even prepared the way for Saul, to travel to Damascus pursuing other Christian believers (Acts 9:2–224) in an effort to wipe out the church. According to Luke's description of the church in Judea and Samaria, which continues to grow in size, it was experiencing peace, was fortified by God's Word, and was comforted by the Spirit (Acts 9:31). The prayer, Spirit, friendship, community to the level of sharing and sacrifice, and strong witness were all factors that contributed to the church's effectiveness at this time (Bock, 2011:307). The Jerusalem Church commissioned Barnabas and Paul to Antioch to witness God's hand and assess the situation in the church there, as one illustration of how these churches were connected through communication and mutual assistance (Acts 11:22). This church taught them for more than a year. The church began to take on a separate identity at this point, and those who opposed them began to refer to them as Christians (Acts 11:26).

Bosch (1991:116) considers Jesus's life and the story of the church as united in the same season of the Spirit. There was mutual acceptance of gentiles and Jews in the church. For Luke, the church was both inward and outside. The inward church was that community, committed the apostles' teachings, breaking of bread, fellowship and prayers. In this church, God and the Holy Spirit revealed Themselves. The second Christian community has got an external identity, where it does not identify itself with a sectarian label, but participate in mission to non-Christians. It is where the church's internal life gets connected to its external life (Bosch, 1991:116). Luke sees mission as an ecclesial enterprise, where apostles as witnesses ensure a connecting thread between the history of Jesus and that of the church.

### **3.5.8 Mission Encounters Adversity and Suffering**

Suffering means an individual or a group experience of pain (social, physical, economic, or psychological), loss or distress and adversity is a state of misfortune or a calamity (Tabb, 2015:47). Because of a person's ethnicity, beliefs, or customs, suffering is purposefully caused by one individual or a group (Tabb, 2015:12–16). According to Harrington (2001), suffering is complex

and challenging to understand. However, he describes it as a sensation of pain, discomfort, suffering an injury, a disadvantage, a setback, or receiving a punishment. According to Conzelmann (1964:1–85), when Luke wrote his books, he did so to address the parousia's postponement by providing a history of redemption at a time when the church was being persecuted. His goal was to influence how Christians act during times of persecution when they are called to suffer for following Jesus Christ and his purpose. Schutz (1969:11) asserts that the persecution believers face for following Jesus determines the church's position in the world. Luke reinterprets persecution as signalling the end times to the church's chance of engaging in witness (Dehandschutter, 1979:545). Luke presents many adventure stories, including persecution, incarcerations, martyrdoms, conspiracies, trial and many others. Acts has no purpose, structure and history that is without reference to suffering. It is critical to acknowledge that suffering, according to Luke, plays a key role in spreading the Gospel, defence to Christianity and the strengthening of the foundations of the early Christian church.

Paul asserts that persecution, particularly incarceration, has a vocational impact (Acts 9:15-26). He also makes it explicit in Acts 14:22 that all Christians, not just the apostolic witnesses, have to accept persecution (Rapske, 1998). Jesus' followers, especially Stephen, Paul, Peter, John, are presented by Luke as following Jesus' footsteps of suffering persecution (Moessner, 1986). Jesus suffers and dies as a part of God's purpose to accomplish sin forgiveness and eschatological atonement. Through His suffering and that of his apostles and witnesses, His Gospel is spread to all corners of the globe. In addition to chronicling ongoing victory, Luke's writings also detail ongoing opposition, strife, and persecution of God's representative. The Spirit enables the followers of Jesus and His church to carry out their mission in the face of adversity and persecution, according to Luke-Acts (Tabb, 2015:45). In this unfinished stage of the kingdom, Luke wished to reassure his audience that suffering will inevitably occur. The not yet consummated God's Kingdom assists to explain the relationship between the advancement of the Word of God and the development of local churches.

The violence committed against Paul and Silas at Philippi is described in Acts 16:22–24, showing the comprehensive and complex nature of persecution and suffering in the first century. Embarrassing and unjust suffering was being experienced by missionaries in the open. Paul and Silas were imprisoned despite there being no official charges or trial (Acts 16:37). Acts 16:24

describes their incarceration experience. The purpose of the Roman stocks was to inflict discomfort and cramping pain (Bruce, 1988). Their claims lacked credibility on both a social and legal level. Paul and Silas suffered physical pain, mental anguish, and even public humiliation as a result of this. Paul might have presented his citizenship earlier to be shielded from this abuse, but he only did so later. This demonstrates that their mission was not being carried out in a way that tried to minimise pain and persecutory treatment. They remained in prison even after the earthquake and evangelised to the jailer who had abused them (Acts 16:31-32).

### **3.5.8.1 Different Kinds of Suffering in Luke-Acts**

Luke-Acts provides different forms of suffering which includes persecution, oppression, retribution and injustice (Tabb, 2015:48). Acts presents different kinds of persecutions such as arrests and imprisonments (Acts 4:2), beatings (Acts 5:40), false accusations (Acts 6:13-14), stoning (Acts 14:19), murder plots (Acts 1:23) and killings (Acts 12:2). Therefore, persecution involves inflicting physical harm. Political injustice was also done on Paul's prolonged imprisonment (Acts 16:16-18). Tabb (2015) asserts that the passion of Jesus demonstrates extreme persecution in the Gospel of Luke because of His shameful and painful death. Luke places more emphasis on the interpersonal, emotional, and social aspects of this suffering since, as was expected, His intimate companions betrayed and denied Him. He was arrested like a bandit, beaten, insulted, and handed false accusations to humiliate and embarrass Him (Malma & Rohrbough, 1992:406).

### **3.5.8.2 Natural Adversities**

Luke gives different examples of natural adversities, such as hardships from a calamity, personal or corporate loss or disappointment not from human antagonism (Charles, 1991:257-258). Acts 27:28 also records violent storms, shipwrecks, serious illness and snake bites. The fact that Jesus' suffering was part of God's predetermined plan to redeem people is revealed by Luke. God gives the suffering believers the ability to share His message (Luke 4:29-31; 9:16). Acts 10:38 demonstrates God's ability and compassion for healing and restoring the sick, as well as for putting an end to suffering and all injustices (3:20-21; 17:31; 24:25). Diseases, evil spirits, fever, blindness, leprosy, lameness and paralysis, poverty, and starvation are among other natural calamities. God utilised Jesus' suffering and justification to fulfill His plan for salvation. At the start of His public career, Jesus encounters antagonism, misconceptions, and violent rejection at

Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30), where the populace was enraged and drove Him from the town. As evidence that He had to endure many things in line with God's predetermined plan, foreknowledge, and the text of the Bible, Jesus also foretold His own suffering and death (Tabb, 2015:51). Jesus endures suffering and a vicarious death to fulfil God's predetermined plan of redeeming His people (Luke 2:30–32; Isaiah 40:1–5).

### **3.5.8.3 Believers' Suffering as a Strategic Missional Purpose of God's Kingdom**

The suffering of believers serves as the strategy to fulfil God's missional purpose of His inaugurated not yet consummated kingdom. Acts ties Christian believers' pains and tribulations to the growth of the church. Luke also focuses on the early Christian church's methods to settle disputes and overcome obstacles. Believers confronted both external and internal disagreements, problems, and difficulties, which are described in Acts as the church grew (Tabb, 2015:51). The church was subjected to persecution on the outside, including by Jews. The needy minority in the church is neglected, Gentiles are not fully accepted in the Christian society, and Jewish Christians are afraid to share the gospel with non-Jews, among other internal issues. Luke intends to reassure his audience, like Theophilus, that the purpose of God is accomplished through His suffering. Despite all these sufferings, the Word continues to increase disciples also multiplied in Jerusalem and many priests turned to the faith (Acts 6:7). The martyrdom of Stephen resulted in great persecution against Christians in Jerusalem. However, this led the gospel to spread to Samaria and Judea (Acts 8:1). This scattering of the church speeds up evangelism in Samaria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch reaching out to the Gentiles.

### **3.5.8.4 Suffering is Normative for Believers**

Suffering will continue to be the norm for Christian believers up until the completion of the kingdom (Tabb, 2015:53). This is because persecution is a necessary result of following Jesus. Jesus advises anybody who needs to follow Him to lay down their lives, pick up their cross, and do so. In order to follow the suffering Lord, this passage exhorts all the apostles to share their suffering with others. Therefore, the missionaries' messages should bolster and uplift Christian believers by providing a theological justification for the disciples' ongoing suffering and inspiring their listeners to persevere through the various challenges they encounter.

### **3.5.8.5 Suffering Validates the Legitimacy of the Church and its Leadership**

Suffering serves as a means to validate the church's legitimacy (Tabb 2015). Luke intends to validate the Christian community of Jesus' disciples in suffering that they were eschatological God's people. The book of Acts projects the apostles, Paul, and Stephen, as individuals who endured suffering similar to that of Jesus while carrying out God's purpose, fulfilling His prophecies, and receiving supernatural assistance when they encountered opposition (Acts 4:13; 26:22). This depiction cements their legitimacy as divinely appointed leaders. The church must be aware that spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ causes persecution from Jews and even Gentiles. Throughout the Bible, Israel rejects God's prophets and resists God's plans. This is seen in Acts 7:51–52, 28:25–27, and Isaiah 6:9–10, among other places. Conversely, Christian believers are persecuted by the Gentiles because of their message of Jesus as the Lord, which is interpreted to cause religious, social and economic threats (Acts 16:18-19; 19:26-30).

### **3.5.8.6 Believers' Response to Suffering**

Believers should respond to suffering by bold witness, prayer, joy and hope (Luke 6:27-28). When Jesus asked God to pardon His enemies and used to heal them on the cross (Luke 23:34; 22:52), He was demonstrating this. After Pentecost, Jesus' followers responded to adversity and hardships by praying, just like Jesus did. Therefore, the church needs to pray for courage to preach Christ's Gospel even in the face of hardship rather than for rescue from the opponents' difficulties (Bosch, 1991). As an illustration, Paul continues to evangelise when he was under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:31). Imprisonments and persistent persecution did not deter the apostles, including Stephen, to spread God's Word. The church also needs to endure hardships as it pursues the mission of God.

## **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter discusses the meaning of a paradigm and discovered that it can be applied even in the religious context. The Luke-Acts mission paradigm is a Biblically-based paradigm as presented by Bosch (1991). Bosch (1991) produced the eight key ingredients of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm that include Holy Spirit, Jewish and Gentile mission, called to be witnesses, repentance, forgiveness of sins and salvation, the church, preaching good news by Christ and that mission encounters adversity and suffering. Bosch (1991) gives reference to Scheffler (1988) who provides the six dimensions of salvation, namely; spiritual, psychological, physical, political, social and

economic. It has been observed that Luke gives much attention to economic salvation more than others because of his consistent use of the term poor (*ptochos*) which refers to severe poverty. It has also been discovered that Luke's writings were influenced by what was happening in his community which might be the Roman society, the Palestinian community, or both. After critically engaging the Luke-Acts mission paradigm, giving much focus on Luke's context, the next chapter traces the history of the causes of socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe.

## **Chapter Four**

### **History of the Socio-economic Situation in Contemporary Southern Zimbabwe**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

After a critical engagement of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in the previous chapter, this chapter explores the history of the socio-economic situation in contemporary Southern Zimbabwe. This helps to establish what engenders socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe, a context to which the Luke-Acts mission paradigm is to be applied. The chapter identifies political, economic, social, spiritual and natural challenges as the main factors contributing to socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe.

#### **4.2 Political Factors Resulting in Socio-economic Challenges in Southern Zimbabwe**

Socio-economic life in Southern Zimbabwe has always been affected by different political factors, even from the colonial period up to today.

##### **4.2.1 The Impact of Colonialism**

The key objective of colonialism is political domination of the colonised country. Africa had been under political domination by European nations for several decades and is still suffering the after-effects of colonisation politically and socio-economically. Underdevelopment in African countries is attributed to colonisation in many ways. Zimbabwe, as an African nation, is not spared from these challenges. Therefore, some of the challenges the Southern region of Zimbabwe is facing are a result of colonialism.

##### **4.2.1.1 Dispossession and Displacement**

Zimbabweans endured dispossessions and displacements during the British colonisation of Rhodesia, which included not only the physical process of moving communities and families from one location to another but also a process of ontological, cultural, linguistic, and epistemological displacement (Mtapuri & Benyera, 2020:2). After the white settler rule failed to obtain significant quantities of minerals as expected in the 1890s, they turned to farming and deprived Africans of their land rights (Nyandoro, 2012). Massive native African populations were displaced as a result, being relocated to hot, dry, tsetse- and malaria-infested regions that were less appropriate for

habitation and productive farming (Mlambo & Phimister, 2006). Many native Africans still reside in such places today. Despite having a small population, the white regime settlers received more than half of the country's territory (Mtapuri & Benyera, 2020:6). The white regime settler occupied the highly fertile soiled areas receiving high rainfalls, conducive for ranching and close to urban centres like Gweru, Masvingo, Bulawayo, and others, while the indigenous people were driven by force to areas of poor soil and little rain called the reserves giving way to white commercial farmers.

#### **4.2.1.1.1 Loss of Livelihoods**

The loss of the indigenous people's rights to their sources of subsistence land, mining, and farming led to displacements and a loss of their way of life. These forced migrations and evictions from their ancestral lands led to these dispossessions and displacements. They established the primitive land rights markets, fully ignoring the old land rights. Legal, political, cultural, and institutional changes brought about by the dispossession and displacement of people due to their land contributed to the transition of traditional societies into capitalistic ones. According to Mtapuri and Benyera (2020), deliberate disarticulation led to the deliberate division of indigenous people, causing them to lose their identity. They were forced to join the new working group, which was paid pitifully little. As a result, new landowners hired them for temporary positions to work on their farms for low salaries, creating poor and dispersed local populations that were subject to labor exploitation (Feldman & Geisler, 2012).

Following the seizure of the land in Zimbabwe, the colonial government provided for the needs of its own white citizens who required mining concessions and land for farming while also making life difficult for the natives who did not have access to land and were forced to work for their survival and pay taxes (Mtapuri & Benyera, 2020:10). The indigenous Africans who were relocated to the reserves lost their ambition and potential to thrive because their only options were to engage in subsistence farming on unproductive land or to labour for pitiful wages on the farms of the white settlers (Mupfuri, 2014). Africans were relocated into the organised de-stocking and expulsions, where they were compelled to work for little pay and working and living conditions were unfavourable. Life was no longer bearable for them after their loss of land because it is an economic asset.



In addition, indigenous people lost their livestock due to their stay in overcrowded native reserves. These reserves were so congested and overstocked that destructive farming techniques were utilised, destroying the forest cover and causing additional environmental problems, including enabling erosion and drying up water sources. The indigenous people were engaged in gold, silver, and other commodity mining and trading well before the first immigrants arrived. However, as the colonial settlers arrived, they were uprooted from areas with abundant mineral resources and deprived of their rights to free commerce and access to minerals, which made them poor (Mtapuri & Benyera 2020). People's land rights were taken away. They were compelled to pay several taxes to the colonial government, such as cattle, dog, and poll taxes after they were settled in unproductive lands which compromised their livelihoods (Birmingham, 2008).

Consequently, poverty became a reality during that time and even today as some suffered a permanent loss of their land and means of survival. This is because they lost their means of production and some even migrated to greener pastures. Some ended up in Johannesburg that was popularly known as *Wenera*. in Zimbabwe. *Wenera*, a derivative from WNLA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association), a recruiting agency for migrant workers in South African mines in the 1940s and 1950s. Even today, the separation of family members who are crucial to guaranteeing the family welfare has negatively impacted the family and its fabric. On their trek to find greener pastures, several perished from diseases and wild animals (Mtapuri & Benyera 2020:11). Others went there, found employment, got married, and started new families. They could not return to their families at home. Members of the the same clan were occasionally settled in various localities, resulting in a significant family breakup. Even today, in Southern Zimbabwe, there is no contact between members of the same family who stay in different places. Unfortunately, the current generation have lost contact with such family members.

#### **4.2.1.1.2 Loss of Identity and Belonging**

Mtapuri and Benyera (2020:12) posit that displacements during the colonial era resulted in the loss of identity, history and belonging to indigenous people. They also argue that land defines an individual's being and nations' sovereignty. This view was made popular in Zimbabwe through the phrase *Mwana Wevhu*, meaning 'the child of the soil'. The right to own land is regarded as inherent. It is seen as a legacy that should be passed down from one generation to generation since it is seen as belonging to the ancestors (Chavhunduka & Bromley, 2012). The burial of the

umbilical cord in the ground after birth solidifies the concept of birth rights, and the fact that ancestors' graves remain there forever connects to the responsibility that their descendants have to care for these graves in order to protect their legacy, which includes defending their land and its sovereignty (Mupfuri, 2014). Land creates a strong connection between people's origins and history. In Africa, losing land is connected with losing one's heritage and identity. In Zimbabwe and much of Africa, land is viewed as a home, shelter and resource that produce food and store minerals. Dispossession entails a loss of birthright and home. Even if people migrate to another place, they are still viewed as aliens without ancestral roots (Mtapuri & Benyera, 2020). Displacements lead to loss of connectivity with ancestral lands, history and ancestors in Africa.

#### **4.2.1.1.3 Permanent Disempowerment**

Traditional leaders who were in charge lost their authority due to dispossession and displacement (Mtapuri & Benyera 2020). People in African communities were expected to be members of the same social group or other connected groups over which a traditional leader was expected to rule. As expropriation and displacements cut off traditional leaders from these resources, they would no longer be chiefs in the absence of land and its accompanying resources, such as woods, rivers, and mountains, as well as subjects to rule. Some were relocated even to locations where traditional leadership already existed, reducing them to the status of subordinates or commoners. An example is of Chief Jahana who was moved from Insiza North in Matabeleland South Province to Gokwe, a place with poor sand soil infested with tsetse flies. Even now after independence, it is difficult to repossess their land because others have already occupied the place during the land redistribution exercise.

Furthermore, natives were moved to protected villages or reserves to control and monitor them. This had negative implications on their freedom. It was against the law to hold public gatherings, and indigenous people were also denied their right to associate with friends and family to discuss family issues and celebrate family events (Mtapuri & Benyera 2020). They were compelled to ask the District Administrator for permission. The colonial administration constantly monitored their movements to determine where they were going and why they were travelling. People who found themselves close to white settlers' residences, were accused of stealing and illegal trespassing and were assaulted and even shot. As a result, they no longer had the freedom of movement, a right they used to enjoy before the displacements.

#### **4.2.1.1.4 Loss of Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Knowledge**

Forced displacements resulted in a great damage to indigenous people's material culture and identity (Mtapuri & Benyera 2020). They were evicted from their ancestral lands and relocated to regions devoid spiritual and cultural importance. They were removed from native lands where they used to hold rain-making rituals during droughts and when they wanted to appease spirits. They consulted their ancestors for protection and guidance by engaging in their cultural practices before embarking on a journey or hunting expedition. In a way that promoted European cultural hegemony in Africa while denouncing native customs, Christian missionaries and the church collaborated so closely with the colonisers (Segueda, 2015). They preached the gospel that pacified the indigenous people of Africa (Kanyongo, 2005). They used this approach to disarm and disable the indigenous people so that they became less combative but subservient.

Mtapuri and Benyera (2020:15) assert that it is crucial to note that indigenous people possessed beneficial knowledge about their environment. They were aware of their nature and could use it in various ways for the good of society. They were aware of the various kinds and functions of the plants and animals from which they obtained the native herbs and remedies used to treat illnesses, wounds, and snake or insect bites. Therefore, displacements cut them off from their sources of solace. Additionally, they consider that losing their land is equivalent to losing their spiritual power since they think that ancestral spirits had a significant impact on farming conditions, drought, rain, and cattle health. Due to the loss of their land and removal from their holy sites brought about by land dispossession, they were estranged from their spirits and found it difficult to carry out their rites and ceremonies. Sometime these new lands they were relocated to were of different ecological characteristics. This affected their knowledge of traditional medicines and farming methods as soils and climate were different in the new land.

In addition, white settlers demonised indigenous knowledge and culture and replaced them with those from the West (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012:50). Indigenous knowledge and civilisations were viewed as primitive. Due to the difficulty in obtaining these services and medicines, life for Africans was hard and expensive both then and still. They can now be obtained in hospitals, although they are expensive. Africans engaged in a variety of commercial activities and trade

throughout the pre-colonial era using their native knowledge and technology, including mining, moulding, sculpting, weaving, curving, and many more, which they were forced to give up after being displaced. However, when speakers of many local languages were concentrated in one place, the local languages were corrupted, and the reserves were given English names for the settlers' convenience (Mtapuri & Benyera, 2020). Names of rivers, forests, mountains, villages which were having traditional names with spiritual significance were changed. These dispossession and displacements were not respecting important indigenous communities and people were not involved in decision-making and policy formulation.

Dispossession and displacements seriously impacted the life of indigenous people. It affected the rhythm and ways of life, economic opportunities, and resources, family rituals, cultural and spiritual attachments to the land and their ancestors, power, birthrights, freedom, and other types of rights, some of which some people have yet to reclaim. Therefore, this led to the liberation conflict known as the Chimurenga War in the 1960s, which resulted in many fatalities. Although Zimbabwe had achieved its independence, the colonial land distribution still had an impact on the country's land ownership because a small number of white individuals owned vast lands, at least up to the turn of the century when the Zimbabwean Government repossessed the land for redistribution to indigenous people.

#### **4.2.1.2 Impact of Distortions and Dis-articulation on the Economy**

African pattern on economic development was distorted in several ways, such as the production of goods, markets, transport, provision of social amenities, the pattern of urbanisation and others (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012: 51). Some of the factors that affected Africa, as a whole, have also a bearing on challenges in Southern Zimbabwe since it is part of the African continent. Africans were adversely affected by the colonialists' new system of the global division of labor. The task given to Africans was to produce the fundamental goods and raw materials needed by their domestic industries. They were neither urged to participate in manufacturing nor permitted to do so. The cost of raw materials was extremely low, whereas the cost of imported processed items was extremely high. As a result, this contributed to Africans' poverty. Africans were compelled to concentrate on producing goods that were meant for export and not those that were needed by the local people (Ocheni & Nwankwo 2012). As a result, Africa stopped producing the food products

required to sustain its expanding population, which resulted in a lack of food and an increase in food costs. This condition persisted in Africa, where people still import some of their food.

Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012:52) posit that colonialism also led to the dis-articulation of the original and traditional African markets and trades where most of them were formed basing on local needs. The arrival of colonisation affected the original or traditional marketing centres because it brought about a different need, making them obsolete. It was necessary for raw commodities to be conveniently purchased and evacuated back to their place of origin due to these new marketing hubs and routes. This caused the progressive demise or death of the majority of traditional marketing hubs, distorting the pattern of urbanisation and growth throughout Africa. African trade primarily shifted to an export-import focus. Additionally, Africa was prematurely included in the global economy and trade. It is true that any local economy must first sufficiently develop its internal dynamics and forces of production before becoming completely linked to a global economy or trade. The effects of premature integration are that such an economy will be hijacked by more advanced economies making the country concerned a perpetual debtor (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). Therefore, many African countries did not enjoy the balance of trade or comparative advantage.

Furthermore, raw materials produced in Africa were used abroad and not in local industries, thereby destroying the organic linkage between the agricultural and industrial sectors in Africa. As a result of the colonialists taking surplus profit from the economy and not reinvesting it in the same economy, the African economy could not advance. Due to this, Africans are now importing commodities at a higher rate and are less dependent on domestic production. Because the colonisers did not reinvest the earnings from the African economy but instead transferred them for the growth of their own economy, the multiplier effect was not present in Africa throughout the colonial period (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). This greatly contributed to the underdevelopment of most African economies including Southern Zimbabwe.

In addition, there was a distortion and dis-articulation on the development of the transport system in Africa. Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012:53) argue that the transport network developed during the colonial period connected different towns and rural areas for effective communication and development. These transport routes were mainly established so that the colonialists could easily evacuate raw materials from their sources to the designated point for effective export abroad. In

Southern Zimbabwe, the transport network that was mainly developed are roads and rails. Their efforts were not to develop organised roads network for the transformation of local African people as well as for their interaction within their different territories. Therefore, there was no economic integration and cooperation among African places during the time as this distorted disjointed transport system did not provide for effective agricultural and economic integration.

#### **4.2.1.2.2 Impact on the Provision of Social Amenities and Urbanisation Pattern**

Ocheni & Nwankwo (2012:54) assert that most of the social amenities provided during the colonial era were mainly concentrated in one place in towns and cities. Consequently, a large number of individuals moved from rural to urban areas where these amenities could be provided. As a result, there were challenges with urbanisation due to an overuse of these amenities and overcrowding in cities. Overcrowding, rural-urban migration, a filthy and depressed atmosphere, the development of epidemic diseases, poor hygienic conditions, social vices, ethnic and tribal issues, to name a few, are still detrimental effects of dis-articulation on the supply of amenities and urbanisation. Management of these problems continued to be a problem even in Southern Zimbabwe urban centres.

#### **4.2.1.2.3 Impact on African Education**

It is generally argued that colonialism brought Western education that resulted in civilisation of Africa thereby contributing towards the development of the continent. Although this argument appears to be true on the surface, it has been subjected to critical analysis that exposed the hollowness of colonial education which is partially attributed to the underdevelopment of Africa today (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012:51). The kind of education that the colonialists brought was not rooted in African culture. Their education was literary and did not have a technological base, thereby failing to bring real solutions and industrial development. This poor foundation of education and poor technological base established by the colonialists is responsible for the underdevelopment of African nations today. Colonial education mainly targeted training clerks, interpreter, artisans, produce inspectors and others who would assist them in exploiting African resources (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). The aim was never the industrialisation of African territories or improving technological development in Africa.

Colonial schooling warped and disarticulated the indigenous African educational pattern associated with African technology. Africans were skilled technicians who developed at their own

rate based on the resources available in their surroundings before embracing the new colonial technology. They were skilled in many diverse trades, including blacksmithing, mining, weaving, and sculpture, which allowed them to meet the technological needs of the many local communities. Africans were forced to relinquish their native technological knowledge and education in favour of Western schools that strongly emphasised reading and writing. This was the beginning of the present poor technological base in African countries that resulted in underdevelopment because technology that is not rooted in people's culture and environment cannot lead to meaningful technological advancement. This is why the so-called technological transfer struggles to be a reality.

#### **4.2.1.3 Existence and Institutionalisation of Socio-economic and Political Classes**

Colonialism created social classes in Africa, including the petty bourgeoisie, comprador bourgeoisie, proletariat and peasant (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012:54). The petty bourgeoisie was the conveyor belt colonialists used to exploit and siphon the African economy. The African petty bourgeoisie and the European comprador bourgeoisie have common interests and cordial relations. This is so because the mantle of leadership was taken by the petty bourgeoisie after political independence. They maintained their relationship with the erstwhile colonial masters. This is why they continue to run the political administration and economy like the colonialists did. Majority of African leaders maintained strong links with their erstwhile masters.

Most African leaders continued exploiting the working peasants and the working class. The rampant political instability and socio-economic crisis in most African territories today are signs of the perpetuation of colonial realities in post-colonial states have their roots in the colonial era. Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) argue that another reason that causes many African communities to continue suffering today is that the petty bourgeoisie and their European allies continue looting Africa's natural and economic resources. The form of political power struggle and distribution of wealth in current African countries reveal a certain degree of understanding and connection between the African bourgeoisie and their colonial friends. Poverty in most African citizens is a result of this as well as the marginalisation and oppression of the masses by those occupying positions of state power. This is an offshoot of colonialism or colonial hang-over. Colonialism promoted class struggles, ethnicity, and tribalism within African communities to prolong their rule and domination.

## **4.2.2 Ethnicity in Southern Zimbabwe**

Ethnicity has been one of the major tools used to contour in all domains of life in Zimbabwe since the colonial period in several ways. Zimbabwe was already a multi-ethnic society before the colonisers came with these ethnic groups; Shona: Zezuru, Korekore, Karanga, Khoisan, Manyika, Ndau, Ndebele, Kalanga, Shangani, Venda, Tonga and Nambya. Marriages, political alliances and population movement has complicated their relations.

### **4.2.2.1 Ethnicity during the Colonial Period**

The Rhodesian colonisers did not create ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, they were already in existence. The ethnic group's identity was not a political but social identity. Colonisation in Africa, on the other hand, politicised African ethnic identities by rebuilding individuals' identities through their compartmentalisation on the basis of culture and location (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:277). This exacerbated Zimbabwe's ethnic differences, which prevented the country from forging a unified national identity due to colonisers' discrimination against some tribes while favouring others. Since its creation in 1890, the Rhodesian colonial state has enacted institutions and laws that categorize the population according to race and ethnicity. There were the European classes, which included Asians and people of colour, and the native groupings, which included native Africans. Natives comprised of the native aboriginal natives and colonial natives.

The colonial government categorised the country into Mashonaland, Matabeleland, Masvingo (Fort Victoria) and Manicaland (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). Other groups that spoke minority languages were swallowed into those super-ethnic regional labels. This had a negative impact on these small ethnic groups, since they continue to complain about being ignored in development-related matters to this day. Race and ethnicity shaped how people of a society interacted socially and politically, as well as how they were able to acquire power and resources. According to Mamdani (2001), the colonial authority categorised the country's people based on their ethnic citizenship, which was governed by ethnic rights, and their geographic areas of origin. The national identity system, which distinguished citizens on the basis of provinces of origin, was used to impose ethnic citizenship. The post-independence state inherited this system where today district (and province) is marked by specific codes on identity documents.

Under this colonial regime, ethnicity determined how natives accessed resources, such as land. By giving various rights and benefits to its subjects, they also politicised ethnic identities in



metropolitan areas. The colonial state employed settler preconceptions to create a hierarchy of salary differences according to ethnic and racial categorisation in workplaces, where certain jobs were restricted for particular subject groups (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:279). Mombeshora (1990) contends that ethnicity existed before colonialism and undermined nationalism by fostering animosity and division among ethnic groupings during the colonial period. On the other hand, Msindo (2007) posits that ethnic groups do not always act against national development but may also complement it. This is evidenced by erelative ethnic solidarity and cohesion that saw Zimbabweans, regardless of ethnic affiliation, forming a united front to fight the colonial system during the liberation struggle. Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:280) say that in a bid to transform the nation, ethnic-based societies, unions, and clubs were created in Bulawayo during the 1950-63 period. Nationalist leaders emerged from ethnic associations. Ethnicity was utilised positively to mobilise the masses by major nationalist parties, such as ZAPU, National Democratic Party.

However, from the 1960s going forward, ethnicity turned to be a divisive nationalist movement mainly as a result of leadership positioning to take over the country (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:281). Therefore, political actors utilised tribalism as a political tool to enhance their own authority at crucial times. Additionally, this led to the dissolution of ZAPU in 1963 when the Shona-speaking party leaders rose in opposition to Joshua Nkomo, a Ndebele-speaking leader, and founded the new party known as ZANU. Factional fighting and ethnically-motivated violence due to the ZAPU and ZANU split occurred in urban areas (Sithole, 1984). Leaders of the two parties have developed resentment and mistrust as a result of the ongoing ethnic tensions between ZAPU and ZANU. Because of this, political activists who belonged to the undesired ethnic groups were killed and imprisoned (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007).

In addition, recruitment and fighting in the liberation struggle became more ethnic and regionalised. The Shona recruits continued to join ZANU in Mozambique, whereas the Ndebele recruits were mainly joining ZAPU in Zambia (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). After the failure of the leadership to properly manage this phenomenon, ethnicity continued to yield negative results for the nation of Zimbabwe. This is because some nationalist leaders were not committing themselves seriously towards eradicating ethnicity. This, therefore, saw ethnicity continuing to affect politics and human relations in Zimbabwe to this day.

#### **4.2.2.2 Post-Colonial Nation Building and Ethnicity**

After Zimbabwe regained its independence in 1980, its nationalist leadership was seized with the nation-building project. One dimension of this project was eradicating and dismantling racial and ethnic differences in the spirit of national reconciliation that the new government pursued. These included dismantling the colonial institutions, laws and practices which were in support of ethnic polarisation and the promotion of national integration throughout the ethnical diverse Zimbabwean groups (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). They worked towards equal access to all state institutions, structures, and services. They introduced new laws that ensured the democratisation of Zimbabwe politics so as to restore the dignity of African people. These efforts were also made on land distribution but on a limited scale at this stage.

Government employment policies have evolved in areas like deploying public employees outside of their district of origin as a step toward transformation. The new government introduced language policies emphasising the teaching of the languages of Shona and Ndebele, the two African languages that had been accorded the national language status since the colonial era. Other African languages continued to suffer from systematic marginalisation and domination. They only started to be taught in schools and used in mainstream media, on radio and television after extensive lobbying from language and cultural associations and activists. The promulgation of the 2013 National Constitution that gave an official recognition to sixteen languages, including the ones that had a minority language tag, helped to increase their visibility. Also, through promoting political reconciliation, the government attempted to change ethnic group attitudes. ZANLA, the ZIPRA combatants and former Rhodesian forces were intergrated into the Zimbabwe National Army (Rupiya, 1995).

Zimbabwe continues to struggle to evolve into a united state despite all the de-ethnic efforts (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:283). As a result, ethnic animosity continues to impact how political elites behave even after independence. Following independence, it was improved upon and repeated using other methods. One of the main causes of inter-ethnic conflict is the conflict between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF and, which resulted in ZANU PF dominating the political space in Zimbabwe after winning the 1980 elections. The ZANU PF's divisive party slogans, political speeches, and songs, which praised ZANU and ZANLA for their role in the liberation struggle, while denigrating ZAPU and ZIPRA and its supporters who were representing

a distinct ethnic group, are a few processes and events where this conflict exhibits ethnic characteristics. Furthermore, in the national army, ZIPRA cadres were left out on promotions in the Zimbabwe National Army (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). In the early 1980s, ethnicity and other factors, led to clashes between ZIPRA and ZANLA in assembly points, such as Entumbane, Ndabazinduna, Connemara, and Chitungwiza. Between 1983 and 1987, ethnicity and tensions between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF led to the commencement of a genocide in the provinces of Matabeleland and sections of the Midlands, where an estimated number of more than 20 000 persons perished between 1982 and 1987 (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), 1997). Political, social, psychological, and economic difficulties have arisen as a result of this period's high rate of human fatalities.

#### **4.2.2.3 Gukurahundi Massacre**

Military clashes occurred that resulted in the killing of both members of the army and civilians in a dissident war that started after arms caches were discovered in 1982 on ZAPU-owned properties. The ZANU PF government proceeded to arrest ZAPU leaders as well as ZIPRA commanders. The Mugabe regime also sacked ZAPU figures from the coalition government forged after independence, including Joshua Nkomo. All of these elements contributed to leaders from ZAPU, ZIPRA ex-combatants, their followers, and the entire region feeling further marginalised (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). Some of these politically-disgruntled members turned to violence to express their resentment (Alexander, McGregor & Ranger, 2000). The ZANU PF government took advantage of this chance to orchestrate state-sanctioned violence in the Ndebele-speaking regions. The objective was to eliminate its most formidable adversary in the post-independence period.

Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:285) argue that the brutal method that the Fifth Brigade used resulted in serious damage to the Matabeleland and Midlands region between 1982 and 1987 whereby the region is still suffering from its after-effects today. In a war to stop the activity of these armed forces, these state forces killed around 20 000 civilians. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) published a report on the torture, horror, terror, murders and rape that visited the Ndebele-speaking regions during the period. Physical and emotional abuse saw the perpetrators of violence forcing Ndebele speakers to speak Shona. This was a form of

indoctrination meant to force the victims to support the Mugabe regime (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 1997).

Although the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 between ZAPU and ZANU signalled the end of the violence, the state made no efforts to achieve healing and reconciliation. Survivors and victims continue to bear emotional scars. The general feeling among the inhabitants of the Ndebele-speaking regions is that the state is marginalising their area. They feel excluded in the nation building process. (Alexander, McGregor & Ranger, 2000). This is seen from their voting behaviour, since ZANU PF has struggled to win a sizable share of votes from Matabeleland regions after the killings in 1987. Gukurahundi also makes the Matabeleland population more Ndebele-centric, making national integration more difficult to attain. The people of Matabeleland charged Mugabe, his administration, and the Shona with carrying out these massacres as part of an anti-Ndebele campaign. The fact that the Fifth Brigade consisted primarily of Shona people is another factor that supported the ethnic and political nature of the violence (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:286). The Ndebele people were left more conscious of their differences with the Shona. This nurtured and reinforced feelings of ‘unbelonging’ to the Zimbabwean state in the Ndebele-speaking regions. These feelings threaten the notion of unitary Zimbabwe.

#### **4.2.2.4 Protests against the Ndebele Oppression and Marginalisation**

The particularism of the Ndebele resulted even in the formation of radical pressure groups in the 1990s, that focussed on reviving the Ndebele monarchy and foregrounding the Ndebele culture and heritage. In 2000, the Ndebele people tried to resurrect political organisations like ZAPU. Other organisations also emerged, focusing on the Gukurahundi violence and exerting pressure on the government to answer for it. The ZAPU 2000 argued for a federal state where these provinces had to preserve greater political and economic autonomy since they were battling against what they saw as the marginalisation of the region (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). It even goes on to disregard the Unity Accord calling it an elitist pact. Others called for the establishment of an autonomous Ndebele state. Other radical groups are fighting for secession meant to establish an autonomous state they are calling Mthwakazi (Mthwakazi Action Group, 2006).

The diaspora Matabeleland activists treated ZANU PF as a Shona tribal party. When some of the displaced Ndebele communities connected online, the Ndebele ethnicity became a significant issue in the diaspora (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:288). Gukurahundi is charged with

facilitating Matabeleland and Midlands provinces' marginalisation and minoritisation because these unrests hampered socio-economic advancement. Additionally, Ndebele ethnicity persisted in being centres around important development issues, including complaints about the exclusion of the region from key projects (Manganga, 2014). This is also influenced by the fact that people from Matabeleland were expecting significant action towards development after the Unity Accord since the region had been left behind in economic development during the Gukurahundi time (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007).

The Ndebele-speaking provinces generally view lack of political will to complete the Zambezi Water Project as part the state's scheme to marginalise them. The project is meant to supply Bulawayo with water and improve the livelihoods of surrounding communities through irrigation schemes. The government's failure to complete the project is attributed to its reluctance to sponsor it as ZANU PF's way of disciplining a rebellious city and region. However, this can be a difficult story to believe since Bulawayo and Ndebele-speaking regions also have a large number of citizens from Mashonaland. However, Manganga (2014) argues that the marginalisation thesis position on the sabotage of Matabeleland need a nuanced approach because the Zambezi Water Project is just one of the many projects that still need to be completed, while others took long to complete.

#### **4.2.2.5 De-Industrialisation of Bulawayo**

Another factor that is perceived to have contributed to the socio-economic problems in the Matabeleland region is the de-industrialisation of Bulawayo. The colonial government established Bulawayo as Rhodesia's industrial hub. This saw the city earning the moniker "the Manchester of Rhodesia" (Manganga, 2014:187). It maintained this identity up to the turn of the century when it started experiencing de-industrialisation. Most businesses relocated to Mashonaland, especially Harare (Manganga, 2014:188). This significantly affected socio-economic life. Manganga (2014:188) further advanced the case that Welshman Ncube said Bulawayo's de-industrialisation was caused by a larger plan to marginalise the Matabeleland region. In his view, the city's de-industrialisation was also caused by the centralised system of governance and service provision that ensures that everything is done in Harare. This threatens the viability of operating business in any other area, other than Harare.

#### **4.2.2.6 Ethnic Polarisation in other Ethnic Groups in Southern Zimbabwe**

In addition to the inter-ethnic tensions and rivalry between Ndebele and Shona, there have been accusations and counter-accusations of ethnic favouritism among Shona groups in issues that affect social, political and economic life. The same applies to ethnic groups in the Ndebele-speaking regions. They complain about being marginalised from society and economy and cultural and political domination by both the Shona and the Ndebele. For example, their languages are not yet fully taught at all levels in schools, like what is happening to Shona and Ndebele. Leaders of these minority groups have been complaining against the perceived Shona-Ndebele cultural imperialism (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:289).

In Manicaland the Ndaus have been complaining about the Zezuru dominance in politics and economy. Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:290) present that since the 1980s, the state had been associating the Ndaus ethnic identity with Ndabaningi Sithole. Sithole was a Ndaus speaker who was the founding president of ZANU. He later on became a villain, in ZANU's view, along the way, during the liberation struggle. When he left ZANU, he formed ZANU Ndonga. The Ndaus people's unhappiness can also be evidenced through ZANU Ndonga's successful mobilisation of people who outstandingly supported and voted for it against the Mugabe-led ZANU PF party. People from this region expressed frustrations due to the lack of development in their region. In Masvingo, it is argued that the marginalisation and underdevelopment of the province have continued to impoverish the people in addition to the perennial effects of drought striking the province. Due to a lack of government support, socio-economic challenges continue. In addition, the Pfumbi people in Mwenezi are stereotyped as anti-development and anti-education people by the Karanga and the Ndebele (Manganga, 2014:191). This is because of chronic poverty in the area and their persistent droughts and diseases affect their cattle herds.

#### **4.2.2.7 Ethnicity and Power Contestations**

Ethnicity has dominated power contestations in ZANU PF and the MDC. The late Edson Zvobgo mobilised the Karanga identity to challenge an imagined Zezuru hegemony in ZANU PF. Mnangagwa has more supporters from Midlands, his home province, considering voting pattern in 2018. In the MDC, ethnicity was one of the major causes of the split in 2005. Subsequent splits in the MDC saw ethnicity playing a major role. The founding Secretary General, Welshman

Ncube, a Ndebele speaker, led one faction of the party, while Morgan Tsvangirai, from Manicaland remained with the major faction.

### **4.2.3 Political Violence**

Zimbabwe has always been affected by political violence since the colonial era as political leadership continues to use violence as its form of governance.

#### **4.2.3.1 Violence during the Colonial Era**

The British occupied Zimbabwe as early as the 1880s (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014:27). Indigenous black people suffered in many ways at the hands of their colonial masters. The British colonial administration instituted an apartheid system that created separate spaces for Europeans and Africans. When Ian Douglas Smith became the Prime Minister in 1964, he declared Rhodesia a self-governing territory, independent from Britain through the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). His government was more determined to resist black majority rule. UDI and Smith government went on to ban African political parties like the ZANU party that Ndabaningi Sithole led and ZAPU that Joshua Nkomo led, and they were forced to go underground and into exile. UDI came with a dark side as, in addition to the oppression of black political parties, it denied access to vote. Smith then consolidated his power by passing more racist laws to control Africans. He also used the state's coercive apparatus to crush the African dissenting voices. This resulted in a political conflict that broke into a costly civil war. An estimated number of people, between 15 000 to 20 000, died in this war (Haslam & Lamberti 2014). The negotiated transition signalled by the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979 between the warring parties ended the war.

#### **4.2.3.2 Post-Independence Public Violence and Elections**

Many citizens welcomed independence with great joy and hope for liberty, freedom and positive development of the country. African nationalists were praised as patriotic freedom fighters who gave their life to fight the colonial powers for independence (Ayittey, 1999). The Gukurahundi massacre, which took place between 1982 and 1987, as well as some incidents from the year 2000, however, were signs of state-sanctioned violence (Blair, 2002). For many, the paradise that had been promised had instead become a life of deprivation, unemployment, and headshots (Ayittey, 1999). Many people withdrew their support from the nationalist liberation party ZANU PF as a result of their dissatisfaction and alienation. While certain state institutions failed, the ability to impose pressure remained strong. Inflation and impoverishment continue to increase. This also led

to the involvement of civic groups, lawyers, church bodies, human rights activists and journalists in governance issues. They developed a vigorous culture of debate and participation in Zimbabwean politics in the midst of government control on media and politics (Bourne, 2011:161). The government increased its force in suppressing these groups who were communicating their displeasure with how the country was run.

When the electorate rejected the draft constitution in 2000, opposition MDC party supporters celebrated because it signalled the waning support of Mugabe in the country. The Mugabe regime decided to embark on an accelerated land reform exercise to persuade people to vote for it in the elections scheduled for June 2002. The land question was one of the major objectives of waging the war against the colonial system. However, the land redistribution exercise turned out to be a violent process where large mobs invaded farms, kicking farmers off their property. Farm workers lost their jobs and homes, some were raped, killed and assaulted (Bourne, 2011).

#### **4.2.3.3 Partisan use of State Institutions**

The state has always been abusing state institutions, such as the ZRP, ZNA, CIO, Ministry of Youth Development, Department of Information and Publicity, Gender and Employment Creation, to benefit the ruling ZANU PF government and its leadership (Makumbe & Compagnon 2000). The ZRP was usually used to officiate at ZANU PF primary elections, restrict or control street protests. The ZNA has its top leaders who are members of ZANU PF, officiate and facilitate at ZANU PF functions and penalises officers who support the opposition. The different state security departments allegedly monitor opposition political actors and they stand accused of orchestrating the torture and enforced disappearances of such actors. The Ministry of National Affairs ran the programme of training ZANU PF youths in the National Youth Service, a programme that Border Gezi introduced in 2000.

#### **4.2.3.4 Human Rights Violations**

Political violence affected almost the whole nation. The state used to deploy government forces to harass, torture and imprison those supporting the opposition parties. Makumbe (2002) presents that there was unprecedented violence in year 2002, in preparation for national elections. He says at least 100 people are believed to have been killed, of which many were MDC supporters, during and after the elections. In 2000 again, bills were passed which banned independent observers from monitoring elections and others which silenced the privately-owned media. Land grabbing



between 2000 and 2003 were associated with beatings, murders, and mass displacements (Bourne, 2011:164). In May 2005, Operation Murambatsvina was introduced, and it affected over 700 000 people. Tampers always seem to rise during election time in Zimbabwe, as elections are always associated with political violence. This is mainly evident in 2002, 2008 and 2018 national elections that were fatally flawed by violence and intimidation. In 2000, travellers in most rural areas were troubled by the ruling party militia who were demanding them to produce their ZANU PF party cards. The youth militia would beat those who failed to comply.

In 2008 elections, the election managing body delayed to announce the 29 March presidential election results. This raised suspicion that the results were manipulated in favour of Mugabe. When the results came, Tsvangirai had more votes but could not go beyond the 50% plus one mark to be declared an outright winner (Makumbe, 2009). This then led to an election run-off. The campaign period for this run-off was characterised by violence that left over 200 MDC supporters dead and over 50 000 people fled their homes, especially in the countryside (Makumbe, 2009). Tsvangirai was hardly given space to campaign. He then announced his withdrawal from the polls in protest against Mugabe and ZANU PF. The 30 July 2018 elections also resulted in public protests on 1 August 2022 demanding the release of presidential election results led to soldiers being deployed into the streets of Harare, where people were assaulted with six people reported to be shot dead.

### **4.3 Economic Factors Influencing Socio-economic Challenges**

The causes of the socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe are many and there is little scope to do justice on all of them in this study due to space constraints. This section examines economic factors leading to the socio-economic challenges that also affected Southern Zimbabwe.

#### **4.3.1 Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)**

It is argued that Zimbabwe inherited a vibrant economy at independence and was second to South Africa (Chirau, 2014). However, the colonial rule had exacerbated racial disparities in wealth distribution, earnings, and access to social services in several contexts (Magidi, 2018:55). By pursuing development socialist policies, including the delivery of essential services like health and education, the post-independence administration tried to address these contradictions (Murisa, 2010). Recurrent droughts and the world recession that affected every economy in the world, compelled Zimbabwe to adopt ESAP, at the advice of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (Magidi 2018). Chimhowa, Manjengwa and Feresu (2010:6) contend that prior to the

establishment of the ESAP, there was a shortage of foreign currency due to weak export performance and a lack of significant foreign investment. However, import restrictions and capital repatriation laws shielded the local economy.

ESAP encouraged trade liberalism that removed discrimination against exportable product sectors, brought in international competition, and came up with competitive pricing of goods. According to Hess (2001), trade liberalism also sought to increase productivity, earn foreign cash, and open the economy up to external competition. It also sought to produce high and justifiable levels of export growth. Deregulation aimed to eliminate the rigidities and distortions that plagued the industrial sector. In order to optimise public sector investment, privatisation and other public sector management strategies were implemented (RBZ, 2007). This improved the administration of public companies and resource allocation efficiency.

The introduction of ESAP implied a reduction of government expenditure on health, education, and other critical areas. However, this increased the vulnerability of most households because there were massive retrenchments due to ESAP. Due to the failure to realize economic growth, the ESAP results opposed economic growth. The initiative severely affected the urban population and damaged the nation's manufacturing sector. This is because liberal policies led to a decrease in earnings and formal employment, as some people were laid off (Magidi, 2018:57). This situation drove some affected people into the informal economy. This is one of the elements that contributed to the emergence and development of the informal sector in Zimbabwe. Some of the reasons for its failure include the imposition of tariffs on manufacturing inputs. Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector struggled due to its constant reliance on finished goods imports from nations like South Africa.

The introduction of the 5-year programme, ESAP saw a fall in the average Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Inflation rose from an average of 15% to 25% while interest rates trebled. Implementation of ESAP reforms required around 3.5 billion United States dollars in foreign loans in addition to an already existing debt of 2.5 billion United States dollars (Chimhowa, Manjengwa & Feresu, 2010:6). During the 1992 and 1993 fiscal year, the interest payments on both foreign and domestic debt increased by 15% more than the projected due to interest and exchange rate volatility (World Bank, 1995). Under ESAP, Zimbabwe suffered from de-industrialisation as major manufacturing sectors such as textiles resulted in 61% decline between 1990 and 1995 and the general output

from the manufacturing sector fell by more than 20% between 1991 and 2000 (Carmody, 1998). The general deprivation and poverty that ESAP engendered resulted in industrial actions by workers in the private and public sectors. Public workers embarked on strikes in 1996, leading to several trade unions organising strikes in 1997 (Chimhowu, Manjengwa & Feresu, 2010:8). Public unrest increased especially in urban areas where urban people were the most affected by the impact of these reforms. Although ESAP was successful in some areas, its failure to increase GDP in the 1990s could have been responsible for laying the foundation for an unstable economic environment in the country leading to rapid economic decline visible in GDP trends from the year 2000 onwards.

### **4.3.2 Economic Governance**

Zimbabwe has faced economic challenges since the 1990s up to this day. One of the factors contributing to this economic downfall is how its economy has been managed. There are various economic issues that have resulted in economic challenges in the country.

#### **4.3.2.1 Running Up Debts**

Haslam and Lamberti (2014:31) argue that factors such as poor policy decisions by President Robert Mugabe from the 1980s, pension promises the country could not meet, involvement in costly wars and the development of unhealthy addiction to offer loans contributed to the economic meltdown of the nation of Zimbabwe. The increase in the level of debts has affected the performance of the economy of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), 2021). Zimbabwe has accumulated loans from bilateral, multilateral and private creditors and as a result, the government has admitted that it cannot repay them (ZIMCODD, 2021). Any attempt to use resources to pay off debt, on the other hand, will further jeopardise its attempts to enhance public health, livelihoods, and the economy. In this case, requesting debt cancellation will spare the country from suffering economically. The quickest way to free up public and private resources to address the country's economic crisis would be to cancel debt payments. However, Zimbabwe will not benefit from the cancellation because it has already been defaulting over the past two decades, but this cancellation gives the country a breathing space to address social and economic challenges (ZIMCODD, 2021). Cancellation of debts saves the country from some of the ways of debt relief, such as leveraging on Zimbabwe's natural resources (ZIMCODD, 2019).

The concept of debt cancellation can be applied on individual and local level. For example, in 2013 the nation of Zimbabwe wrote off citizens' debts of bills to local authorities after an instruction from the Minister of Local Government, Ignatius Chombo (Herald, 22 July 2013). Minister Chombo defended this government position by saying that residents were incapacitated to settle their bills because most of them were not gainfully employed (Herald, 22 July 2013). The amounts owed have become irrevocable. In rural areas, farmers were farming with inadequate inputs and against droughts. The situation was worsened by delays in paying farmers for their grain, resulting in the erosion of their earnings due to inflation. There were also reports on abuse of office, corruption and improper management by urban councils where some councils were accused of allocating stands corruptly (Herald, 22 July 2013). Debt cancellation concept is very instrumental to save citizens from economic suffering especially when they can no longer pay for their debts.

#### **4.3.2.2 False Promises: Large Pensions and Social Security**

The rehabilitation of the war veterans was an issue of primary political concern as the majority of them had no skills needed in the formal job market. The government therefore introduced a Social Security Scheme called the War Veteran Compensation Fund to support disabled war veterans (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014:31). However, corrupt government officials depleted the fund, and by 1996, it became dry. There was now no further compensation for the war veterans and this resulted in the movement of the war veterans beginning to organise marches to petition for more payo-uts. Its intensity increased through the first six months of 1997. Therefore, Mugabe responded by awarding hefty packages. This became the primary source of the government's excessive spending because such obligations had not been budgeted for.

#### **4.3.2.3 Military Misadventures: The Unbudgeted Costly DRC War**

In 1998, Mugabe sent around 12000 Zimbabwean troops to DRC on a peacekeeping mission to support President Laurent Kabila who was the leader at that time as rebel forces had destabilised the nation. This unpopular decision resulted on the devastating effects on the already burdened economy. (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014:31). The Zimbabwean nation did not derive benefits from this involvement in the DRC conflict. It is alleged that the involvement only served sectarian interests of politicians and top military officials who got diamond claims in the DRC. (Maclean, 2002; Global Witness, 2002).

The war was costly to Zimbabwe. The lowest-ranking military officer received a daily stipend of \$14 in addition to their monthly pay. The costs of the war to Zimbabwe was estimated to be around US\$3 million in a day while on the other hand some analysts believe that the government spent an unbudgeted expenditure of six billion Zimbabwean dollars (Magidi 2018). This spending happened at a time when the nation's economy was on a decline.

#### **4.3.2.4 Debt Sweat: Pressure from Lenders**

Soon after independence, Zimbabwe's credit record was almost perfect internationally due to its vibrant farming and mining sectors. It was eligible to access lines of credit from IMF and the World Bank (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014). These financial institutions suspended funding to Zimbabwe after the unbudgeted hefty packages it awarded to war veterans in 1997. They were more concerned about the increase in spending and lax attitude by the government towards its debts and also money printing. In response, Mugabe stopped to make repayments of its debts, a move that destroyed their good relationship.

#### **4.3.2.5 Financial Panic Resulting in Market Crash**

The breakdown of the relationship between Zimbabwe and its funders was the forerunner of its market collapse. As a result of an increase of investor distrust continues to the panic point, on Friday 14 November 1997 the Zimbabwe dollar fell dramatically losing 75% of its value in one day (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014: 33). The stock market crashed wiping off 46% from value shares as external investors lost confidence in the currency (Chimhowu, Manjengwa & Feresu 2010:7). That day which was known as the Black Friday became a definitive turning point. Years of complacent mismanagement was expressed in one panic-stricken moment. From this day, the value of the Zimbabwean currency continued to fall, and it has never recovered up to now. The Black Friday is considered as an economic catastrophe. Things were made worse in 2000 when the economy experienced a further contraction as a result of land confiscation and redistribution programme. There was a major banking crisis in 2003 and there was crisis after crisis as money printing was increased. It is important to note that debates are not yet complete about the real cause of the Black Friday but these include economic management decisions, failure of the IMF's structural adjustment programme and the decline in investor confidence.

#### **4.3.2.6 Debt Spiral**

The fall in the value of the local currency resulted in a rapid increase in import costs. Mugabe and the ruling party in response raised taxes, that met with fierce opposition as food riots broke out in towns throughout the country. Government deployed state security apparatus to crush the protests. This heavy-handed approach led to the death of ten people and hundreds were assaulted and arrested. All foreign donor groups suspended help to Zimbabwe in 1999 as a result of the government's obvious financial mismanagement (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014). Foreign debt was very high and the market was characterised by trade deficits. This weakened the national currency and resulted in the cost of critical goods like fuel becoming expensive.

#### **4.3.2.7 Government Decision to Print Money**

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe is alleged to be responsible for causing the hyperinflation in many cases that contributed to the continuous downfall of the economy of Zimbabwe, where many people were suffering due to the high cost of living. However, Haslam & Lamberti (2014:34) argue that it did not have option as the wishes of the government drove its decisions. The political policy drove the monetary policy.

#### **4.3.2.8 Choice to Print Money**

As government finances continued to flounder and options available for the Mugabe government had expired, the government had the following options: reducing expenses by closing down a number of government services and also retrenching public workers or to print money (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014:34). Out of these options, the government decided to print money. Printing money was viable because it had no immediate adverse effects. It was also politically convenient because the government wanted to fund its operations. However, this move fuelled hyperinflation.

#### **4.3.2.9 Increase in Government Control**

As a result of money printing and inflation, citizens started to shun the Zimbabwean dollar in trade. This is due to the fact that people produced things and services using their labour, time, and other resources, while receiving payment in the newly-minted money. In order to keep the newly produced currency in circulation, the government, therefore, used more extreme legal tender regulations. The government employed price controls to combat inflation. As a result of being forced to utilise the local currency, people were forced to keep prices low (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014).

#### **4.3.2.10 Raid and Plunder**

Haslam and Lamberti (2014:37) assert that the authorities began to violate property rights by plundering the assets of the nation as it was made illegal for anyone to hold and use foreign currency. Exporters were required to bring all foreign currency home and deposit it with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe at unfavourable exchange rates. With the support of the government, the Reserve Bank raided bank balances by instituting withdrawal limits that restricted people from getting their money.

#### **4.3.3 Corruption in Government**

Corruption has reached unprecedented levels in Zimbabwean private and public sectors. The areas of public procurement, housing for civil servants, land acquisition by the government, are some of the areas where corruption is more pronounced in the public sector. The Judiciary was also abused by the ruling party in covering up corrupt officials so that even if their unclean deals were exposed, justice was not exercised on them (Magidi, 2018). The abuse of state resources and institutions by the ruling government had been a norm since Zimbabwe's independence. There is a need for more political will by the government to fight against corruption in Zimbabwe.

In addition, traditional leaders and chiefs are manipulated by giving them rewards like farms, motor vehicles, farming implements, among other incentives. They have been put on government payroll to reward in return for the support they give to the ruling party at the expense of other citizens (Moyo, 2014). High-ranked officials in the police, state security, army and the judiciary system were manipulated to serve the interests of ZANU PF. Also, scarce resources of the state were channelled towards uneconomic projects, neglecting other sectors that needed critical government support (Moyo, 2014). An example is the gratuities to war Veterans that the top ZANU PF officials looted resulting in war veterans' protests before they were awarded \$50 000 Zimbabwe dollars pay off each which was also accompanied by \$2000 Zimbabwe dollar monthly stipends of which some beneficiaries were not deserving but were qualified because they were connected to the senior government officials (Magidi, 2018).

#### **4.3.4 Fast Track Land Reform Programme: Emptying the Bread Basket**

When the Ian Smith government was struck by sanctions, the country rapidly developed despite sanctions. It was trading with South Africa, and it exported agricultural produce to other countries in Africa and Europe (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014:27). The country developed a very sophisticated

infrastructure, roads, water systems, dams, hospitals and many more. Local farms developed expertise in cotton, tobacco, timber, maize and other grains. It also grew in the textile industry that was fed from the agricultural sector, transport and banking sector.

The Mugabe regime embarked on the land reform programme in 2000. This came immediately after the electorate rejected the draft constitution. Days after the referendum, war veterans began to violently invade farms and at the middle of the year, the government announced that more than 2455 farms had been claimed to resettle 150 000 farm families (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014). It initiated this process to complete the unfinished business of the liberation struggle of bringing back land to the black indigenous people. The process became the brutal land grab, with most of the farms being distributed to politically connected officials. Large mobs entered the farms by force, chasing farmers off their property and stripping them of their farms and assets that they could have sold. The main challenge was that some beneficiaries of the redistribution exercise had little or no resources and expertise in farming. The process destroyed the opposition party's political networks. However, it had more devastating economic effects as the Zimbabwe agricultural and mining sector began to fall. As a result of the decline in production, farms stopped supplying local markets with food. This resulted in massive food shortages in the nation. (Magidi, 2018).

Livelihoods were seriously affected as many people were kicked out of employment (Munangagwa, 2009). Thousands of jobs were lost as new farm owners failed to employ many workers. It also affected the agro-manufacturing sector as there was no longer supply of raw materials. This violent land redistribution exercise affected investor confidence because it demonstrated that there was no respect for property rights in the country. It also led to international organisations withdrawing aid to Zimbabwe. However, Makumbe (2009) observes that the historic land reform programme was meant to reverse the historical inequalities that restricted Africans access to productive land, while privileging the European minority class. However, the process did not totally achieve this objective because it was conducted on a partisan basis, thereby depriving those who were neither supporters of the ruling party nor connected to top ZANU PF officials.

#### **4.3.5 Economic and Political Sanctions**

The European Union and America imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2003 for its alleged violations of human rights. The Government of Zimbabwe complained about sanctions as the main



cause of economic downfall (Chimhowu *et al.*, 2010:10). The sanctions meant the restriction of movement, freezing of assets of some government officials, and restricted access to lines of credit (Chimhowu *et al.*, 2010). However, Zimbabwe gained support from China that was investing in raw materials in Africa without caring about human rights as demanded by the West. The deterioration of the political environment after the disputed 28 March 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections also led to the intensification of sanctions. Eventhough the Western countries argued that the sanctions they imposed on Zimbabwe were targeting individual political leaders, it is the vulnerable people in the society who suffered instead of the targeted group as the country's economic situation continues to worsen.

#### **4.3.6 Operation Murambatsvina**

Operation Murambatsvina of 2005, is another government-initiated programme that negatively affected the socio-economic life of Zimbabweans. The government was working together with the local authorities in a nationwide campaign of demolition of backyard outhouses, flea markets, vending sites and informal businesses established on undesignated sites in towns and cities (Magidi, 2018: 86). The name of the operation reflects that in view of the ZANU PF government, poor people who were living and operating in these premises were filthy or dirty (*tsvina*).

While Operation Murambatsvina was ostensibly instituted to create a conducive environment for foreign direct investment by trying to attract foreign currency back into the economy (Masakure, 2006) and cleaning urban centres from unplanned and chaotic expansion associated with rapid urbanisation (Goz 2005), among other issues, it was, largely, a political move meant to depopulate towns and cities that ZANU PF had identified to be strongholds for the opposition. The overall objective was to try and reclaim the political space taken by the opposition MDC party since 1999 (Bratton & Masunungure, 2006). Thus, the operation meant to push a sizeable number of these people back to rural homes where ZANU PF could easily control and manipulate them through traditional leadership.

It is believed that the operation also sought to address and defuse the politically explosive situation that was arising and that was essentially in defiance of the state apparatus. The government would find tracking citizens' travels in urban areas simple. This was thought to reduce the likelihood of anti-government activity. It was preferable to make sure that some individuals had moved to rural areas where life was cheaper because it was becoming impossible for many people to live in cities.

due to social, economic, and rising poverty levels (Magidi, 2018:86). As a result of this clean-up campaign, many families, especially those that were relying on informal trading lost livelihoods. Some also left their jobs because they no longer had places to stay because their houses had been demolished, some ended up leaving or selling their properties at very low prices as they did not have enough money to transport them to their rural homes. This operation affected about 650 000 to 700 000 people. They lost accommodation, livelihoods, or both (Tibaijuka, 2005; Mugara, 2007). People who were already in the rural areas were also affected, as many families were relying on their family members who were engaging in economic activities in cities. The situation was even worse for those coming from Southern Zimbabwe which perennially experiences dry weather conditions unfavourable to agricultural activities. In the aftermath of Operation Murambatsvina, strict licensing regulations were introduced. People encountered many socio-economic challenges as they lost their homes, businesses, jobs and income. The informal sector remains despite the local council and government's hostility.

#### **4.4 Social Factors Affecting Socio-economic Life in Southern Zimbabwe**

People in society are classified according to the way they are socialised within their culture and religion. Therefore, religion and culture become key social factors that determine the level of the socio-economic life one lives. This section discusses different groups in the society and how culture, religion and, to some extent, institutional regulations and management, such as the state affect them. The section also discusses key social groups in Southern Zimbabwe, such as women, children, the disabled and the elderly.

##### **4.4.1 Challenges Encountered by Different Social Groups**

Southern Zimbabwe has experienced different challenges that have affected different social groups such as women, children, old persons, the disabled, and others. It is important in this study to unveil the causes of challenges that are affecting these social groups.

###### **4.4.1.1 Women**

Patriarchal characters in Southern Zimbabwe have been a key contributing factor towards the socio-economic challenges women face in society. Due to patriarchal dominating culture and religions in Zimbabwe, women have been oppressed, marginalised, and subordinated by men in key areas of life, such as family, economy, education, politics, and religion (Kambarami 2006).

#### 4.4.1.1.1 Women and Family

Family brews patriarchal tendencies by the way people are socialised, while they are still young so that they assume sexually-differentiated roles which end up depriving the female group. Male people are socialised as head families and play the providence role for the families, while women are educated to be subservient and cherish domestic labour (Fry, Hodzi & Nhenga, 2016:11). This gender distinction is a result of the fact that society perceives women as unequal to men and should only provide men with sex (Charvet, 1982; McDowell & Pringle, 1992). Now a big challenge comes when the husband dies, most women quickly remarry to find another pillar of support since they are not economically independent.

Most societies prefer male child to a female one, mainly because she joins the family of her in-laws when she gets married. Thus, a female child does not contribute to the perpetuation of her lineage, especially in patriarchal and patrifocal societies. Instead, the children she bears perpetuate her in-law's genealogy. Females are not usually allowed to head families. Thus, even if a male child is the youngest in a family, patriarchal societies grant the male child the role of heading the family. He then assumes the father-figure role as a protector and provider for her sisters. Society also expects women to be sexually pure, before, marriage, during the subsistence of a marriage, even single women (the yet-to-be married, widows, divorced). Pejorative terms, such as *pfambi/hure* (prostitute) are often used to describe a woman even if she has a love relationship with one male partner. Society tends to monitor and prescribe female sexual behaviour. Single women may be given the label *mvana* (single women). While this term expresses a general neutral sense, it has acquired a pejorative meaning in its use in the Shona society. *Mvana* is a potential home-wrecker, husband-snatcher. Men in similar circumstances have no such negative terms for them. A bride is expected to maintain sexual purity until she gets married, lest she brings shame to her maiden family (Kambarami, 2006:3). There is no such rule for men. It allows men to have sexual experiments before marriage, and deny women the same.

Kambarami (2006:8) argues that Zimbabwean societies are patriarchal. Accordingly, they are characterised by a lot of patriarchal practices that lead to female control by males. Payment of lobola to the woman's family almost reduces a woman to a commodity that men can buy. It grants men sexual and property rights and strips women of such rights. This situation is worsened when the lobola charge is very high. Levirate marriages are also practiced. If a woman refuses to marry

one of her late husband's late brothers, usually, her in-laws send her back to her people. In such cases, the widowed woman is likely to leave all the property acquired during the subsistence of her marriage with her late husband and children. This entails exploitation of women that causes women to continue facing social and economic exploitation in patriarchal societies. On the other hand, if the man is widowed, the late wife's younger sister is given as wife to the man "*kumutsa mapfihwa*". This is usually sexual exploitation because the custom does not consider the feelings of the woman in question.

There is also a practice of arranged marriages that happen also in apostolic sects where old members of the sects, such as Johanne Marange, marry young girls claiming that it is a result of prophetic revelations. Also, during drought, parents could pledge their daughters to wealthy families and get grain in return. This practice was mainly done in the past among the Shona people. Young women are sometimes asked to join the family, and get married to a male member of a victim of murder's family, to pacify the spirit of the dead person in a custom known as "*kuripa ngozi*" (Kambarami, 2006:8). A virgin is usually chosen for this purpose. There are instances where women are not given a chance to decide what is good for their future life. These practices destroy a lot of potential. Furthermore, women have been sexually abused in several ways, such as rape, as they are treated in a way that makes them lack the ability to have control over their sexuality, some were abused due to the myth that HIV and AIDS that can be cured by having sex with a virgin. Women are also treated in a way that makes them lose power even to use contraceptives if the husband is unwilling. Socialisation processes in the family have influenced patriarchal practices in young people that then infiltrate into other social institutions, such as economy, politics, education and religion where women continue to be disadvantaged.

#### **4.4.1.1.2 Women and Education**

The education system in Zimbabwe promotes and perpetuates gender inequality (Kambarami, 2006:6). School textbooks construct masculinity and femininity because toughness is ascribed to boys, while girls are depicted as gentle. Such literature also prepares boys for more challenging tasks that need physical strength, while girls are portrayed as dominating in the domestic spaces. This means that the education system perpetuates gender inequality (Chirimuuta, 2006). In schools, some girls fall victim to (male) members of staff, who seek sexual favours from the girl child by offering them money or any other needs. Such sexual exploitation of the girl child in

schools end up adversely affecting their performance. Some families do not prioritise sending the girl child to school. Kambarami (2006:6) argues that women can use education to fight patriarchy. However, he also says that educated women have revealed that education is not a true emancipator because some educated women are compelled to comply with cultural and religious expectation, lest they run the risk of being labelled deviant and unfit for marriage. Prospective suitors may shun such deviant and non-conformist women (Chirimuuta, 2006). In Zimbabwean cultures, all women are expected to get married when they reach a marriageable age.

#### **4.4.1.1.3 Women, Economy and Politics**

The low level of women enrolled in secondary schools in Zimbabwe means that women who are making it into the corporate world are fewer. Also, in public ministry, more males have occupied ministerial positions, while females occupy ministerial positions perceived as less challenging like Gender, Culture and Education (Kambarami 2006). In the corporate sector, women sometimes are compelled to offer sexual favours to their bosses so that they are considered for promotion. The majority of unemployed women in Zimbabwe live in the countryside, where they practice agriculture and perform domestic tasks. In urban areas, the majority of women are into informal trading as means of livelihood, while men dominate in the formal sector. There is a small number of women in politics. The few women engaging in it have to show that they are tough enough to be able to withstand pressure brought about due to patriarchal tendencies. Women are accepted as singers, dancers, cooks and guest entertainers at most political events (Kambarami 2006).

#### **4.4.1.1.4 Women and Religion**

Religions, such as Christianity, ATR and Islam, also found in Southern Zimbabwe, exhibit patriarchal tendencies. In Christianity, the story of Eve's creation, allegedly from Adam's ribs shows that women's creation came as an after-thought to God. Thus, women should be subordinate to men (Kambarami, 2006:5). Women are therefore forced to submit before males. In almost all these religions, women are portrayed as the weaker sex that should be monitored all the time so that they do not make mistakes. This has resulted in most women be sidelined from leadership positions in families, industry, community, and the church where men are also involved. Men also use Biblical texts, such as Colossians 3:18-19, to control women and to justify patriarchy.

#### **4.4.1.2 Children**

The social, political, and economic crisis that has affected Zimbabwe since the 1990s to date have adversely affected children. Munro (2015) argues that primary education and health services were free in the first decade after independence. The downfall of the economy of Zimbabwe implied availability of fewer resources for critical sectors, such as education, health and childcare by the state (Munro, 2015). This also leads to a fall in the quality of services, equity, and coverage. Provided that children are still young, immature, lack social structures and are less able to advocate for themselves, their voice is less likely to be heard. Challenges, such as inflation, unemployment, divorce drive children to survive through begging and criminal activities. Cities in Southern Zimbabwe such as Bulawayo, Masvingo, Gwanda, Gweru, Mutare and others are flooded with street kids who live on pavements and have established shack settlements on the outskirts of the CBD. A decrease in school enrolments, disability, immoral and criminal behaviours, higher rates of absenteeism from school, among other factors, contribute to child abuse.

Most families in rural areas suffer from extreme poverty, the majority of them were affected by malnutrition which has effects, such as decreased cognitive functioning affecting educational outcomes and career prospects in later stages of life. Most parents cannot not provide resources, such as school fees, uniforms, textbooks, exercise books, pens and pencils and other school supplies as government funding dries up, resulting in many dropouts in schools. On the other hand, teachers are demotivated due to low wages and the fall of their money's purchasing power in the face of inflation (Munro, 2015). Decline in the quality of education results in lower levels of literacy and life skills that impact individual's prospects for employment and social mobility. An uneducated child then becomes a social and economic problem in life. Failure in health resulted in a fall in life expectancy driven by HIV prevalence. For example, in 1986 to 1988, life expectancy was 62 years which declined between 2002 and 2004 to 42 years (Munro, 2015).

#### **4.4.1.3 Old Persons**

Old persons constitute 5.8% of Zimbabwe's population and most of them are poor, mainly because inflation has eroded their contributory pension assets over an extended period of economic decline. The new surge in hyperinflation witnessed in 2017, pensioners and those about to retire faced a new challenge of pension assets depletion. The Old Person Act (2011), among other legislative frameworks protect the elderly, for example by providing some subsidies and exemptions available

for services they need. However, the elderly face multiple vulnerabilities, including challenges related to accessing healthcare in a country with a collapsing health delivery system and the costs of accessing healthcare and shortage of drugs in the nation.

#### **4.5 Spirituality and its Effects on Socio-economic Life**

Southern Zimbabwe is a multi-religious society comprising ATR and Christianity, contributing a greater portion, while Islam and others are very few. Their religious values and beliefs also affect social and economic life. Christianity consists of Apostolic Churches, most of them known as the African Initiated Churches (AICs), and Mainstream and Pentecostal Churches. Most AICs' belief system is almost the same. Except Johanne Masowe, they believe in the Bible and they all borrow from ATR. They believe that evil spirits, witchcraft, and punishment from God result from sin and can lead one into suffering, such as sickness, poverty and other misfortune. Such misfortunes may affect an individual, family, community and even the nation.

Their remedial practices are that they call for repentance and forgiveness and also prayers by the prophets who mainly prayed for water to drink and bath to get rid of those evil spirits that cause sicknesses or any form of suffering (Mukushi, Makhubele & Mabvurira, 2019:106). Sometimes water that is prayed for is sprayed on the homestead. Some pray for stones that are put in the home or moved with to chase away those evil spirits. They strongly believe that problems, such as sickness and disability are caused by avenging spirits or evil spirits that need them to focus on spiritually related solutions. Some of these Apostolic Sects do not even visit hospitals when they fall ill, and it is also considered a sin for its member to visit health centres for help. Therefore, many are suffering and even lose life due to medically-related sicknesses that can be treated in medical centres.

European missionaries introduced most of the mainstream and pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. They emphasise on accepting the message of Jesus as Lord and Personal saviour. Pentecostals believe in receiving the spirit's gifts of the spirit, such as healing and performing of miracles. ATR does not influence them (Mukushi *et al.*, 2019). They preach the Gospel of Jesus for repentance so that one is forgiven of sins that can hinder progress spiritually and even materially. They believe that some form of suffering and failure in life is a result of God's punishment for sin. Some of their members believe in African traditions and things, such as avenging spirits, ancestral spirits, demons, witchcraft, and generational curses that can cause misfortunes to people. Pentecostal

churches believe in divine healing and the working of miracles through prayers, sometimes for water, oil and other objects that become anointed. They also believe that some spiritual disciplines are able to make one rich in addition to working. These groups also believe in going to health centres like hospitals and clinics for assistance as these are made available through God-given wisdom.

African Traditional Religion is an indigenous religion in Zimbabwe. It emphasises on the use of traditional healers. It is believed that ATR is the shadow of Zimbabwean people despite their belief in Christianity because some aspects of ATR still influence their daily life. Sicknesses, disability and other forms of suffering are believed to have been caused by spiritual forces (Mukushi *et al.*, 2019). Some forms of sicknesses, especially chronic sicknesses, disability and other sufferings, may result in the discrimination of the affected people as others do not want to associate with witchcraft, spirits, or punishment from the ancestors. They believe in several remedies, such as the use of holy water, traditional medicines, traditional healers and rituals. Forms of suffering one is facing may cause the person to face discrimination in families, community and even on institutional level.

#### **4.6 Socio-economic Challenges from Natural Factors**

The world in this contemporary time is grappling with natural challenges, such as drought, cyclones, storms, and frosts due to climate change and variability where people, animals and vegetation are at risk (Brazier, 2015:3). This causes poverty, with particular reference to Southern Zimbabwe, a region frequently affected by drought, cyclones and floods leading to loss of livelihoods. These challenges also resulted in the shortage of water, sanitation, hygiene as dams and rivers quickly dried up. The energy sector has also been affected due to the shortage of water for hydro-power stations.

Southern Zimbabwe has been affected by several natural disasters, such as drought, cyclones and floods and pandemics. Southern Zimbabwe mainly consists of regions four and five. These are the driest places in the nation. Thus, the region is frequently affected by droughts that leave people's lives, animals and vegetation at risk. Drought has caused people, especially those in rural areas, to lose their livelihoods as their crops are frequently affected by drought and livestock died due to lack of enough pastures. This is part of the effects of the Fast Track Land Reform as those who were allocated the land could not produce because they could not secure irrigation equipment to



make agriculture possible in this dry region. This result in economic suffering because agriculture is their main source of living. In urban areas in the region, they have been continuously suffering from a lack of water, sanitation, and hygiene as dams in the region quickly get dry (United Nations Common Country Analysis Zimbabwe, 2021). Low levels of water in dams, such as Kariba which is used to produce hydro-electricity supply the whole nation, resulted in low production of electricity thereby increasing the load-shedding rate. This, in turn, affected production in industries and even power in residential areas. Climate change effects come through droughts, floods, storms, and veld fires and erratic water supply that affect human health. It has also resulted in cyclones that have affected Southern Zimbabwe, starting in 2000 when the country was hit by cyclone Eline. In 2019, Idai in 2019 destroyed infrastructure, displaced people, killed others, while several others cannot be accounted for.

Pandemics that have hit Zimbabwe, such as HIV AIDS, COVID-19, and others, resulted in social impact in many ways. Chitando (2002) asserts that, like other Southern African countries, Zimbabwe has been devastated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic that killed many productive people. The economically active age group was decimated through illness and death. The number of widows and orphans continues to rise and suffer because they have lost their breadwinners in the family. COVID 19 that hit the country in 2020 disrupted livelihoods and economic activities, especially in the informal sector, exacerbating food shortage because people could not access workplaces. Many people lost their resources as they sought medical treatment after discovering that they were infected with the pandemic. Families lost their beloved ones some who were economically active in those families, and some for whom they had greater hope in their future. People were barred from attending funerals of their departed relatives. This meant that they could not perform their rituals, which in most cases, serve as a therapy, and help to achieve closure.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the history of the causes of socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. It has been demonstrated that Southern Zimbabwe experienced the same problems that affected the entire Zimbabwean nation. The chapter discusses how political, economic, social, spiritual and natural factors have caused the social and economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. After exposing these political, spiritual, natural and socio-economic causes and their effects in Southern Zimbabwe, the next chapter discusses the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe.

## Chapter Five

### Church Ministry in Southern Zimbabwe

#### 5.1 Introduction

The ministry of the church implies proclaiming the Gospel to the lost by sharing the love and the power of Christ to transform and restore both in their material and spiritual life. The ministry of the church involves activities like evangelism, discipleship, *diakonia* (social responsibility) and *diakosune* (justice). In this chapter, the researcher evaluates the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe, according to the Luke-Acts mission paradigm.

#### 5.2 Universality of Luke-Acts

Luke's concern about the Christian mission to the Gentiles and Jews is important in the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe. When the Gospel is properly interpreted and presented, it becomes the message of salvation to all people and across the whole range of economic, social, spiritual, political and religious problems. Luke's emphasis on the mission to both Jews and Gentiles or witness to all nations, includes Zimbabwe, because it is also a gentile nation. This can be justified from the word Gentile that Luke used in some texts, such as Acts 15:3-23. This use is in sync with the general definition of a gentile as a non-Jew (Sankamo, 2012). A non-Jew is described as a gentile even if he or she is a resident of Israel. Since the term Gentile is used to address those who are not Jews, it means the Gentile community, like Zimbabwe, is included and also that those gentile communities that were mentioned might represent the rest of the gentile communities. Therefore, by speaking of an all-dimensional salvation even to gentiles, Luke-Acts is relevant in providing a message of salvation to Southern Zimbabwe, as a gentile community.

On the other hand, the mission to the Gentiles is to begin in the post-Jesus era as indicated in Acts 1:8. Southern Zimbabwe is included as part of the world beyond Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria referred to in this verse. Although some argue that Luke was addressing a Jewish community, Esler (1996) argues that he was also writing to a predominantly gentile audience due to the gentile character of his audience, including the mentioning of a number of Jewish communities. Inclusion of the gentile audience reveals Luke's desire to relate salvation offered by Jesus in the gospel to non-Jews. The universality tendency in Luke-Acts has shaped the traditions to present the original Christian mission in the diaspora as involving the conversion of Gentiles and Jews and the

establishment of the table fellowship between them. The ends of the earth refer to a universal mission where Luke connects the story of salvation to the entire world. This phrase does not describe a particular region but expresses the idea of universality where no region, group or nation is to be excluded. This, therefore, means that Southern Zimbabwe is included as a partaker in the salvation and ministry of the Gospel. It means that even though the witness of Jesus made it all the way from Jerusalem to Rome, it is not the end of the story as the gospel has not travelled enough during that period. The ending of Acts is open-ended as Luke calls his audience to pursue God's plan of salvation of all people. This, therefore, leads us to the church's ministry of the Gospel of salvation in Southern Zimbabwe through evangelism and social action.

### **5.3 Evangelism**

The Commission in Acts 1:8; John 20:21; Luke 24:47-49; Matthew 28:19-20; and Mark 16:15-16 is regarded as a climactic command. Every Christian who trusts in Christ is given this responsibility, not just the original disciples or the church hierarchy (Emedi, 2010:31). The movement that is both ideological and geographical is called by Christ to spread the good news to parts of the world beyond Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.

Since the beginning of the church, evangelism has been a primary concern. It is thought to be the immediate effect of obedience to the Great Commission (Ogunewu, 2014:65). According to Luke 24:46-47 and John 20:21, evangelism also refers to sharing the gospel with people who have not yet experienced the forgiveness of their sins (Wilkins, 1992). Christ desires that his church expand continuously, quantitatively and qualitatively from time to time through the work of his disciples. Therefore, the greatest tool he has given is evangelisation. Evangelism is the church's primary and permanent task and without it, the church has no right to exist. Evangelism is, therefore, the work and heritage of the church. Acts shows the zeal of the apostles and the early church to spread the Gospel. The church in Southern Zimbabwe is performing its duty of evangelism in the region.

The church in Zimbabwe, through its denominations, ecumenism and individuals, has become relevant in society by preaching the Word of God where humankind is liberated from sin and other forms of evil. The church in Zimbabwe has even reached out to remote areas with the Word of God, caring for the less privileged, providing basic social services to the nation, especially during periods of crisis (Baloyi, 2022:62). The church members' lifestyle is also key in soul winning as a

high standard of Christian life should be upheld and avoid worldliness. Christians are winning unbelievers by revealing attractive and refreshing differences (Sibanda, 2015:18). However, some church members and even leaders fail to exhibit the lifestyle of a transformed believer as they engage in several sinful acts, such as adultery and corruption. This sinful lifestyle brings the church's name into disrepute and affects spiritual growth. One of the reasons why the church is failing to challenge evils that the political leadership perpetrates on citizens is that the church, through its members, is sometimes found in a compromising position.

On the other hand, Baloyi (2022) argues that the church, through its leaders and ecumenical bodies, is tempted to accept gifts from the ruling regime. In the end, the church ends up protecting the interests of the ruling regimes. Disunity in the church also have a negative impact on church growth as the church is failing to reflect the teachings and character of Christ. On the other hand, the church in Southern Zimbabwe proved to be growing through evangelism due to the rise of new denominations, especially under the Pentecostals and AICs, as well as the establishing new congregations and increasing in the number of its membership. Sibanda (2015:18) asserts that, unlike the old congregations, the new ones can reach people and lead them to a commitment to Jesus Christ as members are still zealous to do God's work. Since it is still small, everyone is actively involved in most church activities.

Evangelism is connected with the commissioning and empowerment of the church. Luke records that Jesus gave his twelve disciples power over illnesses and demons (Nwaomah, 2012). This combination shows that the ministry of Jesus is in words and deeds as proclaiming the kingdom is connected to healing. Proclamation of the coming of the kingdom is to challenge corrupt politicians and unfair treatment of humans. Leifeld (1984) argues that it was important for the disciples of Jesus to have authority gained by their position in Christ and power as inherent ability. The apostles' miraculous powers demonstrated as God's messengers of the Gospel validated the Gospel among other means.

Evangelism also aims to see the local Church grow. It is the major reproductive mechanism for the church as new members are added. In other words, evangelism is intended for the multiplication of the church, as men are won to Christ through proclaiming the gospel, they become church members. Therefore, the local church can grow through evangelism. Growth, in this regard, means both spiritually and numerically. Numerical growth entails the number of

believers, while spiritual growth refers believers' maturity levels. The two are not discreet entities, but complement each other. Through evangelism by the church in Southern Zimbabwe more souls are saved, and the church is growing both numerically and spiritually.

Ogunewu (2014:84) argues that the ministry of the Gospel must be associated with demonstrating dependence on God through miracles and divine healing and not to emphasise in word only. Jesus was concerned with holistic salvation. It was always within the context of people in need who come to him and ask for any help from him that he provided and not only healing sicknesses. It is a good means to turn people's attention to God, and give them a living faith that is relevant to their life issues (Ogunewu, 2014). The church in Zimbabwe should not be content with just filling church buildings with people, while ignoring key biblical emphases to do with demonstration of power, moral and ethical aspects (Hameno, 2014). Charismatic movements are mainly those that give much concern on the divine healing and miracles.

As far as Zimbabwe is concerned, these movements multiplied during the period of economic upheavals in the country where people needed supernatural interventions in areas, such as health care, since most of them could not meet their medical bills. On the other hand, mainline churches in Zimbabwe mainly emphasise modern health care, and stressing less on supernatural intervention in therapy. In this sense, the mainline churches must care for people, not only send them to the hospital or doctor, but also pray with and for them for their healing as a demonstration of dependence on God and his free will.

The Zimbabwean economic crisis that rocked the country from the 1990s accounts for the phenomenal spread of Pentecostalism (Marongwe & Maposa, 2015:8). These existential challenges also increase spiritual insecurity in areas like poverty, violence, political oppression and HIV AIDS, and this increased insecurity that led to an increase in belief in occult practices and witchcraft (Marongwe & Maposa, 2015). As a result, leadership in pentecostalism tried to popularise prosperity gospel, inciteful counselling and moral guidance in everyday life (Marongwe & Maposa, 2015). This, therefore, attracted many followers resulting in church growth in the nation.

Although this brought positive results through church growth, it also negatively impacted the church as some Pentecostals were focussing less on preaching theology, but put more attention to challenges that society faced. It caused the Gospel of prosperity to be abused through what

Marongwe and Maposa (2015:14) call ‘gosprenurship’. Congregants were taught to ask for new cars, bigger houses, nice clothes and many others with boldness, as wealth is viewed as a sign of God’s favour. It promotes members’ health, wealth and happiness and leaders of such churches exhibit opulence. Some Charismatics were, therefore, driven by money and fame to get into ministry as they saw others having made lots of money and fame. Focus was given to the prophets more than on social action towards the welfare of the general followers and the society in suffering.

### **5.3.1 Approaches to Evangelism**

There are several approaches to evangelism. These include; conventional church services, door-to-door witnessing, open-air preaching, the Christian village, use of medical care and allied institutions, the school and institutions (Younghoon & Nonsuk, 2018:129). Younghoon and Nonsuk (2018) record that Hill (1973) mentions some main forms of evangelism which include, Personal Evangelism, Local Church Evangelism, Rural Evangelism, Urban Evangelism, Industrial Evangelism, Visitation Evangelism, Hospital Evangelism, Prison Evangelism, Film Evangelism, Pastoral Evangelism, Tract/Literature Evangelism, Follow-up Evangelism, Radio Evangelism, Television Evangelism, and Cinematographic Evangelism, Mass Evangelism, Electronic Media Evangelism and others.

The church in Southern Zimbabwe utilises many of these evangelism methods in its ministry. Sibanda (2015:35) argues that public evangelism in open spaces, halls and churches, is the most common one. This is also done through public evangelistic meetings. Evangelistic outreaches are still ongoing activities in Southern Zimbabwe through different methods like house to house outreaches and crusades (Mwenje, 2016:5). The Word of God is also preached on usual Sunday, Saturday or mid-week services to equip church members. Evangelism is also pursued through presentation of Christ in the family and small gatherings in private houses.

Care ministry is also used as a method of evangelism through hospital, prison, orphanages, school and other institutions’ visits caring for the marginalised, disadvantaged, and attending and preaching at funerals. Other denominations, such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses do evangelism by distributing Bibles, pamphlets and gifts. The church, through its different denominations, is partnering with other organisations like World Vision to bring donations, free medical attention and education to people. This has helped to win the people’s hearts to come to God and join the church. The Word of God has also been shared in the church among different groups, such as

men's ministry that target men in the church, children and youth's ministry, ladies' ministry and church conferences and revivals (Mwenje, 2016:5).

In addition, the school and the hospital ministry is one of the main techniques the church uses to evangelise. Mainline churches have been using this technique since the colonial era. Schools were used to lure Africans into the Christian faith and way of life. To missionaries, there was no difference between the school and the church as the same building was used for both purposes. The curricula were also designed to make learners receive doses of denominational dogma (Missionalia, 2011). Christian missions, in their evangelism, gained networks of schools in which children of all ages receive academic education alongside religious instruction leading to baptism and church membership. Even after independence, the church continued to establish more schools that also served the same purpose as missionary schools during the colonial period, as they are still characterised by academic programs and church services for the students. Therefore, this means that the church-run schools' pastoral programme deliberately targets children.

Electronic media evangelism is now a prominent method for evangelism as churches in Southern Zimbabwe are utilising platforms, such as television, radio, Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media platforms, books, both printed and soft copies, and many others. The pressure to use electronic methods increased, especially during the COVID-19 era when authorities imposed pandemic lockdown regulations forbidding public gatherings. This is when the bulk of churches resorted to social media platforms to continue sharing the Word of God from their different respective places. All these platforms gave the church access to the unsaved to hear the gospel and, at the same time, continued to sustain the spiritual life of Christian believers through these platforms.

### **5.3.2 Discipleship**

Evangelism should not be viewed as a process intending to convert non-Christians into the Christian fold only, but rather, should be considered as a continuous process whereby after conversion, Christians are continually nurtured into spiritual adulthood and grounded in the faith (Ogunewu, 2014). The two dimensions to evangelism are proclamation and evangelism outside the church, to outside unbelievers, reaching the unreached and the unchurched and teaching the converted and nurture them into mature Christians so that they can minister to others also. One of the key ministries the church in Southern Zimbabwe is doing is discipleship. The church in



Southern Zimbabwe consistently holds its services throughout its denominations to sharing of the Word of God among believers. This means that the goal of the church is not simply to bring people to the saving faith in Christ, but also to teach them in order to present them perfect in their relationship with Christ (Emedi 2010:35).

Paul, the apostle, realised the importance of discipleship since he was taught by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), Ananias (Acts 9:17) and heard from Peter about Jesus' own emphasis on discipleship. Paul also wanted to teach people like Timothy that they would be able to carry on with the ministry of the Gospel and be able to teach others also (Acts 20:18) (Plumber, 2001). His desire was not merely to preach, but to make disciples. Paul sought the strength of his disciples and not their salvation only (Acts 14:22, 15:32-41, 16:5 & 18:23). Discipleship helps to grow active congregations that manifest the church's influence in society. This is because a local congregation is the first manifestation of the church. Discipleship is about empowering the laity that is dealing with spiritual immaturity, inability to witness faithfully as well as making them able to make ethically informed moral decisions (Hendricks, 2004). If members of the church reach a level of discipleship, the church experiences growth from their commitment to its programs that are inclusive of evangelism (Sibanda, 2015). In order to ensure the accomplishment of their disciple-making process, vibrant and growing congregations organise their key programs. Its key activities will be aimed at strengthening each individual's faith. The success of the program results in members becoming true disciples who purposefully organise their lifestyles in a way that enables them to set aside specific time and resources for God's work.

Although the church in Zimbabwe has grown spiritually and numerically, the growth rate in some denominations is now not as it was during their early years in the country. Sibanda (2015:10) argues that the reason is that some Christians or churches are now concentrating on satisfying their needs while ignoring their surrounding non-believing communities. Their programmes no longer have an evangelism component. Priorities have changed and programmes no longer target non-believers. The reason may also be that some Christians do not understand the church's purpose. Lack of gospel outreach is a possible cause for the low membership increase. This low church growth is also because the church has become too inward-oriented, resulting in most of its resources being used in serving its members and for institutional survival. The church is now focusing more on nurture and not mission. Whilst discipleship is necessary for the church to bring

spiritual maturity, the church should not forget that Jesus' Great Commission demands it to always engage in witnessing to the unsaved to win their souls. Christ constantly looked for others to minister to and spent time equipping them for further and effective ministry. Those members whom the church equips should also go on evangelism and win more souls.

#### **5.4 Leadership in Church Mission**

Through its leadership in the form of individuals and ecumenical boards involved in mission, the church in Zimbabwe has addressed challenges affecting the nation. The church has been involved in the life of the state since the colonial time in 1890. The ministry of the church can be described through church-state relations, especially the church's advocacy role. The church's prophetic role to the state has also been critical, especially during the time of crisis when the state is associated with a lot of injustices to its people. In this section, the church's prophetic ministry, according to Luke-Acts, is found in the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000 to the present. The church has mainly related to the state through ecumenical bodies like the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) representing the Catholic church, Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) representing the Protestant churches, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) representing the evangelical and Pentecostal churches and the Union for the Development of African Churches in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACIZA) (Manyonganise, 2015:167).

However, apart from these ecumenical bodies, some churches and church leaders, have forged personal relations with the state. Talent Chiwenga, the founder of Jesus Revelation International Ministries, is one of the prominent church leaders who frequently confronted the government against its injustices. However, the church's response in individual capacities, resulted in different responses as some churches or their leaders decided to support the ruling government or its establishment. Such divisions weaken the voice and the church's position on its ministry towards injustice by the government.

Since the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe is holistic and not only towards spiritual welfare, Chitando (2011) posits that the church responded differently to the political crisis in Zimbabwe on issues, such as political violence, since 2000. Some church leaders stood to condemn state brutality, while some were in support of it. Those who were in support of the state and ZANU PF party include Nehemiah Mutendi of Zion Christian Church, Andrew Wutawunashe of Family

of God Church who supported President Robert Mugabe, among others. Some continued to support President Emerson Mnangagwa after he took over the presidency from Robert Mugabe (Manyonganise, 2015). Church leaders and denominations must not be involved in party politics. They must be active in politics challenging political leadership when it is against God's principles. The church's involvement in partisan politics compromises its voice. Zimbabwe has been polarised with two opposing camps: the one supporting the ZANU PF ruling regime and the other that is critical of the current government's rule (Sibanda, 2011). Since one of the key themes in Luke-Acts is social justice and because Jesus also confronted Roman and Jewish leaders against their acts of injustice, the church in Southern Zimbabwe must use this as the foundation to fight against injustice, thereby building and maintaining peace in society. The Church needs to be a proponent of justice in the society, a voice of the voiceless, poor, discriminated, marginalized and a political mediator of human society as she is the conscience of society (Maforo 2020:17).

In addition, the Church needs to be seen as a structure that reshapes both society and individual lives. It is necessary for the ministry of the gospel to mould people's lives and purposes. The Church's praxis theology addresses social, political, and economic challenges. In this instance, theology contributes through the advice and direction of its participants in political, governmental, and policy matters. It is important to realise that the Church must provide moral, ethical, and spiritual leadership for social, political and economic structures (Maforo, 2020). The Church must see itself as a champion of the oppressed people by bringing ethical and rights consciousness to politics. This strategy supports Jesus' work, who relentlessly promoted peace and justice. The Church should actively engage in political discourse from a theological perspective. Because God cares for human justice, the Church cannot remain silent regarding political, social, and economic injustice. If the Church remains silent, it loses its prophetic role within the political corridors of power resulting in it preserving rather than challenging the status quo.

However, the Government of Zimbabwe has, in most cases where the church commented negatively on politics, reminded the church to stick to its primary mandate of evangelising and morality (Manyonganise, 2015:169). The church in Zimbabwe should, therefore, be always alert and maintain its position without any compromise even amid adversities and also not to prioritise personal interests. Manyonganise (2015) asserts that before the year 2000, the church in Zimbabwe, except the CCJP, seemed to have been subscribing to the idea of prayer, morality and

charity alone in its ministry. During the Gukurahundi era in the 1980s, the Church, though slow to respond, became a critical player through the work of the CCJP. After 2000, church leaders rose to bring change in a politically-volatile setting (Chitando, 2011). The church, therefore, spoke through its various ecumenical bodies against the government atrocities and find ways to deal with political violence in Zimbabwean society.

As a means of ensuring peace and unity inside the church and to make the church speak with a single voice, the church began its ministry towards justice, peace, and reconciliation throughout the nation in 2000 through ecumenical groups (Manyonganise, 2015:169). Meetings and pastoral letters to the Zimbabwean government and people made up the majority of their work in this area. Through its leaders, the church in Zimbabwe also attempted to ingrain Christian values into the national body of politics, where citizens were urged to take charge of the welfare of the country. A clear example is Wutawunashe, who created a campaign called “Faith for the Nation”. However, due to his intimate relationship with the ruling regime, people generally ignored his campaign.

To build peace among warring political parties in Zimbabwe, the church from the year 2007 attempted to bring these parties to a negotiation table to salvage the situation (Manyonganise, 2015). For example, the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) which is the body of three ecumenical bodies which are ZCBC, led by Bishop Patrick Mutume, ZCC, headed by Reverend Sebastian Bakare, and the Reverend Trevor Manhanga led EFZ, encouraged dialogue between MDC and ZANU PF. These church leaders pleaded to President Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of MDC party, to prioritise the welfare of ordinary citizens and to unite their political actors instead of dividing them (Chitando, 2011). Manyonganise (2015) argues that these church leaders facilitated dialogue that gave birth to the coalition government that subsisted during the period 2009-2013. Furthermore, the HOCD engaged political actors over the deteriorating economic and political situation in the country. It has done this by issuing pastoral letters highlighting different issues contributing to the national crises and also exposing falsehoods that the official media sometimes peddled.

#### **5.4.1 Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Through Ecumenical Bodies’ Pastoral Letters**

The church in Zimbabwe, through its ecumenical bodies, has used pastoral letters to preach the message of justice and welfare of the people. These pastoral letters confirmed the church’s mission of salvation (Chitando, 2011:45). However, the church faced persecution from the state for writing

these letters. Despite all the adversities and threats from government officials, the church continued with its ministry through these pastoral letters. However, the threats did not stop the church as it continued with its mission through these ecumenical bodies.

After Operation Murambatsvina in 2005, ZCBC, ZCC, and EFZ, all issued statements against the indiscriminate destruction of property and insincerity to the urban poor. However, the church generally supported land redistribution. The church also engaged the United Nations (UN) Special Envoy on Habitats and Settlements, presenting evidence of how the operation adversely affected households (Manyonganise, 2015). This also shows that the church ministered the message of justice both in word and in deed as it provided its infrastructure to help people with demolished houses with shelter and other facilities. This study presents some of the main pastoral letters produced and used by ecumenical bodies in their ministry in Zimbabwe.

#### **5.4.2 A Call to Conscience, Zimbabwe Silver Jubilee 1980-2005**

One of the pastoral letters published in 2005 is entitled “A Call to Conscience, Zimbabwe Silver Jubilee 1980-2005” (Manyonganise, 2015:171). Its meaning was derived from Biblical times, where jubilee was a time of freedom for those who were captives, poor and downtrodden. This letter reflects on how the regime persecuted citizens, especially opposition political actors, but were were afraid to speak their mind. Therefore, the church became the voice of the people. Church leaders said that people in Zimbabwe were living like prisoners. However, the description of Zimbabwe as a prison was against the nationalist ideology that the regime popularised during the time. They considered problems of the country to have been caused by the death of conscience and pointed out the challenges of the day as: deterioration of schools, hospitals and homes, rapid decline in the value of money, hunger and lack of planning for the future, among other things (Manyonganise, 2015:172). They also condemned the culture of violence during the land reform programme, 2002 presidential elections, 2005 parliamentary elections and the Operation Murambatsvina. Zimbabwe’s post-independence violence indicates that independence did not produce fundamental freedom that Zimbabweans were yearning for, as some people, especially those with political power, were infringing the freedom of others. Church leaders also opposed the selfishness of political leaders in Zimbabwe who were blaming everybody except themselves.

### **5.4.3 National Vision Discussion Document, “The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards A National Vision for Zimbabwe”**

Another notable work that the ecumenical bodies produced and published was the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD), “The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe” in 2006 (Maforo, 2020:54). The document underscored the significance of a common national vision for Zimbabwe. It indicated that Zimbabwe lack such a vision. It also reinforced the argument that the church is obliged to actively participate in politics, despite the systematic persecution it always got from politicians to leave politics to politicians. It also presented successes and shortcomings of the government since independence. It challenged the church and citizens to collaborate on framing a common national vision and also provoked the mind towards the humanisation of women and gender issues (Manyonganise, 2015:174).

### **5.4.4 Concern Over the Deteriorating Situation in Zimbabwe: Message from HOCD in Zimbabwe**

Furthermore, after the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008 harmonised elections, HOCD published another pastoral letter entitled “Concern Over the Deteriorating Situation in Zimbabwe: Message from the Heads of Christian Denominations in Zimbabwe”. This came when political violence was at its highest. ZANU PF thugs unleashed a reign of terror that included rape, murder and physical assault on real or imagined opposition supporters or sympathisers. (Manyonganise, 2015:175). The church called the government to stop the violence, and encouraged political tolerance among citizens.

In addition, in 2009, HOCD issued a press statement underscoring the church’s role in politics is not always to criticise the state, but also to support and encourage it when it is doing right. HOCD also commended political players for displaying a highest level of tolerance by forming a coalition government, after disputed elections. It also encouraged political players to come up with a people-driven constitution. (Manyonganise, 2015). Furthermore, the ZCC congratulated President Emerson Mnangagwa for winning the 2018 elections (Maforo, 2020). The church did not condemn the military-assisted transition of November 2017 that deposed Mugabe. Instead, Father Fidelis Mukonori, a Catholic priest, mediated between Mugabe and the securocrats that was leading the coup to ensure a bloodless political transition (Manyonganise, 2022).

#### **5.4.5 Blessed are the Peacemakers for they Shall be called the Children of God**

During the period that pre-dated the referendum and national elections in 2013, HOCD published another pastoral letter entitled “Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called the Children of God” from Matthew 5:1. The letter was addressed to all Christians and seemed to have a meaning to the majority of the citizens since Christianity is the dominant religion in Zimbabwe (Manyonganise, 2015:176). The nation was reminded that violence characterised the political terrain in Zimbabwe.

#### **5.4.6 God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed**

To complement the work of the HOCD’s pastoral letters, individual ecumenical bodies also responded to the crises in their own capacities. The ZCBC published their pastoral letter titled "God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed" in 2007. In this letter, the bishops accused the government of the various challenges the nation was facing. In this pastoral letter, ZCBC identified corruption and poor leadership as two of the most significant flaws in the political system at the time. They demonstrated that political leaders no longer possessed the moral stature necessary to govern the country (Chitando, 2013). On August 4, 2020, EFZ published a pastoral letter titled "Zimbabwe at the Crossroads Between Danger and Opportunity," a message about the state of the nation today. It indicated that the multi-layered crisis Zimbabwe faces (Manyonganise, 2022:5). Additionally, it cited arrests that had happened in the recent past, restrictions on protests, and the stay-away of July 31, 2020, which they claim are an expression of growing annoyance and frustration brought on by the circumstances that the majority of people find themselves in. According to the church leaders, arbitrary detentions, kidnappings, torture, and repressing rage only exacerbate the situation, and divisive and exclusive politics endanger the already precarious cohesion of our country.

#### **5.4.7 The March is not Ended**

Another pastoral letter by the ZCBC that shook Zimbabwe’s political establishment was published on 14 August 2020 entitled “The March is not Ended”. After Senator Monica Mutsvangwa, a government minister, on 15 August 2020, gave a government response to the letter, ZCBC’s pastoral letter received many solidarity statements through letters from ZCC entitled “Echoing the March is not Ended” on 16 August 2020 (ZCC 2020), EFZ on 17 August 2020 (EFZ 2020) and the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA). Monica Mutsvangwa’s was discussed in the passages

above. described the bishops as evil and narrow-minded and accused the bishops of being reckless regime change agents whose objective was to incite the public to rise against the government. Other solidarity messages came from individual denominations such as the Anglican Council of Zimbabwe that released its statement on 24 August 2020 affirming the Church' prophetic role in society.

People who had endured hardship under Mugabe expected that the regime would institute democratic governance principles in the nation by cultivating political tolerance in the nation. Contrary to their expectations, the administration used the military in response to protests over the results of the elections on July 31, 2018, murdering six citizens. Following the protests against the high expense of living, more civilians were slain in January 2019 (Manyonganise, 2022:2). People began to wonder if the new political leadership would offer anything fresh as a result of this. As a result, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions announced that protests would be held on July 31, 2020. These protests were scheduled to coincide with a general strike in retaliation for the public's rapidly growing cost of living. The government responded by detaining and imprisoning well-known supporters prior to the demonstrations. Several opposition political activists, including leaders of the labor movement, went into hiding due to this onslaught. The protests were planned to take place in response to allegations of corruption surrounding how tenders to supply personal protective equipment (PPE) were awarded and general current regime's bad governance tendencies. The administration turned to violence rather than paying attention people's concerns. The pastoral letter from the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference was written and published in this setting. The pastoral letter was a call to self-introspection since the nation was still in a multi-layered crisis of the convergence of economic collapse, deepening poverty, food insecurity, corruption and human rights abuses among other crises in urgent need of resolutio (Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, 2020).

For them, the government's attempt to quell the populace's rage was counterproductive because it would only make the situation worse. Additionally, they emphasised how unattended wounds from the past continued to breed angrier generations, such as Gukurahundi. The bishops also criticised the South African government for showing reluctance to engage Zimbabwean churches and civil society following the 31 July 2020 protests, instead of sending a delegation to learn more about the nature of the crisis and to seek advice on potential solutions. The delegation ultimately only



spoke with ZANU PF government representatives, who denied that Zimbabwe was experiencing a crisis. The bishops condemned government's abuse of power and indicated that they want Zimbabwe politics unify the nation.

Wutawunashe criticised the bishops for penning a letter criticising the state. He indicated that bishop's pastoral letter wanted to revive old grudges or wounds. He claims that they were separating themselves from calls by some deviant religious leaders calling for people to protest against the government. In his view, God was answering their prayers by bringing political leaders to negotiate and solve the problem the faced by the nation (The Herald, 19 August 2020). Wutawunashe rejected the notion that the administration is intolerant, dishonest, abusing human rights, and has no regard for the rule of law contained in the pastoral letter from the bishops. Instead, he attributed the population's ongoing suffering to targeted sanctions. Mutendi, on the other hand, criticised the bishops for criticising the administration, instead of promoting a constructive and healthy dialogue.

What is clear however, is that the church in Zimbabwe continues to have a divided voice when it comes to issues concerning the government. This continues to be the weakness of the church as it seeks relevance within the Zimbabwean political space. Zimbabwe also witnessed the emergence of "Pastors for ED Movement" in 2022 where the founder of the movement, Evangelist Idirashe Dongo, mobilised pastors and church leaders across the nation to support and prayers for president Emerson Mnangagwa to win the 2023 general elections. This is also done on the premise that the platform will assist the pastors to access national resources, such as mines and land.

Apart from traditional ecumenical bodies in the situation of political violence in Zimbabwe, other religious groups and individuals also emerged attempting to deal with the problem. These informal groups include the ZCA in Harare, Grace to Heal in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe Pastor's Conference and individual churches and leaders (Manyonganise, 2015:178). All that the church in Zimbabwe has done, through ecumenical bodies and individual church leaders, describe the ministry of the church in (Southern) Zimbabwe as a community that fight against injustice and oppression. Therefore, it promotes peace and transformation in society.

## **5.5 Church Ministry towards Socio-economic Transformation**

The socio-economic commitment of the church in Southern Zimbabwe is demonstrated through offering a sustainable option for people's economic development. In Zimbabwe, the distribution of resources, accessibility of social services, eradication of man-made poverty, and respect of humanity are critical concerns. The church, therefore, should ensure a social compact whereby everyone in the society participates in a spirit of responsibility, accountability, solidarity and collaboration so that all citizens realise growth in their human dignity (Dowling, 2016). The ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe has been done in different ways including the preaching of the message that brings economic empowerment and hope, as well as the provision of the needed material resources to the community through individuals, denominations and Faith-based Non-Governmental Organisations.

### **5.5.1 Economic Empowerment Gospel**

The church should have preachers towards the gospel of economic empowerment. This is because, the gospel as the good news for the poor, is one of the key themes in the book of Luke while in Acts, the good news for the poor is done through deeds and spoken words (Bosch, 1991). Luke-Acts has a strong social and economic tone. The impact of this message influences the development of an entrepreneurial mind set (Shumba, 2015:154). Mangena and Mhizha (2014:138) observe that prosperity preachers emphasise physical and spiritual success on health and well-being, business development, employment opportunities, wealth creation and general prosperity. The church, in its message, should promote working for self-sustainment and taking care of the marginalised. The example of Paul, Aquila and Priscilla pursuing their tent-making career can inspire people in Southern Zimbabwe towards working and entrepreneurship as well as self-funding of the gospel. Based on Paul's mission strategy, Christian believers utilised their professional or business skills to establish a business as a means of survival and witness to locals (Lee, 2019). However, it is unfortunate in Zimbabwe that wealth-seeking congregates have been prayed for and manipulated by some unscrupulous and corrupt church leaders who take advantage of their vulnerability to enrich themselves by their emphasis on offerings as a key to unlocking the promised wealth. This kind of deception has been the main reason why the prosperity gospel has received so much attention and criticism.

Many churches in Southern Zimbabwe, such as Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, ZAOGA FIF, UFIC and others, promote working through holding of business forums, a ministry dedicated to empowering believers to start, build and consolidate businesses using Biblical principles. The objectives of the Business Forums are to inspire and motivate believers to use their God-given talents in developing successful businesses, assist believers who want to get into business, provide training on various business aspects and help believers who are struggling in business. This bears a testimony that churches address not only the spiritual needs of individuals and communities but also the business life. The quest by these and other churches to reduce poverty through firm creation should be supported and appreciated. The ministry of economic prosperity should be balanced and not emphasise the spiritual aspect, such as giving and prayer while neglecting other economic principles.

The church's involvement in the economic sector has to be considered as a call for the church to holistic ministry. This should be done to bring humanisation of communities in the economic sector. In addition, if the church is involved in the economic sector, it will perhaps help in making the economy a legitimate economic programme that would warrant the support of all parties, such as the government, the civil authority and the private sector (Chatikobo, 2002:45). The church should be involved in issues that affect people, be they political, social or economic. Through its message and faith, the church motivates humanity to explore possibilities that might be difficult. It gives hope and assurance in the face of failure. This shows that the church has the power to enter into any social aspect of humanity where its assistance is needed and called for. It is often argued that Christianity is the most materialistic of all religions (Chatikobo, 2002). This is presented in the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:3, where it says, "give us day by day our daily bread". The prayer gives focus on the material well-being of people. Humanity is sustained by food and the preaching of the gospel as presented by Jesus in Luke 4:4 that "man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God". As a result, without assisting people to prosper physically, such gospel message is not regarded as complete. This means that, if need be, the church should also assist in the organisation of economic opportunities and be involved in the economy as part of the proclamation of the gospel (Chatikobo, 2002:53).

### **5.5.2 Material Contribution of the Church to the Society**

Renunciation of possessions and giving or charity is one of the key themes in Luke-Acts. Southern Zimbabwe community is affected by poverty due to different factors discussed in this study. This, therefore, means that the Luke-Acts mission paradigm of sharing possessions and charity should be taken seriously by the church in Zimbabwe. It can do this through sharing individual or church's resources with the less-privileged, such as the poor, sick, orphans, widows, the disabled and others. The church in Zimbabwe has been responsible for this in a number of ways such as the promotion of education through building of schools and colleges, the development of health facilities such as clinics and hospitals and giving emergency relief to people affected by droughts, cyclones, floods and pandemics. The gospel is also preached through social development in the form of developing communities. Even though the church gave to poor communities through subsidies, it must also be concerned with development (Chatikobo, 2002:54).

The church is one of the most strategically-positioned institutions that has access to the most deprived grassroots communities. This is because it has stations in the remotest areas, where the government sometimes fail to do development projects like building schools or clinics. It also has members of the political, economic and civil leadership to use as manpower towards development. This demonstrates that the church can work with diversified community groups from both the poor and the affluent classes to uplift the lives of poor communities (Chatikobo, 2002).

This study has used the Roman Catholic Church as one of the oldest churches in Zimbabwe to analyse the ministry of the church towards socio-economic development through the building of schools, helping the poor, provision of health facilities, among others. Roman Catholic Church has various establishments coming out of its church with different mandates and these include Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Education Commission, ZCBC Health Commission, Caritas Zimbabwe and Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) (Mabwe, Diminga & Siyawamwaya, 2018:146). The vision of the ZCBC Health Commission is to provide affordable, quality and accessible Health Care to all, especially the vulnerable and uphold their dignity. It provides pastoral care that meets the person's spiritual, physical, social and emotional needs and coordinating and collaborating with other health service providers. The Commission also mobilises resources and assesses the church's response and impact on society. The Commission has forty-two hospitals and nine clinics in Zimbabwe (Mabwe, Diminga & Siyawamwaya, 2018).

CAFOD is a Catholic-owned organisation supporting programmes in Zimbabwe for more than 30 years now. Its main focus is on providing assistance to groups of people living with HIV and AIDS and those affected by the pandemic. It does this by sourcing resources to boost income, nutrition tips and healthy behaviour advice for the people. CAFOD also trains the victims to acquire skills in farming, and provides seeds and tools to vulnerable families to reduce their dependency on food handouts (CAFOD, 2016). Caritas Zimbabwe is a member of Caritas International (CI), a worldwide federation of the Catholic Church relief and development organisations. It was established in 1972 as a development initiative and a response to the emergency situation in the country at the time of the liberation war (CARITAS, 2016). Its purpose is to do community developmental and humanitarian work involving deprived children, their families and communities to improve their economic and social situation. Some of the programs of Caritas include the Emergency Relief Program, its response to the needs of victims of various calamities regardless of creed, race, gender, ethnicity, or other social grouping (Mabwe, Diminga & Siyawanwaya, 2018:147). These also include refugees, internally displaced people, orphans and vulnerable children.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is an organisation administered by a Board of Bishops and was founded in 1943 by the Catholic Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and disadvantaged. In Zimbabwe, CRS was established in 1989 and involves men and women committed to the Catholic Church's mission of helping those in need. The CRS activities target the alleviation of human suffering, the development of people and the fostering of charity and justice in the world. It assists persons based on need, not creed, race, or nationality, although it draws its basic financial, material and moral support from the Catholic community in the United States. It also supports individuals of many faiths and government and community organisations, foundations, corporations and student groups

The Catholic Education Commission has worked in establishing of schools in Zimbabwe and assisted by paying school fees for those vulnerable. Education institutions established in main places in Southern Zimbabwe are as follows: Bulawayo: 10 secondary schools, 13 primary schools, 10 pre-schools and 3 tertiary institutions, Gweru: 10 secondary schools, 13 primary schools and many vocational training institutions and pre-schools, Masvingo: 11 secondary schools, 12 primary schools, 1 tertiary institution, several pre-schools and in Mutare: 22 secondary schools,

20 primary schools and several vocational training centres and pre-schools (Mabwe, Diminga & Siyawamwaya, 2018). This shows that the church, in its mission, has focussed on education, livelihood and economy to eradicate poverty and empower its community members. Education helps to empower the community with knowledge and skills to adapt to different environments. The church cannot eradicate poverty among its community members by just preaching in words. On the other hand, the church should ensure that the services it provides through its education and health institutions are affordable and sometimes even available for free as provided by the message of charity and alms giving in Luke-Acts. Some of the church-established institutions are even more expensive than government institutions and beyond the reach of many, especially the vulnerable group.

It is also important to note that churches in Southern Zimbabwe, apart from the Roman Catholic, organise fundraising projects where the funds raised are used to pay for the orphans' school fees and also distribute food and clothes to vulnerable community members, especially during drought and cyclone periods like the cyclone Idai that affected Manicaland and parts of Masvingo Provinces where life and property were destroyed. Many churches, including Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, collected clothes and food from their members and gave them to the victims of Cyclone Idai. Church members and well-wishers usually come together occasionally and donate clothes and household goods to the most vulnerable community members. Members of the community, like the elderly, orphans and disabled, are often the first priority. Church members also pay visits to sick fellow members or other non-church members of the community, the elderly who cannot come to church anymore, and bereaved families.

### **5.5.3 Church Mission Through Faith-based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

In addition to the church ministry in the provision of needed resources to the community through the mobilisation of those resources as individuals or denominations, the church in Zimbabwe is also pursuing this ministry through Faith-based NGOs. Christian NGOs in Africa emerged from a history of missionaries who provided economic development services during the colonial period. Before NGOs, missionaries were at the forefront of offering agricultural assistance, education, and self-help programs for Africans (Bornstein, 2002:5). In many ways, faith-based NGOs in Zimbabwe occupy a similar social space to missionaries of earlier times, sometimes joining with states and at others resisting state policies. After independence, NGOs assisted in state-led

development programs. In the late 1990s, development was less state-led than NGO-driven. NGOs got funds directly from international sources and performed much of the work that a downsized Zimbabwean state could not accomplish.

In the context of NGO activities in Zimbabwe, this study focuses on two main transnational-funded Christian NGOs: World Vision and Christian Care. Faith in the work of World Vision and Christian Care establishes the theological basis of Christian development (Bornstein 2002:5). World Vision is a transnational, evangelical, NGO that operates in 95 countries, including Zimbabwe. It was founded in the late 1940s in the United States. It is funded mainly through child sponsorship, where sponsors send monthly remittances toward the assistance of needy children. It began its work in Zimbabwe in the mid-1970s, assisting orphans from the liberation struggle. Christian Care is the development arm of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. It is also linked to the global ecumenical body, the World Council of Churches, and began its work in Zimbabwe by assisting political detainees during the liberation war period (Bornstein 2002:6). Christian Care and World Vision both work in collaboration with local churches and with the Zimbabwean government. Christian faith is presented differently in each organisational mission (Bornstein, 2002).

Faith-based NGOs call for a holistic mission through meeting, religious, socio-economic, spiritual and material needs. Christian Care and World Vision mainly work with the poorest of the poor who need material and spiritual support. For World Vision and Christian Care, bringing development to the poor is a Christian duty that involves the body and the spirit (Bornstein, 2002:8). Articulated explicitly in the work of World Vision and Christian Care is the concept of holistic development to bridge the gap between the spiritual and material world, and the rich and the poor (Bornstein, 2002). World Vision and Christian Care work to deliver people from poverty. Economic development is primary for both of them, yet, development is of the whole person, the full human, material and spiritual.

World Vision and Christian Care has done a number of rural development projects on the periphery of Zimbabwe. They often begin with emergency relief and then long-term projects transforming to economic development (Bornstein, 2002). These NGOs provide assistance in the form of food in times of drought, especially in Southern Zimbabwe region where drought is prevalent. Some of the World Vision's projects include building schools, houses for school teachers, pit-latrines, water

boreholes and assisting children whose parents cannot pay their school fees (Bornstein, 2002:16). This therefore means that the church in Southern Zimbabwe has done its ministry through Faith-based NGOs and need to continue as it helps acquire resources from nations that are economically strong for the support and development of communities in socio-economic crises.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has assessed the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe. It has described the church and demonstrated that the church must engage in a holistic ministry that covers the spiritual and material issues of human life. On the spiritual aspect, the church should pursue the proclamation of the gospel of Christ Jesus to save the souls of unbelievers and equipping believers through discipleship. The ministry of the church is also to work for justice, peace and reconciliation in the community, and the church in Southern Zimbabwe has done this through individual church leaders and ecumenical church bodies. The church has also contributed to economic welfare through the ministry of economic empowerment gospel and provision of material resources like food, clothes, schools, hospitals, and many others, to the poor and vulnerable in the society through individuals, denominations and Faith-based NGOs. After assessing the ministry that is performed by the church in Southern Zimbabwe, the next chapter is going to particularly analyse the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm for church ministry in dealing with socio-economic suffering in Southern Zimbabwe.



## Chapter Six

### Relevance of the Luke-Acts Mission Paradigm in Addressing Socio-economic Challenges in Southern Zimbabwe

#### 6.1 Introduction

After a discussion on the background of Southern Zimbabwe, the nature of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm and the history of the causes of socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe, it is, therefore, important at this stage of the study, to analyse the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in addressing socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. This chapter is, therefore, analyses the relevance of Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch (1991) in addressing the socio-economic challenges affecting Southern Zimbabwe. This chapter builds on information already discussed in chapters three and chapter four. It analyses the church's actions in addressing political, economic, social, spiritual and natural challenges affecting Southern Zimbabwe.

#### 6.2 The Political Situation

Zimbabwe is a nation that has been struggling with political challenges since the colonial period. This section analyses the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in bringing solutions to these problems.

##### 6.2.1 The Political Audience: Theophilus as a Political Leader

According to Creamer *et al.* (2014:2), the presentation of Theophilus as a Gentile recipient is also critical in analysing the relevance of Luke-Acts on communities like Southern Zimbabwe. Luke's preface and dedication of the Gospel to Theophilus in Luke 1:1-4 as he explains the Gospel of Jesus, is the starting point to reveal the audience he intended to reach. It is presumed that Theophilus was the leading figure in whatever group he belonged to (Esler, 1996:24). Luke's presentation of the Gospel to a political leader, therefore, shows his intention to transform even the political leadership as they have influence in political and socio-economic issues. This, therefore, informs the church that it must communicate the gospel even to political leaders and not only to ordinary citizens in the church. This can be done through pastoral letters like what ecumenical bodies in Zimbabwe, such as the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ, ZCA and others, have done. However, Johnson (1991:21) believes that Theophilus might not be a person but a symbolic

reference for any reader or audience since the name means the lover of God. Although the geographical setting in which Luke-Acts was written might not be Zimbabwe or any other Gentile location that may represent others, the message of the text appears to apply to communities outside its geographical setting.

### **6.2.2 Liberation and Repossession**

Political factors have been discovered as key contributors to socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is still struggling with effects of colonisation by the West. Colonisation and corruption have resulted in many challenges like dispossessions and displacements (Mtapuri & Benyera, 2020:2). These resulted in the loss of livelihoods like land, mining, farming rights and forced migrations. These resulted in legal, political, economic, cultural and institutional changes. Land was commercialised and privatised as its ownership rights were given to individuals instead of the local community. Local people were enslaved as they were forced to work for white people, where they were under-remunerated (Feldman & Gesler, 2012). Natives became landless and even forced to destock. This slavery resulted in poverty for Africans. Colonisation led to loss of identity and belonging, permanent disempowerment, and cultural heritage. Distortions and dis-articulations had a negative impact on Zimbabwe's economy as they affected the provision of social amenities and urbanisation patterns.

Colonisation also caused the existence of institutional socio-economic and political classes, which are the petty bourgeoisie, proletariat and peasant classes, where resources were exploited from Africa by colonialists (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). Even after independence, local leaders maintain the exploitation of the proletariat and peasant classes and also the marginalisation of the masses on resources resulting in poverty today. Corruption was also at play during the land redistribution exercise. Land was not fairly distributed through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme as good and bigger farms were taken by some without the capacity to utilise them effectively. The land repossession process was also associated with violence as people were killed, assaulted, lost their property and jobs. The Luke-Acts mission paradigm of peace-making (Bosch, 1991) is relevant to use in such programmes so that when a need arises, they should be executed in a peaceful environment that respects and safeguards human rights.

When Luke was writing his narrative texts, it is believed that he was influenced by what was happening during his time. The political background of his time is also important to consider as

the chapter analyses the relevance of Luke-Acts in dealing with these political challenges. During Luke's time, the Romans were dominating the inhabited world (Scheffler, 2011:117). Christians were under persecution of the Romans and these persecutions were primarily economic through financial punishment and confiscation of property. This might have influenced Luke to give emphasis on political liberation in his writings as the Jews were under political oppression by the Romans (Scheffler, 1993). The concept of universalism, according to Luke, has a political element where his message of liberation does not refer to Jews alone but any people group that is under political domination by another. This is because the concept of salvation to all nations includes political salvation according to the six dimensions of salvation in Luke-Acts that Bosch (1991:115) identifies as: economic, political, social, spiritual, physical and psychological.

The Benedictus, in Luke 1:26-28 on the birth of Jesus, the angel instructs Mary to call the child's name Jesus which means Yahweh saves. Although this term has significance to salvation of sin, it is not limited to salvation of sin. The term may not refer to individual or spiritual level but has nationalistic and political overtones due to Luke's universal character (Scheffler, 2011). In addition, there is no indication that the word is to be interpreted in a spiritual sense. In Luke 1:16-17, Jesus is said to be born for His eternal kingship of the people of Israel. God's salvation is in a political sense as the throne of David is handed to Jesus and reigns over the house of Jacob. On the Magnificat in Luke 1:41-55, Mary calls God the saviour. His reference to a low degree in verse 52b should be interpreted politically as it stands for the opposition to the mighty from their thrones in 52a. The theme of salvation is dominant in this poem as the people of Israel are presented as the object of salvation. In addition to spiritual salvation, Luke introduces political implications as the kind of salvation referred to is the national deliverance from enemies. Since the Bible is used by the church and community in Southern Zimbabwe as its audience and narrative analysis allows the Bible to be read and interpreted from the context of the audience, when Luke was talking of political salvation of Jews from Romans, the message is applicable to Zimbabwe's liberation from Western colonisers, and other unfair and corrupt rulers.

In addition, although the statement from Luke 4:18d "to preach deliverance to the captives" and Luke 4:19 "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" have spiritual meaning, in their literal interpretation, these words are of political significance that can be used to ensure political independence (Larkin, 2015:3). Since Jesus came for all, it, therefore, means liberation even of

people in Zimbabwe from any unfair political domination whether the influence of Western colonisers, or dictator African leaders. When the church is doing mission to people under political domination of other groups, or people who suffer under dictator leadership, liberation has to be emphasised in its witness. The church in Southern Zimbabwe should respond to oppression and dictatorship through by caring for each other and not preaching alone, but acting through deeds of mercy as Jesus and the early church did. The primary reference of the phrase acceptable year of the Lord was to the year of Jubilee as in Leviticus 25:9-10 where land was restored to the owner, debts forgiven and slaves released. In the context of Zimbabwe, it means land that the colonisers and dictators took has to be returned to the people who are the owners. The indigenous population should be liberated from domination. This text is very relevant in supporting or guiding the land reform program in Zimbabwe.

Some indigenous Zimbabweans have benefitted from the land reform, but others did not. This can also mean that the land reform process is still an unfinished business as some of the land is still not yet in the hands of its rightful owners. However, in doing this, peace has to be prioritised according to the Luke-Acts mission paradigm, unlike what happened during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme that the Zimbabwean government launched in 2000. The exercise was chaotic and violent because the land was violently grabbed and people, especially white farmers, lost their other properties, employment and, some were killed. On the other hand, the land reform was not done in a manner that fully addressed the challenges caused by land dispossession, dis-articulation and distortions, as the distribution did not consider that beneficiaries were allocated their ancestral lands. It was not guided by principle of restoring original inhabitants to their original homelands where the colonial system evicted them (or their ancestors) to pave way for white settlement.

The existing imbalance in the distribution of land should be treated as a social justice issue and unsustainable. It is from this background that most religious scholars and church leaders in Zimbabwe agreed with the principle of land redistribution in Zimbabwe (Chitando, Taringa & Mapuranga, 2014:180). Although the church accepted the principle of land redistribution to the landless black majority, the problem was the method used and how political power was abused and used as a political weapon (Gundani, 2008). The church should support government programmes which are in line with the scriptures and, at the same time, maintain its position to challenge all forms of injustices. The participation of the church in matters of politics and

governance shows that it is working to bring political salvation according to Bosch (1991)'s dimensions of salvation. The church in Zimbabwe has a role to play by preaching the gospel of peace, love, forgiveness and reconciliation so that programmes such as land redistribution after the liberation struggle are not associated with violence, war, hatred and vengeance as ascribed in Bosch (1991:116)'s preaching of Good News of peace by Jesus mission paradigm.

### **6.2.3 (Servant) Leadership (Luke22:24-30): Guard Against Oppression**

The ruling government's adoption of authoritarian or dictatorship form of leadership contributes to the oppression of the people of Zimbabwe. Since the late 1990s when a majority of its members defected to the opposition party, the MDC. Dissatisfaction resulted in the withdrawal of popular support from the nationalist liberation party, ZANU PF, culminating in the rejection of the government-sponsored draft constitution in February 2000 (Makumbe, 2003). This form of leadership suppressed citizens and ensured that the ruling party retained power. The ruling elites are accused of using the government as a vehicle for looting national resources and terrorising the people (Ayittey, 1999). Opposition political parties, media, civil society and even churches are often harassed, tortured and intimidated for simply disagreeing with the ruling government (Makumbe, 2003). Evidence abounds that the ruling government even uses state institutions for partisan purposes. Any force or group of citizens trying to demand their democratic and constitutional rights are sometimes dealt with by the personalised state institutions in the name of preserving peace, law and order (Sachikonye, 2003:99).

In such circumstances, Jesus' model of leadership, according to Luke-Acts, becomes instrumental. Servant-leadership is needed in order to overcome oppression and social injustice. Thomas (2018:68) asserts that servant-leadership has recently gained popularity although some of its features can be exhibited as early as the time of Jesus. He also says that the contemporary general view is that servant leadership contributes to effective outstanding leadership across cultures. Like in the case of Zimbabwe, the culture within which Jesus lived embraced the patron-client construct giving support to unequal distribution of power among members of the society. Jesus' leadership is appropriate to use in cultures across the world, producing desirable results. The other purpose of this service is for others to grow in service and leadership so that they can take over the leadership. This is because, when Jesus was talking to his disciples, he was preparing them for leadership. If this form of leadership is adopted in Zimbabwe, authoritarianism and succession

disputes will be minimised, unlike a situation where President Robert Mugabe continued in leadership for thirty-seven years until he was forcefully removed. This kind of leadership is important in the leadership of society and even in the church. Servant leadership is linked to ethics, virtues and morality as a way of serving rather than as a way to wield power over people, that is dictatorship (Thomas, 2018). Luke's concern was to form a new community with the Jews and Gentiles living together and treated equally. Luke 22:24-30 teaches the new church, both Jews and non-Jews how to interact and share good news with people outside the church. This text is also relevant to Zimbabwe, a nation with several tribal groups so that they can be treated equally as citizens and leadership be prepared to serve all without any marginalisation. As a result, peace and unity are achieved, and evils like terrorism, violence, war and poverty can be surmounted (Bosch, 1991:116).

In Luke 22:24-30, the disciples were arguing about who is greater among them, and Jesus urged them to be like the youngest and to lead as one who serves (Luke 22:25). This is not the first argument about leadership in Luke as in Luke 9:46 after Jesus told them that he would die and they heated a discussion of who was the greatest. Jesus concluded his response with a statement "for it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest" (Luke 9:46). In the Greco-Roman society, a few rich people held the bulk of the resources, while most citizens were dependent on a patron to provide for them. The patron-client social structure puts expectations on rich rulers to share favours with poor clients and the clients in return give them honour, loyalty and service (Thomas, 2018:72). The church can use this text to challenge the form of leadership in Zimbabwe where the ruling government have control over resources of the nation to an extent of using them to demand support during time of elections. This happens in rural areas, which are mainly affected by poverty and the government brings aid in terms of food, farming implements, land and others. Those who are known for being against the ruling party, ZANU PF, in some places, are deprived of their rights to enjoy national resources. Only the ruling party's supporters are rewarded for their loyalty and service (Magidi, 2018). In verse 25, Jesus is clear that rulers used their authority and power for their benefit, not citizens.

Corruption in Zimbabwe is a similar situation where those in authority use their authority to engage in corrupt activities that benefit themselves instead of the people they lead (Magidi, 2018:65). Jesus emphatically told his disciples that they were not to rule from the patron-client model but

rather that those in highest positions become as those in the lowest positions and that leaders need to be like those who serve (Luke 22:26). Jesus was commanding the greatest and the wisest to be humble. This is to be exhibited both in position and actions like the powerful to sit with, eat with, relate to and equate oneself with the servant or the youngest.

Jesus, in this text, told his disciples to challenge the norms of the existing culture by changing the patterns of relationship, and way of interaction and be examples in leading as servants (Thomas, 2018:72). For the transformation of Southern Zimbabwe, leaders should serve or lead through service and humility. However, it is also important to note that Jesus was not denouncing all distinctions of office and power but rather indicating an aristocracy that goes beyond power. Jesus did not only demand servant leadership from his disciples but lived as an example for them to follow. The church, also in its mission, should demonstrate this kind of leadership so that the world can learn and confront the government against any abuse of power. Another lesson from this is that power should not be used for the benefit of the powerful as what usually happens in Zimbabwe during campaigns for votes where opposition members are usually assaulted, killed, raped and any other form of political persecution (Makumbe, 2002). This is evidenced by the fact that most elections in Zimbabwe, at least after 2000, are associated with public violence and violation of human rights. The opposition is limited by control of public funds, limited access to media, and government forces are sometimes deployed to harass, imprison and to torture the opposition members (Makumbe, 2002).

If servant-leadership is applied, all the abuses and excessive use of power will end. Jesus also highlights the differences between the values of this world and of the kingdom of God, as the world sees greatness as having power and being served, while in the kingdom, greatness is found by being a servant to all (Thomas, 2018:73). The church, through its proclamation of the kingdom of God to the world, is another way of countering the culture of the world when the world has received the message of grace in Jesus Christ and become saved. The kind of servant-leadership that Jesus proposed, the one characterised by service, is relevant and effective, even today, in Zimbabwe.

#### **6.2.4 Jesus and the Church in Politics**

Political salvation is among the six dimensions of salvation by Bosch (1991:115). This has influenced the researcher to analyse Luke-Acts in relation to the church's involvement in politics.

Different scholars have defined politics in varied ways that depend on their disciplines and orientation. Moore (2018) says that the term political is “*politehōmai*” in Greek which means to live as a citizen as is used according to Acts 23:1. This has to do with social engagement. He also gives some specific definitions of politics as; involvement of a public person where people have access to his ideas rather than a private, sociologically identifiable group of followers, social agenda and exercise of power. According to Jonathan (2018), politics is an expression of activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially a debate between parties with power.

Given the vast array of political ramifications connected to the life, death, teachings, and legacy of Jesus and his disciples in the early Christian church, modern Christians should be concerned about engaging politics in their faith and daily lives to transform their communities. According to Jonathan (2018:1), Christians typically do not give politics much thought because they downplay the political significance of Jesus' ministry and, in doing so, ignore politics' place in their religion and daily lives. Christians nowadays can receive political advice to become more informed and motivated to engage in politics more actively and responsibly. In this section, the researcher analyses the role that the church can play in politics because of its presence in the world and Southern Zimbabwe community considering the Luke-Acts mission paradigm.

It is important to note that political aspects in the life of Jesus are evident in several cases in Luke-Acts. In Luke 1:32, the angel Gabriel after his visitation to Mary, told her that her son Jesus would be given the throne of his father David. In addition, many Christological titles used to describe Jesus have explicit political connotations (Jonathan, 2018:5). These include Christ/Messiah, Son of God, Son of David and others. On the other hand, Jesus' political actions are supported by the terms such as judge, king, saviour, and shepherd. Jesus was also raised from the dead and exalted to heavenly glory, giving him the position of the Lord, as in Acts 10:36, he is presented as the Lord of all. This means that his divine authority surpasses that of all earthly kingdoms. These political designations were usually reserved for the Roman Emperor but were now given to Jesus without reservation to show that Jesus' ministry had political significance (Scheltele, 2004). Considering the overwhelming information from the Gospel writers, Jesus is viewed as the real king who reigns on behalf of God and whose dominion is not limited to Israel but also over the whole world.



Therefore, the church that participates in *Missio Dei* should spread its influence into the political kingdoms of this world on behalf of God.

Christians believe that Jesus sits on the throne of God and will come again to judge the living and the dead. A presentation of Jesus and his disciples after his resurrection in Acts 1:6 has his disciples asking if Jesus was going to restore the kingdom to Israel and he later released the information that God has appointed Jesus as Christ and Lord over all (Acts 2:36; 10:36). In his prayer in Luke 11:2, Jesus speaks about the kingdom of heaven that this kingdom would come down and that God's will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. This, therefore, means that the principles of the kingdom of God should be used to run the affairs of the earthly kingdoms. The kingdom of God should influence the kingdoms of men. On another case, during Jesus' temptations, Satan promised all kingdoms of the world and their glory to Jesus if he fell down and worshipped him (Luke 4:5-8). However, Jesus refused because he was commissioned to establish the kingdom of God according to God's principles without compromise by not doing things Satan's way. A political system derived from the teachings and principles of Jesus is that which is non-violent, non-retaliatory, and compassionate even to their enemies (Jonathan, 2018). Zimbabwe therefore, needs to adopt these principles considering its history of political violence from the chaotic Fast Track Land Reform Program, Gukurahundi Killings, political and ethnic marginalisations, assaults, killings, arrests and other brutalities especially during the election campaign periods (Makumbe, 2003).

Jonathan (2018:2) argues that while it is true that some political language about the kingdom in the Bible describes the spiritual reality, it would be a mistake to make a too sharp distinction between the spiritual and the physical categories because in the ancient Jewish thinking, they are closely related. The process of God's salvation has cosmic significance that unfolds on the stage of human existence on earth and within history. Religious language was also used to describe geopolitical events. It is also important to note that the calling and sending of Jesus' disciples was a political symbol. The call of the 12 apostles was a symbol of the 12 tribes of Israel, and also 72 disciples match the number of Moses' judges as the number of the Sanhedrin members (Moore, 2018). The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Luke 19:35-38) is a political symbolic act Jesus did to announce himself as a king and the pilgrims who participated reciprocated both symbolically and verbally with regal acclamation. It is a political symbol to use a donkey to enter

the city on the carpet and with shouts of save now during the Passover celebration. Moore (2018) also argues that John's stage in the desert and his costume of Elijah reflect a political light. This is because if his priority was on baptism, the Lake of Galilee would have been more convenient, also if he wanted a bigger crowd, Jerusalem was a better place. Instead, he wanted to present a new entry into Israel at Jordan.

Political leaders can be ousted from office, as implied by Luke 1:52's reference to the exaltation of those of a low degree and the expulsion of the powerful from their seats. According to the prophetic writings, kings who did not administer justice were deposed. This has significance even in the current political climate in Zimbabwe, where government leaders commit injustice. Positions of power should be given to better leaders. On the Magnificat, Mary a woman, is the one who is conveying this message about politics; this example may also be used to encourage women to get involved in politics.

#### **6.2.4.1 The King of the Jews**

The earthly ministry of Jesus starts with the proclamation of the arrival of the kingdom of God and concludes with his death on the cross with an inscription which was written "the king of the Jews" (Luke 23:3). As evidence that Jesus was viewed as a political leader during his time, at his trial, governor Pilate asked him if he was the king of the Jews, a threat to the Roman stability in the region (Jonathan, 2018:5). The story of Jesus' betrayal and arrest explains a conflict between the civic authority and Jesus as a budding political figure. Due to the accusation that he poses as the king of the Jews, which amounted to sedition, the highest Roman political power in Palestine sentenced him to death by crucifixion (Moore, 2018:2). This viewpoint was shared by his disciples as well, who occasionally became angry when they saw that Jesus appeared to be highlighting issues within Israel rather than rising against a foreign and cruel Roman regime (Jonathan, 2018). Some Jews believed they were following their political leader as well as their spiritual leader when they followed Jesus. This is supported in John 6:15 which shows that Jesus' followers were speculating his political ambitions as some forcibly attempted to make him their king.

This type of animosity persisted among Jesus' followers who held political and religious power after his death on the cross. The same thing happened to several victims later on in Acts, perhaps because they were viewed as the political as well as the theological heirs to Jesus' mission (Ayuch, 2019). It was forbidden for the apostles of Jesus to share the gospel in his name. The Sanhedrin

had ordered Peter and John to stop preaching, yet they persisted (Acts 4:18). Despite being imprisoned and tortured, Paul persisted in his evangelism (Acts 16:37–40). Even when he was captive in Rome, he continued preaching (Acts 28:30-31). Also, Stephen did not surrender to the Sanhedrin and was killed (Acts 7:54-56).

#### **6.2.4.2 Non-Violent Politics**

Interpretation of the politics of Jesus is instrumental to the church and the world when they are engaging in politics for social transformation due to Jesus' non-violent approach to politics. Jesus encourages submission to earthly authorities while remaining loyal to God. However, the ultimate authority should always be given to God (Acts 5:29). Jonathan (2018:6) asserts that Jesus was not a politician in the traditional sense as he did not take any step that allowed him to ascend a political ladder. Jesus did not lead any political revolts against the Romans. Even his followers he gathered, were no militia, those in his entourage were a crew of fisherman, tax collectors, women, social outcasts and not the ruling Jewish elites. This means Jesus did not attempt to gain political power by doing things that give him favour from the Jewish aristocracy as he did not lead a revolt against the Romans as some expected (Jonathan, 2018:9). His politics was not what the Jews were expecting, he was a different kind of a king and of a different kind of a kingdom, that is the kingdom of peace.

Jesus believed in non-violence to an extent that he allowed his captors to arrest him and willingly went to the cross. At the time of his arrest, his disciples violently resisted and fought on his behalf. However, he stopped them when one struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear saying “no more of this” (Luke 22:51). Those in leadership should be in a position to stop and control their followers so that they cannot continue to be perpetrators of violence. In Zimbabwe, the church should preach this message to political leaders. The Gospel of peace should be preached by the church in Southern Zimbabwe so that citizens should do politics without violence. Political parties such as ZANU PF, CCC, MDC and others should peacefully engage in political actions and also know that regime change can be achieved without violence because it causes the loss of peace, property and life.

During his ministry, Jesus was supportive of those in authority. He supported paying of taxes to Caesar and was kind to those who worked for the foreign oppressors like the tax and toll collectors (Acts 5:27). In Luke 7:1-10, he healed the servant of the Roman centurion. This way of doing

politics is a lesson to teach the politicians in Zimbabwe that they should continue in love and do politics without sabotage to those in power but rather give the necessary support for the better of people's lives. However, Jesus does not submit to political authority nor obey the habits and customs of the time if they were against his public work and the word of God. He sometimes showed resistance to political authorities as inflictors of suffering, like when he called Herod a fox (Luke 13:32), and through his counter-culture of accepting the poor and the social outcasts and criticism of political relationships of domination and oppression implied in the advocacy for humility and service among his followers (Luke 22:24-27). Christians need to learn from Jesus that it is proper to resist passively in terms of violence but actively in terms of conviction and actions for the people (Ayuch, 2019). Paul was not always silent before the authorities and could not fear to defend his principles of proclaiming God. This demonstrates the unconditional ministry of the Gospel that should be followed by the church today.

Although Jesus did not receive a positive response from those who exercised power, he made it clear through his teaching and life that he was for all. He was not partisan in his ministry and life. Jesus did not stay in his parent's home, have children, house, possessions so that he could not be biased. He did not work the land nor practice a profession (Ayuch, 2019). He took care of all people around him, friends and enemies, weak and strong, young and old, women and men. He would teach everyone, heal and visit everyone with words of admonition and comfort and relief to others. Jesus did not take political sides to side with the Jewish political or tribal group neglecting the Romans or other Gentiles. Church leaders must also learn that they should not engage in party politics or side with any political group but preach the word of God fairly. Engagement in party politics by church leaders in Zimbabwe has resulted in disunity and polarisation of the church with two opposing camps: one supporting the ruling party and others backing the opposition. This then compromises the church's voice and position in the community.

Jesus' command to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27-28) can eliminate political enmity because it promotes political tolerance. Acts 10:28 records an interpretation of Peter's dream of clean and unclean animals that represent Jews as clean, and Gentiles as unclean. Gentiles were not allowed to associate with Jews. The dream also teaches political and tribal tolerance as there should be no distinction between national or tribal and political groups, especially in the Zimbabwean context

where there are different races and nationalities like whites, Asians and blacks, tribes like Shona, Ndebele, Shangani, Kalanga, Venda, Tonga and others, as well as different political parties such as ZANU PF, CCC, MDC T, and many others.

#### **6.2.4.3 Political Implications to the church**

The life and message of Jesus and his disciples equip the church in Zimbabwe to be a community of people who care about the Kingdom of God and therefore care about their society and seek to transform people's lives in their society. Believers should be involved in Kingdom politics, even in the public place, trying to influence the current political environment and the direction of life in the nation, state or province and city or town (Jonathan, 2018:16). The church can do this through preaching and equipping its members to correctly participate in political platforms in a manner that upholds good ethics, moral and spiritual standards and even through their influence in the formulation of policies that run the country or a society. The church, through its members, should find opportunities to participate in the mission of Jesus as he cares for people's lives, especially those in need and ostracised. The church, must, therefore act as the conscience of the society. Ways to fulfil the objectives of the kingdom of God may also be political, given that they agree with the teaching and life of Jesus.

The church should advocate for peace and not just rebel against the government and not have a blind submission to it (Jonathan, 2018:16). This is because, Jesus used the third way which is between the two extremes of revolt and obedience. This mentality should be changed as some think that one has to support the government or be completely against it fully. It needs to be understood that there is no perfect political system of governance even during the time of Jesus. However, Christian believers should learn to co-exist as citizens as well as earthly locales, whilst at the same time, pursue God's mission towards transformation. This is why the approach that Jesus used was not to immediately replace the existing political system through war and revolt so as to establish a Jewish state. As citizens of the country, believers in Southern Zimbabwe should not withdraw from political platforms because of the evilshappening in government or to use violence to remove the government. As Jesus was patient and not attempt to overthrow the Roman government, citizens should also continue to participate in politics and peacefully waiting for God's time.

Jonathan (2018:17) asserts that what matters most in politics is not the form of government like democracy but faithfulness to Jesus when serving in politics. He says this because even the perfectly administered system of democracy does not match the ideal situation of what is in God's mind. Although democracy is good, it is not the ultimate good. This is why Jesus did not choose a system of governance that is most preferred but only puts emphasis on faithfulness to the word of God in political contexts (Jonathan, 2018:17). However, Christian believers in democratic societies, like Zimbabwe to a greater extent, should participate in it so that they make their voices heard. On the other hand, those under dictatorship regimes should challenge such a political system so that it continues to be transformed and be aligned with the ideals and values of God.

### **6.2.5 Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Peace**

Political violence has been part and parcel of the political culture in Zimbabwe throughout its history as it has been used for political advantage by those in power. This can be traced from the violence used by the colonial regime to subdue the black population, liberation movements that used violence against the colonial regime, the public and within itself, Gukurahundi killings and ethnic marginalisations as well as post-independence violence by the ruling government under ZANU PF (Manyonganise, 2015:42). There is, therefore, a need to engage in a peace-building process. Luke-Acts can be instrumental in this situation through the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Manyonganise (2015) presents that for sustainable peace to be achieved, processes of forgiveness, reconciliation and justice are to be done. She defines reconciliation as a societal process that involves a mutual agreement of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships towards sustainable peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the identity-transforming process within a victim to overcome the feelings of revenge, moral hatred, indignation, and feelings related to anger (Manyonganise, 2015). Forgiveness is contested whether it can be viewed as a feeling, rational decision or an act and also whether it is a primarily self-help strategy for victims or conversely a gesture of interpersonal reconciliation where a person is either forgiving a person or an act. Manyonganise (2015:28) argues that forgiveness can be unjust because it may be contrary to the logic of justice, especially when it is considered too high as a demand for reconciliation before the recognition and processes of wrongdoing are done. In this case, it may cause unwarranted psychological burdens on victims, and the pressure to forgive

may cause significant trauma (Saunders, 2011). Therefore, mediators in post-conflict societies need to be careful and not make premature calls for forgiveness. On the same note, forgiveness should be seen as the only way towards healing and reconciliation.

However, according to Luke-Acts, true forgiveness, as taught and practised through Jesus in Luke 11:4, Luke 6:27-29 and Luke 23:34, brings healing. The church needs to preach the message of forgiveness so that there is a conversion of the mind and the heart, which therefore makes a person capable of forgiving, especially after an understanding that we all sin but are forgiven of all our evils by God through Jesus Christ. True forgiveness is understood from God's salvation process, where he forgives us without demanding anything from us. It should also begin with the church because it has received and understands the good news of Jesus Christ. The transformation of the mind due to the gospel of Jesus creates a psychological readiness for a victim to make a personal decision out of his/her own conviction. Justice is also needed before the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Kingdom of God does not give one an option between forgiveness and justice. Apparently, the two go together as one action.

Justice is defined as a range of approaches used by societies to tackle legacies of human rights violations as they move from the moment of violent conflict and oppression towards the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights (Manyonganise, 2015:30). Transitional justice employs processes of reconciliation on both parties of the conflict and the affected population by establishing a process of accountability and acknowledgement to deter re-occurrence thereby ensuring sustainable peace. However, in other circumstances, especially when the perpetrator of injustice is not acknowledging and take accountability to the wrongs committed, like in the situation where there are a lot of human rights abuses by the ruling government in Zimbabwe and some leaders refuse to take responsibility for the Gukurahundi issue and other assaults, killings abductions and others. In such scenarios, Jesus' model of forgiveness in Luke-Acts becomes instrumental for societies to go forward. Transitional justice is also limited because it is viewed as a narrow mechanism which focuses more on issues of violation of political rights without giving a serious concern on economic and social rights violation. One of the key ingredients of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm is peace-making, that is emphasising peace with God and others. It also means the absence of conflict, violence and war. This paradigm is relevant in Southern Zimbabwe in relation to the land redistribution exercise that was mainly characterised by violence. Luke-Acts

can be used to quench the spirit of war and breed the spirit of peace so that land redistribution continues in peace and with respect and protection of human rights and life.

In addition, as a way of promoting peace in the land distribution process, Luke-Acts is very useful, especially in the interpretation of Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4:18-19 a quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2. Larkin (2015) believes that Jesus consciously ended Isaiah 61 quotation before the declaration of the coming of the day of vengeance. Jesus did this to promote peace as during His time, were contemporaries and messianic pretenders who were using Isaiah's passage "the day of vengeance of our God" to call countrymen to fight against Gentiles for political and religious freedom (Larkin, 2015:4). Jesus presents the favourable year, the reconciliation, healing and forgiveness. Non-vengeance is validated by the crowd's negative response. What is therefore needed in Zimbabwe is love, forgiveness, reconciliation and peaceful resolution on political issues affecting the nation and not through vengeance. Land redistribution should be done to promote equality and justice among the black and white citizens and not as retribution if peace is to be built and maintained. It is also important to consider that even white people who were once colonisers are now citizens of the country. Peace-making through the non-vengeance approach is one of the key ingredients of Luke's mission paradigm. It, therefore, can be used by the church in its ministry by preaching and advising the government leaders to adopt this model to build true peace.

Socio-economic life in the country was also affected by post-independence violence. This was mainly caused by the rejection of the ruling party ZANU PF after the state failed to provide food, basic resources, the rule of law, and socio-economic, civil and political rights to many (Bourne, 2011). In response, the government increased force in suppressing groups, such as civic groups, church bodies, human rights activists and journalists who debated, participated, and challenged it. This is a clear indication that democracy was not accepted in Zimbabwe. As such, the ruling government decided to proceed with the land redistribution exercise. It, therefore, mobilised former combatants to lead the fast-track land reform process (*Third Chimurenga/war*) after the ruling party members defected to MDC. This led to brutal land grabs as mobs entered the farms by force. White farmers lost their property, farm workers their jobs and homes, and some were raped, killed and assaulted (Bourne, 2011).

Luke appears to be the only one among other evangelists who had a keen interest in the theme of peace (Kayumba, 2017). One needs to study and understand his view on the subject in the context



of the Scripture with regards to a responsible and pastoral approach in presenting the Gospel of Peace in other contexts today (Alexander, 2008). One of the assumptions is that Luke-Acts was written during the Pax Romana period, before the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. The Roman Empire brought Peace (pax) during the time of Luke's writing. During the time, one could not talk of peace without referring to the thoughts of Pax Romana (Kayumba, 2017:11). It is exactly against this form of peace that Jesus is presenting the kingdom of God. Within the kingdom of God, peace is not gained through power and violence but through empowerment in faith in Christ and forgiveness.

Therefore, the achievement of peace in the Pax Romana must be understood through the idea of military force or battle, which was used to achieve peace. Pax Romana is understood in different aspects as presented by Luke, including military, political, economic, and legal peace (Kayumba, 2017:15). A close analysis shows peace was achieved and maintained through power and or violence for Rome. The military aspect of Pax says that peace can be provided and maintained through military force. This is relevant to the effort to obtain peace in Zimbabwe when she gained her liberation through military force against white colonisers during the *Second Chimurenga* and the *Third Chimurenga* to accomplish the goal of the *Second Chimurenga* of land repossession. However, it became clear that no peace was obtained, the politicians just established their power to suppress the people of Zimbabwe even more. In addition, the political concept of Pax Romana raises an issue of the ability to enjoy possessions in peace through military power, which cannot offer peace and security to people and their possessions. This, therefore, makes it clear that military power in Zimbabwe will not guarantee peace and prosperity, since Zimbabwe has moved backwards on all accounts of life, socially, economically and politically. Something else is needed.

#### **6.2.6 Ethnic Oppression and Marginalisation**

Gukurahundi memories are still haunting the nation due to its unresolved problems and Zimbabwe as a nation is living with victims of Gukurahundi, still having simmering anger, resentment, and frustration (wafa, 2012). Some Ndebele communities continue to perceive Gukurahundi as ethnic cleansing by the Shona people. There is a need to ensure that processes towards justice and forgiveness are done. This is because forgiveness contributes also to the transformation of the society and not only to the reproduction of social justice (Ndlovu, 2017:2). Some Ndebele people accuse the Unity Accord of its failure to address issues of justice, like compensation of

Gukurahundi victims and prosecution of the perpetrators of these crimes (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003). This process is believed to have brought justice, forgiveness and reconciliation so that socio-economic development is achieved, as without justice, forgiveness is difficult to achieve. Ndlovu (2017:3) asserts that the perpetrators of Gukurahundi are still in power and are not acknowledging their role in orchestrating the massacre. He also says that some citizens view the government's version of forgiveness as impunity and the erasure of the past. The victims say they are waiting for justice as their relatives were killed and houses burnt. They demand that the perpetrators acknowledge their crimes so that justice can occur.

Not disregarding any other model of admission, prosecution or restitution and forgiveness by the perpetrators where necessary, Luke 23:34 about Jesus forgiving those who were crucifying him is important for peace and development according to the Luke's mission paradigm of preaching the Good News of peace by Jesus Christ. The expression by Mugabe, that Gukurahundi was a "Moment of Madness" can bring a turnaround of the situation when understood according to Luke's writing in Luke 23:34 saying "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." as the words spoken by Jesus concerning the perpetrators of His death. The 'moment of madness' means that when the perpetrators performed the wrong, they were not in their sound mind. Accordingly, they deserve forgiveness. Therefore, Jesus asked for the Father to forgive them because his tormentors acted in ignorance. In the same manner, Gukurahundi victims can forgive the perpetrators of evil since Mugabe acknowledged that it was a 'moment of madness'. On the same situation, Jesus created restitution when he took responsibility for the ignorance of those crucifying Him and paid the price through his suffering as the consequence of their 'moment of madness'. Therefore, restitution is required for forgiveness and reconciliation.

On the other hand, Jesus' statement on the cross is relevant to the political situation where sometimes political leaders are arrogant and do not acknowledge or repent from their wrongs. Those who are mature in the word of God should move ahead to the stage of forgiveness as Jesus forgives those who were crucifying him. The church should continue to preach the Gospel of repentance and forgiveness so that they may repent from their evil works in future. The victims demand that truth is told of what happened and who participated in the Gukurahundi atrocities as it is difficult to forgive perpetrators who are unknown and unrepentant or are still a threat (Ndlovu, 2017). After what has been said about the Gukurahundi killings, it is therefore recommended for

the perpetrators to repent and show that they now have a changed mind towards the people who are affected by Gukurahundi incident.

If Welshman Ncube's allegations that the de-industrialisation of Bulawayo and the marginalisation of the Southern region is a result of manipulation by political elites and political entrepreneurs are true (Manganga, 2014:187), it shows a total absence of repentance. It can be helpful for the nation's development if the mind of political leadership is changed and equally embrace everybody in the nation towards development regardless of ethnicity. This is because everybody is equal before the laws of the land, irrespective of whether one is a politician, president, or a member of one of the marginalised ethnolinguistic groups. Justice is when everybody takes responsible of their actions and face the consequences of their deeds. Continuous marginalisation of this region makes people remain imprisoned in the past occurrences of Gukurahundi. However, on the discussions concerning Gukurahundi, Ndlovu (2017) argue that the surviving victims of Gukurahundi cannot be dispensed by an individual or institution like the church. This is because after the Unity Accord, the main actor of the Ndebele people, Joshua Nkomo, forgave the state for persecuting and its part in the state-sanctioned violence. He moved on and joined a coalition government with Mugabe. Accordingly, his supporters should also forgive and move on. Since the Luke-Acts mission paradigm involves the witness of the Gospel of Christ about repentance and forgiveness, the church's role is to minister the Gospel to the people of Zimbabwe so that they accept responsibility, confess their sins, repent and live according to it from their conviction. The church must guide them in this reconciliation process. Luke-Acts advocates for holistic salvation. As the victims were traumatised by the Gukurahundi atrocities, the church needs to minister to them so as to bring healing in a holistic way as well as build hope in them. The message of social salvation is just as important as spiritual salvation since it eradicates discriminatory behaviour in society.

According to Bosch (1991), the church should be bold when challenging issues, such as injustices by the government because it usually faces adversity. The church must build peace in the nation. In cases of conflict, the church should stand in the middle of the side that is causing violence and the one not causing it and execute its intermediary role by constantly preaching against political violence, marginalisation, oppression and injustices by politicians for their repentance (Manyonganise, 2016). While avoiding its alignment with a political party, the church should reconcile the warring political and tribal parties and provide counsel on how to do politics properly.

The church should maintain its sound teachings and prayers for its mission and the nation at large. This conforms to Bosch (1991)'s view that the church is inward and outward-oriented because it has a responsibility to both Christians and non-Christians. An example of adversity encountered by church leaders from the government is of the Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube, who was courageous and raised a critical voice in challenging President Robert Mugabe and blamed him for economic downfall causing socio-economic hardships (Chitandi, Taringa & Mapuranga 2014:179). He also accused Mugabe of human rights violations, including the Gukurahundi massacres. Mugabe responded by calling people to disregard church leaders calling for his removal and questioned the moral authority of the clergy by accusing them of sleeping around. Bosch (1991:116) describes the church as the first community to devote itself to the teaching of the scripture and to be transformed. This description becomes important in this case where the church should exhibit good moral and spiritual standards for it to convince the world.

Another example of adversity in mission is when Monica Mutsvangwa condemned and described Catholic Bishops as evil and narrow minded, reckless regime change agents who incited the public to rise against the government after issuing a pastoral letter in 2020 (Manyonganise, 2022). Minister Mutsvangwa even singled out Archbishop of Harare, Robert Christopher Ndlovu and accused him of inciting tribal conflict when he made reference to Gukurahundi killings. The church can be encouraged through Bosch (1991:117)'s mission paradigm that mission of necessity encounters adversity and suffering even from political leadership, but what is needed is boldness, as Jesus, his disciples and other martyrs like Stephen s demonstrated who suffered for their witness even to death. The Holy Spirit should equip the church with boldness so that it can overcome fear.

### **6.2.7 Ecumenism: Unity and Peace in the Church**

Zimbabwe has a plethora of churches, including Mainline missionary churches, Pentecostal churches and the AICs (Shoko, 2016). Different churches have separated to form different denominations. However, for the church to be influential in addressing injustice and conflicts in the nation, must demonstrate unity and peace within itself, as it cannot convince the world to do what it is failing to do. Jesus prayed for the unity of the church in John 17 so that they may be a witness to the world. Therefore, for the church in Zimbabwe to be able to show visible unity established in the saving and redeeming work of God in Christ, it has adopted ecumenism. (Baloyi, 2022). Ecumenism is when different denominations that are separated because of doctrines,

beliefs, traditions and practices come together to visibly express their unity in Jesus Christ (Kessler 2004:280). Different ecumenical groups in Zimbabwe include the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ, Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA), Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACIZA) and others. As the church pursues the ministry of justice, peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, a country affected by challenges like political instability, dictatorship, poverty, corruption, abuses of women and children and oppression of the poor, it is therefore necessary for denominations to come together and have a strong voice against these issues. This ministry is mainly anchored on Christ's message and the Gospel of the liberation of the oppressed in Luke 4:18-19.

The central affirmation of ecumenism is built in the search for the full visible unity of the church and its common witness to the world as rooted in Jesus' prayer in John 17:21, "that they may all be one" (Baloyi, 2022:56). The Jerusalem council in Acts 15 contains the values of ecumenism as the churches in other areas like Antioch, Syria and Cilicia sent their representatives to the church at Jerusalem to present issues that were troubling them. They needed some guidance on how to handle the challenges. Both Jewish and Gentile Christians believed in the Gospel of Christ, but the Jews kept Jewish traditions. Consequently, circumcision was a major contention. They convened a meeting to discuss these doctrinal differences between gentiles and Jews to maintain unity in the church. In Acts, these churches were distinguished by geographical names. Acts 15:25 reports that they assembled with one accord, thereby bringing out the same concept of being one as indicated in John 17:21. At the Jerusalem Council, they agreed for Gentile believers not to be circumcised, but to abstain from idols, fornication, things strangled and from blood.

The unity of the church also remained centred on the word of the Gospel and received the Holy Spirit, although there were some doctrinal differences. On another case, Downs (2008) argues that relief that was sent from Antioch to the church at Jerusalem in Acts 11:27-29 holds a sense of ecumenism as that gift shows unity between churches as they continued to work together to the extend of assisting each other during the time of crisis. As a result of these texts, Luke-Acts can be used by the church on an ecumenical basis in Zimbabwe. This is because of the levels of violence and political polarisation experienced calls for the church to come up with helpful platforms for peace and national healing. Ecumenical groups in Zimbabwe are committed to building a united, peaceful, and prosperous Zimbabwe.

Since Southern Zimbabwe comprises of different religions like ATR, Christianity, Islam and others (Mukushi *et al.*, 2019), it is, therefore, crucial for the church to go beyond church ecumenical and religious boundaries in order to harness people from all religions towards socio-economic transformation of the region or the nation at large. This is because religious values have a bearing on social and economic life. People who participate in different spheres of life in the community like politics, economy, social and others come from different religions. As the church is called and equipped by God to minister the message of Christ concerning repentance, forgiveness and salvation to all nations (Bosch, 1991:114), it has to avoid extremism or exclusivism of other religions, although its key objective is to convert even those who are of other religions (Larkin, 2015). Luke-Acts presents that the Gospel is to be preached to all with an expectation for them to positively respond to it. The church should avoid rejection of family members or members of the society because they adhere to a particular religion.

When the church engages in mission, it has to contact people of other religions with respectful integrity, metanarrative that embraces global and local constructive and corrective engagement. Acts 17:22-30 is a text where the church can learn how Apostle Paul engaged the ministry in Athens at Mars Hill, Areopagus. He began by appreciating that the people at Athens were religious in verse 22, and in verse 25 told them that God gives life to all. This means God does not consider one's religion. Paul also presents that although they were from different religions, the whole human race is of one blood and then calls for their conversion because God overlooks the past as it is considered the time of ignorance. This demonstrates that Paul did not condemn other religions, but preached the Gospel in a manner that convinces the audience.

### **6.3 The Economic Situation**

The economic challenges affecting Zimbabwe have also not spared the country's Southern region. Political, social, spiritual and economic factors have contributed to the situation. This section assesses the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as a model for solving the economic problems in the region.

#### **6.3.1 Poverty in Southern Zimbabwe**

When Luke was addressing poverty in Luke-Acts, he was influenced by the economic classes in the Roman context (Scheffler, 2011:117). These classes, to a certain extent, fit into the

Zimbabwe's economic structure, making Luke-Acts relevant in addressing its socio-economic challenges. Scholars have divided the economic classes in Rome into two main classes: the rich and the poor, patrons and clients (Scheffler, 2011). Southern Zimbabwe also comprises of the rich and the poor as it was in the Roman community that Luke addressed. The bulk of the wealth is in the hands of the few. On the other hand, scholars like Friesen (2004), view the classification of Rome into two main classes as too simplistic. Instead, they identified seven classes that existed in the Roman society. These classes were the imperial elites, regional elites, municipal elites, with moderate surplus resources, on stable near subsistence level, those at subsistence level/often below the minimum level to sustain life and the below subsistence level. According to Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012:52), the colonialists established a similar economic structure in Africa, which include comprador bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, proletariat, and the peasant. These continue to exist even in Zimbabwe as the petty bourgeoisie that got the mantle of leadership at independence continue to run like the colonialists did.

In the Zimbabwean context, "*murombo*" in Shona or "*umuyanga*" in Ndebele refers to the poor as a person whose minimum level of consumption of basic needs cannot be met (Chinake, 1997:39). In most cases, the basic needs are quantified into monetary terms, therefore, resulting in poverty being treated as a purely economic issue. On the other hand, in Africa and particularly Zimbabwe, poverty is understood as a result of a deprivation of welfare, social power, and lack of capabilities (World Bank, 1995). In other words, being poor often means being voiceless, powerless, and less likely to break through the culture of poverty unless one is empowered or assisted (Chinake, 1997). In Luke, Jesus rebukes the leadership in the society for injustice and oppression of the poor meaning that they were deprived of their opportunities to come out of poverty by those in authority. They were failing to meet their basic needs of life. The rich are also taught to share with the poor so that they assist them to come out of poverty. Since the context and significance of poverty have some similarities, the message of Luke-Acts is also applicable in Southern Zimbabwe. This therefore means that the church in Southern Zimbabwe can use the same approach in its ministry of confronting political leadership and those in authority and rebukes them for any act of injustice. It should do it without fear as it may face adversity and suffering from the response of such leadership.

There are several texts which can be used to demonstrate that Luke was concerned with economic poverty and sharing possessions with the poor. These include his first use of the term *ptochos* in his Nazareth episode in Luke 4:16-30 referring to Jesus being sent to preach to the poor, reference to severe famine and relief of the widow in Elijah's day in Luke 4:25, correlation of the hungry in the Magnificat in Luke 1:53 and on the beatitudes in Luke 6:20b. Others include the parable of Lazarus, the rich ruler in Luke 18:22 and the rich man in Luke 16:19-30 and Luke 16:9-13 where money is to be rightly used to serve God through charity. Luke-Acts help us understand how the rich and the poor are understood. There are also other traditions where Luke presents his perspective on poverty without using the term *ptochos* like in Luke 6:22. Luke also presents the early Christian church as a sharing community (Acts 2:44-47) and also the Hellenistic church collecting for the poor church in Jerusalem. In these cases, it was not just a case of the rich giving to the poor but of Christians, rich and poor alike sharing. The church in Southern Zimbabwe needs to practice sharing beginning with fellow church members. However, the church and even other rich people are to be encouraged as Luke's presentation concerning caring for the poor is not restricted to people in the church.

Siame (2016:23) posits that some scholars have argued that "the Lord's Acceptable Year" means the proclamation of the year of Jubilee referred to in Leviticus 25. It is more likely that Luke was aware of such a connection when he was writing. The term release is key in the concept of Jubilee. Release means freedom or liberty, and it is used in the book of Leviticus to refer to the release of slaves and property in the 50<sup>th</sup> year/Jubilee year (Siame, 2016:27). Its proclamation marked the reversal of the rich and poor, time of release of those forced into slavery, release of land which was lost because of poverty to original owners, time for cancellation of debts and letting the land lie fallow. Jubilee was established on a spiritual foundation premised on the commandment of releasing people who were in bondage (Hertig, 1998). The roots of Luke's concept of Jubilee are traced from Isaiah 61. Although Isaiah 61 lacks jubilee historical material, some of the verbs have jubilee roots like "anointed me and "sent me" which implies God's action of deliverance. The one who is anointed does not only bear the good news but is also a liberator of the poor from various kinds of sufferings (Siame, 2016:28). Deliverance brought by the Messiah is multi-dimensional and includes spiritual, physical, socio-political and psychological. These are evident in Jesus's holistic expressions and practices in his mission (Hertig, 1998).



It is important to know that the word poor was understood in different ways during the time of Jesus for example, in the Qumram community, the poor was understood in relation to the community of people or the pious who espoused a self-inflicted poverty (Siame, 2016). In Luke's view, Jesus rejected this kind of exclusive way of looking at poverty by giving an inclusive and broader meaning. In the Old Testament, the word poor has social and religious dimensions. In the Old Testament, where the concept of jubilee is derived from, those who are poor are also considered as victims of unjust structures of society, the exploited, the insignificant and the economically disadvantaged. This, therefore, means that when we are applying the concept of jubilee in Southern Zimbabwe, we are talking of the end to unjust structures of the society where people are marginalised and exploited because of its political and economic systems that, to some extent, neglect the well-being of the poor

### **6.3.2 Governance and Injustice**

Although poverty was always affecting the nation of Zimbabwe, even during the colonial period, due to unequal distribution of resources, its economy was performing well to the extent of it being called "the bread basket of Africa" (Haslam & Lamberti, 2014:27). This is because under Smith, despite the sanctions the nation developed sophisticated infrastructure, roads, hospitals, dams and water systems as well as expertise in farming. However, due to misgovernance and injustices in the running of the nation, its economy has deteriorated from what it was. Policies, such as ESAP, violent Land Reform, Operation Murambatsvina, involvement in the DRC war, too much reliance on borrowing, and other things like corruption and marginalisation of other citizens or ethnic groups on the basis of their political affiliation are some of the key causes of poverty in Zimbabwe. This is because of their negligence on the welfare of citizens and injustices because of the violation of basic human rights.

The church can make use of Luke-Acts as it helps to discourage policies that promote a class system but promote equal human treatment among citizens. Wealth accumulated by individuals needs to be shared with the poor from their own conviction, see for example, Acts 4:36-Acts 5:11. Scheffler (2011) says that it has been argued that Karl Marx's used Lukan texts to come up with his views on communism as Marx interpreted Luke as striving for a classless society where nobody would be rich or poor. This helps achieve economic salvation according to the six dimensions of salvation by Bosch (1991:115).

The Nazareth episode shows that Luke had the poor, sinners and those oppressed in mind. Luke 4:18-19 is a quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2. It contains two omissions which are to bind up the broken-hearted and to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn and adds a line from Isaiah 58:6 that says to let the oppressed go free at the end of Luke 4:18. Dyer (2016) argues that Luke intentionally left out the words of vengeance as a way of downplaying the theme of judgement. The effect of ending Jesus' quotation before mentioning vengeance focuses on the good news to the poor and the release of the oppressed. Siame (2016) argues that Jesus purposefully removed all references that encouraged hostility towards Gentiles. Leaders and members of the society in Southern Zimbabwe should learn to embrace all people regardless of their tribe/ethnic, religion and political affiliation and give a just treatment.

After Jesus finished the reading, he sat down to give an exposition to the Scripture, and in his exposition, he said, "these words have been fulfilled in your hearing today". The meaning of the word 'today' is important to understand the relevance of Jesus' mission today (Siame, 2016:13). In this case, "today" must be understood in generic sense as "nowadays" (Siame, 2016:13). This claim is very crucial in Luke's view of salvation that it was to be actualised at the time of Jesus. Therefore, the fulfilment of Old Testament predictions and issues Jesus included in his mission statement was fulfilled in Him. Accordingly, this message is relevant to communities and the church today. The statement "fulfilled in your hearing" implies that the kingdom Jesus proclaimed was fulfilled in his obedience to the Scriptures, and the church uses the same Scripture for ministry today.

The statement "to proclaim good news" summarises the entire activities of Jesus's mission. Jesus outlines the people who were the targets of His Good News, such as the poor, captives, the blind and the broken hearted (Siame, 2016). These concepts are very significant in Luke-Acts as they describe his ministry. Even though these terms refer to physically-challenged people, their use in this regard refers to the people who are economically-disadvantaged as such people have received particular attention in Luke. Preaching good news to the poor, in this case, therefore, means fulfilling God's purpose of helping the poor and hungry; and this is done in word and deed as Jesus demonstrated. The church therefore needs to call upon its members and leaders in government and community to have concern for the poor and engage in actions that cushion members of society from poverty.

It is crucial to understand that Good News is not only eschatological; it is also for the here and now. One of the causes of poverty in Southern Zimbabwe is how resources are distributed by those who have them in their hands, especially those in government positions of authority. Some of the policies used by the government show no concern for the poor and those in need, as people are sometimes left in suffering after their implementation. Corruption by government officials means gain by those in power at the expense of the rest of the citizens. Discrimination in the allocation of state resources like land, farming inputs and others on the basis of political affiliation by some of the ruling government officials instead of considering the level of need should be condemned basing on this text that calls for the prioritisation of the poor. In this case, the release of captives refers to economically oppressed people, especially those enslaved due to accumulated debts. If the government and those with economic power do not provide access to resources to those who are suffering in poverty, it, therefore, means those in poverty need deliverance from such kind of an oppressive system. The church should, therefore, stand to challenge such bad governance and injustices.

### **6.3.3 Social Justice in Luke-Acts**

Luke-Acts can give guidance in resolving issues of injustice in Southern Zimbabwe. According to Bosch (1991)'s peace motif in Luke-Acts, dealing with issues of injustice helps to build and maintain peace in the society and achieve political, economic and social dimensions of salvation. Dyer (2016) argues that among other New Testament writings, Luke-Acts is the richest in dealing with issues of social injustice. He says that social justice is the standard that God holds his people to. Justice is closely connected with caring for the oppressed and marginalised, poor, widows and orphans (Dyer, 2016). The emphasis, therefore, is on equality, solidarity and putting the wrongs to right. As a result of the concern of his writings on the poor and the oppressed, Luke has been called "the Gospel of Good News to the Poor". Due to its concern for the poor and the marginalised, Luke's writings become useful in transforming Zimbabwe as a nation stricken by poverty and facing oppression from some of its political leaders. The Old Testament is significant for the writings of Luke, evidenced by several Old Testament quotations and allusions. Luke draws heavily from Isaiah and other prophetic literature (Dyer, 2016). Isaiah is used more than other Old Testament books.

In the prophetic literature, justice is a major theme. The church in Southern Zimbabwe should stand boldly in its mission against all forms of social injustice as the Old Testament prophets and Jesus did. It also needs to participate in social issues that help to ensure the welfare of the whole society.

Luke's version of the beatitudes in Luke 6:20-23 also presents the mission of Jesus being that of focusing on the poor, interpreted in light of Isaiah (Dyer, 2016:112). The poor are seen among other terms which are low status and oppression, the hungry, hated and persecuted (Evans, 2011:108). Verses 24-26 contain woes to the rich, well-fed and those who are highly-esteemed which parallels the beatitudes in earlier verses. The rich in verse 24 parallel the poor in verse 20, the well-fed in verse 25a parallel the hungry in verse 21a, those laughing in verse 25b parallel those weeping in verse 21b and the highly esteemed in verse 26 parallel those hated and excluded in verse 22 (Dyer, 2016). The word 'poor' does not refer only to those of low economic status, but is representative of those marginalised in a larger society. The term 'rich' does not refer to only an economic class, but linked to issues of power and privilege, social location as an insider and arrogant self-security not coming from God. Through his proclamation of the kingdom of God, Jesus overturned the social norms that included only certain people, while others were excluded. The language Luke used reflects that of Isaiah 61:2 and is seen as a continuation of strong words in the prophetic literature against those who bring about injustice or do not respond rightly to injustice (Dyer, 2016:114). Thus, the church in Southern Zimbabwe can use this to challenge social injustices practiced by those in authority. Jesus warns that the comfort enjoyed in this age at the expense of those in need will be reversed in the age to come.

Jesus had the prophetic tradition of calling out rulers for their empty rituals and acts of injustice. This text contains four woes to the Pharisees (Luke 11: 39-44) and three to the experts of the law (Luke 11:46-52). He accuses them of neglecting justice and the love of God, but simply pretending to be religious. They load people with heavy burdens they cannot carry themselves (Dyer, 2016). Jesus' rebuke calls for them to give alms to the needy as well as practice justice and love. Jesus points to the standard of justice set by God in the Old Testament and as what prophets emphasised. The church can use this text to challenge leaders who fail to uphold justice and do not care for the poor. There should be congruence between the words and deeds of the leaders.

Chapter 18 of Luke contains different parables and encounters with Jesus where he continues with the theme of justice. Hays (2012) argues that the prophetic theme of justice connects through this chapter and Zacchaeus' encounter in Luke 19:1-10. Jesus' interaction with the ruler reveals the dangers of wealth. It is also important to note that Jesus identifies the man as a ruler, which is "*arkon*" that has a general sense of someone who rules or exercises authority and is used over 500 times in the earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew (LXX) (Dyer, 2016). In the Old Testament prophetic writings, rulers are often called out for bringing injustices and oppression, as in Isaiah 1:10, 40:23 and others. The man is presented as a ruler and rich, the same term used in the woes of chapter 6 and elsewhere by Jesus. Matthew and Mark have the man left right after Jesus told him to sell his possessions and give the poor. However, Luke presents him being present to hear the strong words against wealth in the following verses (Schottrof & Stegemann, 1986). The rich ruler is not prepared to be obedient. He goes away disappointed in Jesus, while Zacchaeus, who is also rich, converted and in obedience, act through giving back to the poor. This therefore means that these texts in Luke can be used to challenge those in power and the rich in the government and the society to have concern for the poor and practice justice so that the multi-dimensional salvation that Bosch (1991) talks about is achieved.

#### **6.3.4. Economic Repentance**

Luke-Acts is instrumental in these economic challenges as Bosch (1991:119) argues that when Luke presents his message of salvation, it is in different dimensions, which are economic, political, social, spiritual, physical and psychological. Bosch (1991) asserts that Luke, however, is concerned about economic salvation to save people from economic suffering. From the Zimbabwean context, it has been revealed that the economic suffering of the citizens is also caused by economic failure and injustice by those in authority and in control of economic systems. The theme of repentance, forgiveness, and salvation in the Luke-Acts mission paradigm can help resolve such challenges. Larkin (2015:3) argues that economic response to the Gospel is required in the market to help in the correction of market-dominant minorities in areas, such as corruption, economic sabotage, labour exploitation and unjust wages, fraud, bribery, discriminatory lending, charging of high prices as well as utilisation of abusive laws. As the church is called to witness the message of Christ to the world, the message of economic repentance has to reach key economic players and government leadership in Zimbabwe so that they change the way of doing their things and have concern for the poor by coming up with just laws and policies.

One of the key themes of Luke-Acts is repentance which is the change of one's mind or a total shift of perspective from where one was before repenting (Bock, 2011:262). This means repentance from every kind of sin, including those committed in the economic or political world. This therefore means that the church has to preach the Gospel of repentance to the church, society and authorities with influence on economic systems. This agrees with what Bosch (1991:116) says, that the church is both inward and outward-oriented. Those inward should first devote themselves to the teachings of the apostles and the scripture. Its outward orientation is when it does not treat itself as a sectarian group but engage those who are still outside the gospel by sharing the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Luke 3:3 and 24:46-47 teaches about preaching repentance for the remission of sins as the reason why Jesus suffered and rose from the dead. The person, through this process, changes the mind about sin and turns to God for salvation through Jesus. In addition, Paul, in Acts 26:20, believe that when one believes in Jesus they can continue doing whatever they want, but need to have concern for God's moral standards (Bock, 2011). Good deeds are the expected results of genuine repentance. After repentance, good moral standards are to be followed in society, and even in industry as part of society. In Zimbabwe, the majority of economic and political players are Christian, meaning that if they all adhere to the moral standards of God in their places in society, there will be a significant social transformation. This is in line with what Bosch (1991:116) observes that the inner life of the church should be connected to its outer life.

Economic and political sanctions are also other factors contributing to the economic suffering of the people of Zimbabwe. Due to the violation of human rights in Zimbabwe, including what happened in the violent land reform process, political violence during elections and allegations of vote rigging, the country was struck by sanctions (Bourne, 2011:186). Political sanctions through the restriction of movement and freeze of assets of some ZANU PF members, private individuals and companies after accusations of human rights violations were issued. On the other hand, the nation was also struck by indirect sanction through the withdrawal of aid, Balance of Payments (BOP) support and termination of credit lines (Chimhowu *et al.*, 2010). Although sanctions were targeted at individual political leaders, the vulnerable people in the society suffer as the economic situation continues to worsen. In this case, in the process of addressing the violation of human rights and suffering of the people of Zimbabwe through sanctions, human rights are also violated as the majority who are innocent are caused to suffer because of these sanctions. Notwithstanding the fact that sanctions affected those not targeted by them, on the other hand they are an effort to

cause those violating human rights to repent so that there is peace and justice in the nation thereby ensuring the welfare of all citizens.

### **6.3.5 Economic Participation of the Poor**

When Luke presents his message, he is trying to establish the relationship between the rich and the poor where the primary emphasis is for the rich to share their riches with the poor. However, Luke also is concerned with the empowerment of the poor so that they participate with the rich in alleviating their poverty (Larkin, 2015:3). He presents that economic salvation can be achieved through working through his inclusion of the stories that have to do with working. This is because, on his theme of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:39 and Joel 2:28-29, the Spirit empowers the people. Luke's connection between the New and Old Testament presentation of the Spirit is the call to vocation where the Spirit comes upon a person and enables him/her to perform a particular task or ministry, including architecture like Bazalet in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31, although it is done at the will of the Spirit. The Spirit also equips people with judgement (Numbers 11:17-29) and military expertise, as in Numbers 27:18, Deuteronomy 34:9, among others and empowering them to speak the word of God. In Luke 10:7, Luke uses a phrase that, "... for the labourer is worth of his hire ...." when Jesus sends out the seventy-two. This message can be used to encourage people to work hard for the reward that sustains them in life.

In Acts 18:3, Luke also gives reference to Priscilla, Aquila and Paul having the same occupation or craft of tent-making (Matarirano, 2018:100). This means these people have skills they were using for economic production. This, therefore, can be used to encourage people in Southern Zimbabwe, both men and women, since Priscilla was a female to pursue education so that they acquire skills and have their professions in life that will sustain them. The same text can also be used to encourage citizens to engage in entrepreneurship and partnerships like what these people were doing. Luke records the teachings of Jesus in some cases through parables that have to do with working, especially in agriculture, like the parable of the sower in Luke 8:1. Most of the parables used by Jesus were stories of common settings and were close to the experiences of the Palestinian people (Russel, 1912). Most of the parables involve the customs, conditions and ideas peculiar to the Jews of Palestine during the time of Jesus and therefore need explanation for a reader from another context to fully understand the historical and theological meaning., the meaning of working communicated in some of these parables is understood when the historical

foundation is explained. Jesus used the agricultural stories to inspire people spiritually as the economy was mainly sustained by agriculture. Zimbabweans can also be inspired by these Biblical stories because they also operate in an agro-based economy. This, therefore means, Luke-Acts can be used to encourage and empower people to learn from the land as they work for their sustenance.

### **6.3.6 Renunciation and Sharing of Possessions/Charity**

The model of renunciation of possessions and charity is a relevant tool to alleviate poverty in Southern Zimbabwe if those who are rich share with the poor, thereby overcoming inequality. Among the six dimensions of salvation by Bosch (1991:115), he argues that Luke seemed to give focus on the economic dimension of salvation. The major element in Luke's paradigm is the relationship between the rich and the poor where the wealthy and healthy should share with those in poverty, some being the victims of exploitation and other challenges. The church should preach and practice the message where those privileged be in control over their insatiable desire to go upward socially and economically, having lifestyles devoid of ethics that exalt standards like self-sacrifice and solidarity.

Bosch (1991) asserts that Luke is also considered an evangelist of the rich because he had many dealings with wealthy people and also wants the rich and those respected to be reconciled to the message and way of life of Jesus and His disciples. Luke's ethics of economics are expressed in the idea of almsgiving and charity. In Acts, there is a lack of direct appeal to the prophetic concept of justice as Acts gives a stronger emphasis on how the early church wrestled with and lived out the teaching of Jesus on justice (Dyer, 2016). Some of the key examples of the descriptions of the early Christian church are in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37. Luke is not shy in Acts in sharing the shortcomings of the early Christian church in Jerusalem (Acts 5:1-11) and possibly Acts 6:1-6 where he holds this congregation as a model of harmony and community. In every community, even in Southern Zimbabwe, sharing possessions and caring for those in need is very important and should be practised. In Jerusalem, community members sold their property and possessions and gave all proceeds to those who were in need to an extent that there was no needy person in the community. If this is practised in Zimbabwe, poverty will be overcome as most of the nation's resources are in the hands of the few, while the majority suffers.

Some scholars argue that these descriptions in Acts fulfil a Hellenistic form of friendship and sharing (Dyer, 2016:118). On the other hand, Luke appeals to friendship across social classes,



encouraging those with possessions to help the poor expecting no goods or obedience in return. He redefines the ideals of friendship as how the poor are being helped in the community (Mitchel, 1992). This is contrary to what happened in the Hellenistic society, where friendship was characterised by reciprocity among the wealthy and people of high status. These expressions of the early Christian church at Jerusalem confirm the standard of justice set by God; that is, there was no needy person among them (Acts 4:34). This verse alludes to Deuteronomy 15:4. A community that always takes care of its needy meets the standard of justice of God and the church in Zimbabwe, in its ministry of the word to its members and all citizens outside the church, should encourage them to minister to other people's needs. In the prophetic literature, rulers were evaluated according to how well they cared for the lowliest in the society. Prophets condemned the unjust rulers for neglecting to care for the poor, orphans and widows and this was a priority in the early Christian church. The church in Southern Zimbabwe should do mission in a manner that demonstrates that it is a prophetic church by challenging all injustices and neglect of the poor, disabled and those in need by those in authority and also to engage in sharing of possessions and charity among its members and even the society at large.

Acts 11:27-29 talks of the relief sent to the church at Jerusalem from the church in Antioch. On another occasion in Galatians 2:10, Paul and Barnabas are asked to remember the poor, traditionally viewed as a responsibility given to Paul by the Jerusalem church. On the other hand, Romans 15:26-27 suggests that Gentile believers are indebted to the Jerusalem church. It may also be because Jerusalem was seen as the hub of the early Christian movement. Thus, Paul and his Gentile congregations were legally obligated to return financial support to the mother church. Another view is that it was an ecumenical offering. The frequent use of the word "*koinonia*" in the Pauline Corpus leads many scholars to view the collection as an ecumenical offering. Downs (2008) suggests that the collection is an example of a voluntary expression of unity. The collection's purpose may be to join the Jewish and Gentile believers together through the same understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Heredia, 2013). It was done from Paul's benevolence, although it may act as a measure of promoting and maintaining peace.

In addition, some scholars suggest that the collection is Paul's method of material relief. Downs (2008:6) agrees that "*ptochos*" is literally referencing the "economically disadvantaged." Therefore, the relief can also be considered as a form of charity for the destitute. Paul's desire, as

a result, was to give material relief to the poor in Jerusalem as a result of famine. This form of giving is very useful even as ecumenical, obligation or material relief in Southern Zimbabwe, a region that is frequently affected by droughts. Aid from churches in other regions and even beyond Zimbabwean borders is very important for relieving those suffering in poverty. Christians who are rich today should practise solidarity with poor Christians as well as non-Christians in their mission, as in Acts, compassion and sharing were mainly practised within the Christian fold, while in Luke, concern was for the poor in general.

### **6.3.7 Almsgiving in Acts**

In reference to the New Testament, the term is connected to good works and acts of charity. It involves more than one time and simple monetary gifts to the poor. However, it gives an expression of genuine social solidarity of caring and embracing those who are in need as if they are members of one's own kin group (Green, 2011). Almsgiving, by contrast, expects nothing in return as reflected in Jesus' words in Luke 14:12-14. Almsgiving is first mentioned in Acts 3:1-10 when Peter and John came across a lame man begging for alms. In response, Peter did not give alms in the traditional sense, but the story is an example of meeting the person's immediate needs. In this example, the expansion of the kingdom needs to ensure that justice for those in need is brought. Begging for alms was considered shameful and carries a stigma as the poor were at the margins of society (Dyer, 2016). The church in Southern Zimbabwe should preach to their members of the society that they practice giving to those in need. They should consider that those begging has proven that they no longer have the capacity to sustain themselves. There are many beggars in the streets with some of them being the disabled. They need to be assisted with love as people of the same society.

There are some references to the giving of alms like Acts 9:36 where Tabitha from Joppa was full of good works and acts and Acts 10 about Cornelius, a Centurion, who feared God and gave alms. Since individuals gave some of these alms, it means that the church in Southern Zimbabwe should teach its members to participate in mission in the society through giving of alms without waiting for corporate collections in church or to wait for government's intervention all the time. The church in Zimbabwe has played a critical role in complementing government efforts towards national building as well as in fostering national development, especially in social welfare (Zakeyo, 2012). The church, through its different denominations, invested its resources heavily in building,

supporting and running hospitals and clinics and in providing quality education to disadvantaged communities especially in rural areas. Its legacy and contribution to health, education and relief from disasters like droughts, floods and others in Zimbabwe still live on and should continue to encourage its members, denominations and other boards to continue this good work.

## **6.4 The Social Environment**

Social suffering in Southern Zimbabwe refers to the suffering of a particular group of people through marginalisation and oppression due to ethnicity, gender, social and religious beliefs, age and others. Main groups concerned include women, children, old people, the disabled and the sick.

### **6.4.1 Marginalisation of Women**

Women are oppressed, marginalised and subordinated by men in key areas of life due to patriarchal characters in Zimbabwe. This happens in areas like family, economy, education, politics and religion (Kambarami, 2006). Violation of human rights for females occurs through gender differentiation and discrimination, unequal treatment between a male and a female child and abuse at workplaces. Palestinian women in the first century were marginalised members by the societal codes, but during his time, Jesus broke the borders of these patriarchal structures (Matarirano, 2018:99). It is believed that Luke wrote his gospel in a way that tries to promote equality between men and women. This is why Luke sometimes is called the gospel of women (Schithals, 1980). The same text can be used to address inequalities between men and women in Southern Zimbabwe.

Luke believed that he had to challenge the status quo of how women were treated in society and bring balance between the positions of men and women (Predito 1997). In order to achieve this, he included several texts in his writing carrying the meaning that promotes women in the society. Elizabeth and Mary are presented as the main figures in the birth narratives. In contrast to Zachariah, Elizabeth is pictured as faithful because she believed the message of the angel (Luke 1:25). Mary is depicted as highly favoured after the angel's visitation to Mary rather than to Joseph. Mary is also praised that she will be called blessed by future generations. On the other hand, in the angelic communications (Luke 1:5-38), Mary is paralleled with Zachariah. This reveals God's concern for equality between men and women.

Stories used by Luke to challenge the status quo that can be utilised in the Zimbabwean context include the temple scene in Luke 2:25-38 where Anna and Simeon are used to show a balance

between a man and a woman and the acceptance of the widow of Zarephath by Elijah in Luke 4:20-30. Luke also includes the story of Queen of Sheba in Luke 11:31-32. He also presents the mustard seed paralleled with yeast, where women engage in domestic duties of making bread (Luke 13:18-21), parable of the shepherd and the lost sheep is also paralleled to woman seeking and finding a coin where both the shepherd and the woman represent God. Another text that Luke uses to portray Jesus having special attention towards women is through His attention to widows as women suffering most in the community (Luke 2:37, 7:12, 18:3, 20:47 and 21:2 (Predito 1997. Jesus rebuked the scribes who were taking widows' houses (Luke 20:47), and this can also be used against African Traditional culture, where women are disowned of their property after the death of their husbands. Jesus also shows His positive attitude toward a poor widow (Luke 21:1-4), a text that can be used to promote the care of widows in Southern Zimbabwe society.

#### **6.4.1.1 Women and the Economy**

In his narration in other texts, such as Acts 18:1-3, Luke presents women as being at par with men in aspects of economics (Matarirano, 2018). The church in Southern Zimbabwe can also use these texts in promoting and empowering women towards economic participation in the society. In Acts 18:1-3, Priscilla is presented as having the same occupation as her husband Aquila because they were both tentmakers. Therefore, it means that Priscilla was an economically skilful woman among men. This can teach women that they need to acquire technical skills and not only confine themselves to household duties as they can equally be economically active on the same level as men. The demise of Sapphira along with her husband Ananias in Acts 5:1-11 also reveals that women carry equal rights to property with men in marriage. Sapphira was independently accountable for bearing witness to the property they had sold. This text can be used to challenge patriarchal domination and oppression of women where ownership of property in some cultures is on men and not women.

As an indication that, even during the time of Jesus and the apostles, women were economically sound, there are a number of recordings where women without husbands were participating in the ministry of the Gospel with their own material resources. Women sometimes have church services conducted in their houses just as men do, as in Acts 12:12, 16:14-15 and Acts 18:7. Lydia, who was without a husband, had a household that supported the work of God even through her material resources (Matarirano, 2018:101). Luke 7:36-50 also reports of a prostitute who get crashed at a

dinner that was hosted at Simon the Pharisee's residence. The woman anointed Jesus' feet with her fragrant oil, showing that she had material substance. Therefore, this can also be used to encourage women to have material possessions. In response to the ministry Jesus received from the prostitute, he made positive comments that he had never seen such faith in Israel, declaring her as a heroine of faith. Such narrations by Luke reveal Jesus paying special attention to women. These texts confirm the interpretation by Bosch (1991) that women are a social group that requires social salvation according to his six dimensions of salvation and, in this context, in an economic sense.

#### **6.4.1.2 Women's Active Participation in Church**

In Zimbabwe, religious societies such as ATR, Christianity, especially African Independent Churches, Islam and others promote subordination and marginalisation of women in one way or the other. However, Luke records a number of stories that can be used to correct the status quo. Jesus was publicly associating with women and treated them with fairness and equality (Matarirano, 2018:100). Luke confirms the elevation of women's ministry as they are equated with their male counterparts. The Gospel of Luke alone contains the story of Jesus' visit to the home of Mary and Martha where they were given an opportunity to learn and listen to him as disciples (Luke 10:38-42). Martha and Mary are presented in a way that shows that women are involved in religious work, as Mary's position at the feet of Jesus depicts that of a disciple (Predito, 1997). Luke also shows that women performed the primary role in the ministry of the Gospel as women were the first to discover the resurrection of Jesus and reported about the empty tomb to the apostles (Luke 24:10-11).

Other stories that can be used to promote women's participation in ministry is that of Priscilla and Aquila as husband and wife where, together, they explained the way of God to Apollos in Acts 18:26. In addition, Acts 21:9-11 also puts women at par with men in Gospel ministry as Phillip's four daughters who prophesied are mentioned alongside with Agabus (Matarirano, 2018:101). On the same point, Priscilla, alongside Aquila, who is a man, taught Apollos, who is also a man, despite the view in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 that says that women should keep silent in the church as they are not allowed to speak. These references show that women have a role to play in church as men do. Therefore, Luke-Acts can be used to equip and promote the participation of women in the Gospel ministry. The church should begin to demonstrate within its corridors, even to the

outside world, through its message and practice that it is against the marginalisation and oppression of women. This can be done through its ordination of women in gospel ministry and by allowing them to occupy leadership positions in the church.

#### **6.4.2 Care for the Children**

In Southern Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe as a whole, children have suffered in many ways in the long social, political and economic crisis affecting the nation (Munro, 2015). Some of their sufferings, include lack of education, health care as well as child protection in families, schools and society at large. Children are the most vulnerable because they are still young, immature, lack social structures and are less able to advocate for themselves. Socio-economic challenges in Zimbabwe destroyed family support as parents also lost capacities to look after their children. The situation is also worsened by family conflicts and epidemics that destroy social structures. Some children resorted to begging and even criminal activities after the destruction of the social fabric, thereby creating potential for child abuse and neglect and the shortage of food, mainly in poor rural families.

The theme of children features predominantly in the Gospel of Luke. His teaching concerning the relationship and management of children is relevant in addressing problems faced by children in Southern Zimbabwe. Luke presents a story that encourages parents to have love for their children. Luke 1:17 says that John will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. Oepke (1954) argues that this was said because of Luke's concern to children. Luke said this because there was decline of parental love in the contemporary society resulting in children suffering. Also, the parable of the prodigal son emphasises on the father who unconditionally cares for his suffering children (Luke 15:11-32). The father was prepared to provide for the needs of the child, in the Southern Zimbabwe context, can be in the form of food, clothing, shelter, education, healthy services and many other. In some cases, an increase in a number of street children results from parents who lack care with their children and condemn them when they erred in life.

However, the infancy narrative of Jesus in Luke 2:48-51 where Jesus was at the age of twelve, shocked all the people in the temple because His wisdom reveals the value that is in children and, at the same time, act as a model of obedience to children in the society. Verse 48 shows the care of the parents as they were seeking the child with sorrow. If families can adjust and be able to look for their lost children in the streets and be ready to care for them, this will go a long way in

alleviating the suffering of children in the streets. The church may engage in mission in this context through preaching the message of hope to the lost children for their repentance, forgiveness and salvation as one of Bosch (1991:114)'s keys ingredients to mission according to Luke-acts. It can also participate through the establishment of more orphanages and rehabilitation centres as well as challenging the government to do the same as some of the children are now suffering from psychological stress and drug addiction. The church should teach children to obey their parents as verse 51 says that Jesus went with His parents after being found and was subject to them. Children should be given platforms to be taught in families and churches instead of chasing them away and failing to give them attention. This is why Jesus in Luke 18:15-17 rebuked His disciples for their intolerance towards children. Luke teaches that children are important in the society and to God as he reports that the Holy Spirit filled John from the mother's womb, children are also presented as a model which people should adopt for them to enter the kingdom.

#### **6.4.3 Old Persons**

Most of the older persons in Zimbabwe are poor and without pensions. Their number is high in rural areas where there are no good social amenities. Those who were in the working class have lost their contributory assets due to high levels of inflation during the time of the economic downfall. The country's economic fall has also caused their children, grandchildren, and relatives to fail to look after them. As a result, they suffer from inadequate access to services, health care and social security support also due to the increase in the cost of health care and the shortage of drugs in the nation. Some of them are also disabled due to complications of old age and other sicknesses.

Scheffler (1993) argues that according to Luke, psychological, economic and physical salvation is required for old persons. Luke also had an emphasis on old people, where he presents the psychological experience of the old people where they had a feeling of irrevocable failure and incessant preoccupation. This is shown in the case of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-80) who were both advanced in years but still childless. According to the contemporary belief of some in Zimbabwe, this situation could have been considered divine punishment (Groundman, 1974). However, Elizabeth's pregnancy contributed to alleviating social and psychological suffering as the condition was bringing shame upon them in the society.

The story of Anna and Simeon (Luke 2:25-26, 38) in the temple also presents both expectations of the Messiah's consolation of Israel and deliverance of Jerusalem. The birth of Jesus means deliverance from stressful situations experienced due to the delay of the coming of Jesus until they reached an old age. Anna was also of great age and a widow till 84s. When the church is ministering in communities with old people experiencing such forms of suffering, these texts can be used to build hope in them that their situations can change even if they are old. In Zimbabwe, the economic situation has to improve so that the nation can provide what is needed by those of old generation. In order to bring social salvation to this group the church should minister to the needs of the old people and teach children in the church to look after their parents. The church should also challenge the government to practice justice and care towards the old aged by providing them with goods and services for their welfare.

### **6.5 Spiritual Context: The Reign of the Kingdom of God**

The majority of religions in Southern Zimbabwe believe that evil spirits, witchcraft, and punishment from God due to sin result in suffering like sickness, poverty, famines, and other misfortunes (Mukushi *et al.*, 2019:106). Their remedial practices include repentance, forgiveness, prayers and other rituals. The Luke-Acts mission paradigm's key ingredients by Bosch (1991:113) include the Holy Spirit, call to witness, repentance, forgiveness and salvation. The church is very important in dealing with spiritual factors that lead to socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. This is because Luke emphasises that the presence and work of the Spirit is basic to the mission of the church as He equips believers with boldness to witness the message of Christ to the church and also to those outside (Priscilla, 2010). The church needs empowerment to minister in word and to do works or miracles like healing and exorcism. The church is also called to witness as spokesperson of the message of forgiveness of sins to all nations.

The coming of the kingdom of God illustrates a divine seal to the good news of salvation the church needs to proclaim and its power over demons by casting them out and performing divine healing (Nwaomah, 2012:98). This means that the ministry of words and deeds for proclamation of the kingdom and healing are linked together. It, therefore, appears that Jesus intended the message of the arrival and reign of the kingdom of God be spread across all nations to give hope to those in spiritual and physical suffering. The way the kingdom of God should reign is outlined in Luke 9:1-6 on the sending of the 12 disciples and in Luke 10:1-24 on the sending of the 72



disciples. They provide instructions for the missionaries, including details of their empowerment, the content of the mission where the Gospel has to be proclaimed in words, and physical healing of ailment as well as exorcism (Nwaomah, 2012). Since the role of today's church even in Southern Zimbabwe is to carry on with the mission of Jesus Christ, these passages were not recorded for historical purposes but that they can be used by the church today.

The church needs to know that it is sent and empowered for the mission to act with full authority on behalf of God. Luke records that the disciples were given power (*dunamis*) and authority (*exousia*) over demons and physical illness (Nwaomah, 2012:98). Luke stresses the validation of the Gospel, among other means, through miraculous power demonstrated by God's messengers. The proclamation of the kingdom of God is essential in Southern Zimbabwe as this community is involved in different kinds of evils thereby, in need of the divine rule of God's grace; in a way, this rule saves men's souls and God provides benefits of the works of Jesus (Bock, 1994:185). The radical principles of God are required to dominate over the affairs of men and the works of Satan in the form of sin, diseases, and demonic possession. This, therefore, means a holistic ministry is inherent in Luke 9:1-6 because of the balance between verbal and the demonstration of the reign of the Gospel.

Luke 5:30-32 Jesus describes His mission by calling the sick sinners to repentance. This is the appropriate concept to use in mission today, even in Zimbabwe looking for man's response to Jesus. Repentance is demonstrated to be sufficient to express God's offer of salvation (Bock, 2011:98). In Jewish tradition, a sinner is referred to as someone living an immoral life, murders, adulterers, swindlers and others (Luke 18:11). Sins were also associated with certain professions like the tax collectors, shepherds, soldiers where people in these occupations were ostracised as sinners. However, the Gospel of Christ, as demonstrated by Christ Himself, should be preached to sinners so that they repent and receive forgiveness. As they change their mind, their way of doing work and conducting life also change; thereby bringing transformation to the society.

### **6.5.1 Natural Agencies for Healing**

Although the Spirit empowers the church to do mission where direct answers through prayers and miracles are expected on areas, such as healing of sicknesses, healing ministry is not limited to direct answers to prayers (Nwaomah, 2012). Nwaomah (2012:103) also argues that healing may not occur due to direct answers to prayers, although some link such circumstances to weak faith.

While people need to be encouraged to rely on God for healing and in doing their mission, they also need to be taught to employ nature's agencies for the restoration of health and accept God's will in such circumstances. This, therefore, means that a balanced understanding of healing and mission becomes very important in Southern Zimbabwe where Pentecostalism believes that salvation is holistic. Thus, the presence of signs and wonders is the realisation of the presence of the kingdom of God. Bosch's (1991:113) presentation on witness after empowerment by the Holy Spirit to exercise power over all forms of evil and physical salvation becomes relevant. This part of mission is indispensable in Pentecostal ministry. Due to this feature, it has managed to attract many people as miracles and healing are viewed as a validation of the word of God and the absence of these signs in other ministries is judged by some as lack of faith.

Nwaomah (2012:104) continues to argue that the use of prayers and other remedies is equally important as healing itself is more important. Therefore, the ministry of the Gospel in Southern Zimbabwe should also bring knowledge of ethical life. This is because true religion and laws of health work together. When salvation is presented to man, it shows the need to break away from sinful gratifications which destroy health, debase the soul, and obstruct divine truth from impressing the mind. Teaching of a healthy and ethical lifestyle, like avoiding adultery which can cause sexually transmitted diseases, to ensure good health is very important. As a result, sustained teaching on principles of healthy living, as known and practised by other churches in Southern Zimbabwe, is needed in nurturing the church and not only evangelism. Luke-Acts becomes relevant in this case through some of its texts concerning healing through natural means.

Luke, the author of Luke-Acts, was a physician or scientist by profession. Although, there is little in either book that utilises scientific or medical facts or principles, there are some references to instances that involve natural means for healing. Although, circumcision performed as in Luke 2:21 was mainly done for religious purposes, in the Southern Zimbabwe context today, it is of a medical significance as the process is done to prevent the infection of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Luke's record of the haemorrhaging woman (Luke 8:43) also gives reference to the involvement of medical ways in restoring health as the woman had consulted physicians for medical assistance (Stagmann & Du Toit, 2012).

The way Luke presents the story is different from that of Mark in Mark 5:26. This shows that he was even trying to defend his professional colleagues because he shows that they had done their

best, but it was an incurable disease. Mark 5:26 says “And had suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had and was no better but rather grew worse,” while this is what Luke 8:43 says “And a woman having an issue of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her living upon all physicians, neither could be healed of any”. Mark wrote in a way that gives the fault to the physicians, whereas Luke is protecting them by giving no fault upon them. This, therefore, can be used to promote the supply of medical facilities like hospitals and drugs in Southern Zimbabwe. Although, some sicknesses are incurable, there is a great possibility that some are curable. Furthermore, the visit of the physicians by the woman reveals that in their context, they used to seek medical help for their sicknesses.

On the other hand, the woman symbolises the audience’s isolation and powerlessness from occupying a particular social status (Stagmann & Du Toit, 2012). She was vulnerable because she had spent all she had with the doctors but with no results and had no social network. Although, Luke appreciates God’s intervention in bringing physical healing, he did not condemn the woman’s visit to the physicians for medical help but simply exposes its limitation against divine healing. Since the woman was now a social outcast because of her health and economic crisis, her healing and acceptance by Jesus shows His concern for assisting vulnerable people. Stagmann and Du Toit (2012), therefore, conclude that to be healthy means a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not absence of a disease or infirmity. In Southern Zimbabwe, the church and the community need to assist those who are vulnerable and ensure their well-being in all dimensions.

Furthermore, Luke also gives reference to physical healing in his record of the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-35. His record of the assault and loss of property of the man to thieves and help from the Samaritan by binding the wounds, applying oil, and setting him on his beast to be taken care of in the Inn where he paid the bill is the evidence of his interest towards natural means to restore health. Therefore, this can be used to encourage the Southern Zimbabwe community and even the government to ensure that resources for medical assistance should always be available. If the Samaritan had no resources to serve this man, his chances of dying were very high since he was already at a state of death.

Therefore, this means that the availability of medical resources goes a long way in saving those who are in physical suffering. Since an Inn was used as a place to take care of the patient in their

context, we may refer to hospitals and clinics in this contemporary time. Van Eck and Van Niekerk (2018) say that there were two kinds of Inns during that time, which were commercial and non-commercial Inns. Non-commercial Inns were based on an obligation of hospitality. Commercial Inns required payment of services rendered, and those who frequented commercial Inns were from lower classes because they had no hosts of their own. The church can use this in its mission to provide and encourage communities and the government to provide proper and adequate health facilities with some prepared to save for the economically vulnerable at lower or no cost. The church should continue to encourage its members and other denominations to continue with the establishment of more hospitals and clinics. This is because perhaps the only Inn that was available was a commercial Inn that demanded payment. If the Samaritan had no money to pay, the victim was going to lose life. All this means that even though the church has to emphasise on divine healing, natural means should also be provided so that it is possible to save both believers and non-believers as the church has to focus both on its inward and outward as well.

## **6.6 Luke-Acts and Nature**

Pilgrim (1992) acknowledges that the global ecological crisis of our time has resulted in the theological consciousness of the church in many dimensions. Bosch (1991:117) presents that mission encounters adversity and suffering as a key ingredient of the Luke-acts mission paradigm. Adversity and suffering are in different forms in Luke-acts, such as persecution, oppression, injustice, retribution and natural adversities like hardships from calamity, personal, corporate loss not from human antagonism (Cunningham, 1997). Other natural adversities include poverty and famine, diseases and evil spirits, violent storm and many others. The nation of Zimbabwe is affected by a number of natural adversities where Luke-acts seems to be able to help address the church's relationship with nature and its significance for the welfare of all creation. This stage is trying to find out challenges that arise from the interaction of the creation and how Luke-acts can be a useful model in addressing the problems.

### **6.6.1 God as a Benevolent Creator**

The Biblical motif of creation is very crucial in understanding the relationship between God, humanity and the rest of creation. God is revealed in Luke-Acts as the creator and steward of all creation. Acts 4:24 refers to God as the creator of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them, whereas Luke 10:21 refers to him as the Lord of heaven and earth. Jesus expresses his

satisfaction in the order of creation, noting in Luke 12:22–31 that the lilies toil and spin, but outshine Solomon in all his brilliance, and that ravens neither sow nor reap nor store but God feeds them. In Luke 12:24 and 28, the contrast between humans and grass or birds is made rather than God's sure and generous care for everyone (Pilgrim, 1992). This demonstrates how God provides the natural world and also more for humans. These texts help the church in its mission to show that God has concern for creation and that since humanity is an agent of God, therefore has to ensure the welfare of all creation.

Jesus also gave reference to a generous creator in Luke 9:59 who cares for wild creation when He says “...., Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests.....”. When Paul was arguing against idolatry at Lystra, he gave a testimony of a living God whose witness is evident in nature (Acts 14:8-20). Verse 17, after absolving them of their prior ignorance, attests to the Creator's continued self-revelation throughout nature by favouring humanity through showers, seasons, an abundance of food, and human joy. In a comparable speech in Athens about the warning against idolatry and in favour of the genuine God (Acts 17:16–34), he also adopted a similar strategy. Paul says in verse 24 that the unknown God is the maker of all things. The bond between God and the nations and the unity resulting from a shared ancestry received significant focus. Luke believes that God's revelation to us is revealed via nature and humans, and that understanding God's presence, might, and goodness through nature is the first step toward understanding God (Pilgrim, 1992). Luke's view of God as a benevolent creator would be viewed against the background of universal mission of the church as Luke embraces the whole human family (Luke 24:47, Acts 1:7). It reflects that God who is the creator of all nations have a will for their salvation.

In addition, Luke connects the creation and redemption as the whole creation bears testimony to the goodness of God the creator, while special emphasis is on God's care for humanity and the natural world. The natural theology of Acts affirms that God is at work in creation. However, it also uses this as an opportunity to acknowledge our shared humanity and the interconnectedness between humans and nature that is a feature of creation. Discord will exist, though, if the goodness of creation is not honoured, or interdependence is misused. The church in Southern Zimbabwe and the community it serves should take care of and maintain the environment as stewards of God's creation since it is from God. This can be accomplished by refraining from actions that harm the environment, such as deforestation that can cause desertification. Desertification can cause a place

to be uninhabitable. For example, in Luke 4:42, the desert place is presented as an inhabitable place where people had to go to the village for food.

### **6.6.2 Work of the Spirit on Creation**

In the birth narrative (Luke 1:35), Luke compares the first and the second creation through Jesus' conception by the power of the Spirit. According to Brown (1977)'s theology of the new creation, God's Spirit, who was active in the first creation (Genesis 1:2), was active once more in the birth of Jesus. According to Luke, Jesus and the religious community are now strengthened by the Spirit of God who is empowering creation. The good news of humanity's liberty is the outcome of this. We are told that God's ultimate goal for the new creation includes the cosmos, even if there is no explicit statement regarding what this means for non-human creation, according to Pilgrim (1992), the relationship between the church and the Spirit indicates that humans should, in some way, collaborate with God in the continuing process of maintaining and creating the world. In all communities, including Southern Zimbabwe, this must consider both human and non-human creation.

### **6.6.3 Parables and Nature**

Pilgrim (1992) posits that sermons in Luke include similes from nature, such as a tree and its fruit (Luke 6:43-45), both Jesus and John demand good fruit (Luke 3:9) and houses built on different foundations (Luke 6:46-49). Since some places like Southern Zimbabwe are affected by cyclones and floods, the last parable provides measures which members of the society can employ against floods, cyclones or storms, that is, to construct their houses on strong grounds to save them from being swept away by floods. The parable of the sower and interpretation of four soils aptly describes kinds of obstacles the Galilean farmers faced (Luke 8:4-8,11-15). Also, in Luke 13, all three parables reflect nature. The barren fig tree, twin parable of the mustard seed and yeast speak about the kingdom's presence. The parable of the wicked tenants has a vineyard for its setting (Luke 20:9-19). Another story of the fig tree, whose sprouting leaves mimic the signals of the end and suggest that nature can be interpreted in communication to humans, concludes Luke's apocalypse in Luke 21:29-31. As Jesus pulls lessons from nature in these parables, it is evident that He was conversant with agriculture and the natural world. We may say that He expressed his feelings for the land through the frequency of nature in His teachings. Luke's allusion to agriculture is relevant to this society because it is the main driver of Zimbabwe's economy.

#### **6.6.4 Miracles Upon Nature**

Through Luke's teaching, all the mighty works of Jesus are related to the inbreaking of the kingdom. Luke records three natural miracles, two of which reveal Jesus' beneficent power. These include the feeding miracle (Luke 9:10–17) and Simon's miraculous fish capture (Luke 5:1–11). Jesus is shown, in each of them, as the Creator's Lord (*ibid.*, 57). Peter and his friends were fishermen, so using Jesus' influence over nature to make it produce for the benefit of people and lessen economic hardship makes sense. The story of Jesus battling demons is connected to the miracle of the stilling of the storm in Luke 8:22–25. Demons have a significant impact on the forces of nature, although they are not the same as natural forces. The sea represents the abode of the demonic world (Psalms 65:7, 107:23–32, Job 41:1–11).

Jesus, however, confronts the chaotic forces in the sea and commands the wind and waves to be quiet (Luke 4:35–39). The church must confront all demonic forces that might need to influence nature for the benefit of humanity because it is enabled by the Spirit to show the mighty power of God. Natural forces can bring about issues like wind and waves and other issues tied to nature, including droughts and others. According to the whole account in 1 Kings 17 and 18, where the woman of Zarephath and famine are mentioned, Prophet Elijah put an end to drought. Therefore, the church in Southern Zimbabwe, with its power for witness of Jesus, should use this power to restore nature and welfare of humanity. This is because these stories point to Jesus as the one with divine authority over nature and the demonic (Pilgrim, 1992).

On the other hand, Luke presents that nature can be managed even without divine authority. For instance, Paul had warned them to cease their journey when the storm appeared in the middle of the sea in Acts 27:13, but they disregarded his warning. The ability to make judgments that keep people out of danger makes the weather forecast of utmost importance. Luke 12:54–55, when Jesus discusses the interpretation of the times, demonstrates how the natural direction of the wind and clouds aids in understanding the weather and seasons. Planning and taking action are both aided by this forecast. Preserving the environment and refrain from behaviors that threaten it is crucial because it plays a significant role in educating people.

#### **6.6.5 Passion Over Nature**

Danker (1988) argues that even the passion history of Luke involves nature. Jesus rode a newborn colt as he approached Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives as a representation of his regal humanity

and the importance of animals in maintaining human life (Luke 19:29–40; Zechariah 9:9). Since wildlife is useful in human life, people in Southern Zimbabwe where ranching is one of the key economic activities should show much care and protection to animals. Cruelty to animals need to be avoided. Luke uses a story that follows the disciples' cries of praise for Jesus' amazing works when He responds to the Pharisees as a way of demonstrating the importance of even inanimate creation (Pilgrim, 1992). This story demonstrates that God can use inanimate nature to speak (Luke 3:8, 19:40). As stated in Luke (23:44–49), Jesus' nature also has an impact on nature, as his death is accompanied by darkness and the rending of the temple veil (Danker, 1988). This demonstrates the connection between Jesus as human and nature, if the welfare of one is affected, it has an impact on the other, therefore the good relationship should be maintained by protecting nature. Even though, the Passover occurred during the full moon season, Luke attempts to portray the darkness as an eclipse (Danker, 1988). Luke demonstrates how remarkable cosmic phenomena were present during this historical period. Its theological importance is significant because, according to Acts 3:15, the absence of light is a manifestation of the creator's wrath following the murder of His Son. This implies that God laments the suffering of creation. Humanity should be in a position to properly manage nature in a way that is acceptable before God and even welfare of nature itself. The church should also know that God can communicate or express himself through nature, therefore it should be respected. Because of this, Luke's exposition of the gospel of Jesus shares with other Gospels a sense that the entire universe is in agony while it waits for redemption (Romans 8). If even the creation is about to be redeemed by humans, it indicates that God cares deeply about it and that humanity should treat it with respect.

#### **6.6.6 Nature and the Apocalypse**

The end-time message is communicated in relation to nature according to Luke-Acts. Jesus predicts that the end will occur like a burst of lightning in Luke 17:24. The argument for the unexpectedness of the end is made using biblical tales of Noah and the deluge and Sodoma's volcanic devastation (Luke 17:26–33). In Luke 21:5–38, Luke also describes the apocalypse. In the first portion, which begins in verse 11, Luke lists the cosmic signs that precede the end, which include earthquakes, famines, plagues, and portents. According to certain theologians, the end times are the period of time between Jesus' first and second comings. The New Testament church is in its time period. Luke suggests that since these events cannot be stopped, the church and the rest of the world should create ways to deal with crises like famines, earthquakes, and pestilences.



The church has a responsibility to educate the public. The force of the entire cosmos is also described as being shaken in the parousia, which includes the sun, moon, stars, raging sea, and earth passing away (Pilgrim, 1992). The entire creation is shown longing for redemption in the triumphal words of verse 28 (Craddock, 1990). The advent of Christ ushers in the new world after the current one has been destroyed. Although, humans will always be the main target of salvation, there are connections that the rest of creation will share.

While Luke does not expressly state that the old heaven and earth would vanish, Pilgrim (1992) contends that the destruction of the old world implies the emergence of a new one. If this is the case, Luke's interpretation of God's ultimate goal for creation fits with Pauline's hope for the release of creation from slavery (Romans 8:19–23) and the imagery of a new heaven and earth in the apocalypse (Revelation 21–22). This suggests that even if a new earth is produced, the old one still matters to God. Luke-Acts is therefore, to be utilised to educate the church and the world on the necessity and means of relating to nature and start incorporating them in preaching and living, even though some of the texts may have been omitted. Bosch (1991:117) asserts that the church should respond to the suffering that both it and the community experience by continuing to teach from the Bible, to pray, and live boldly in accordance with the Spirit. When they come against these natural difficulties, the church and communities in Southern Zimbabwe are to apply the same strategy.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm by Bosch (1991) in dealing with socio-economic challenges affecting Southern Zimbabwe. Although, some minor concepts were also used in the analysis, key ingredients to the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as explained in chapter three were mainly used. It was discovered that the main factors contributing to the cause of socio-economic problems are political, economic, social, spiritual and natural. Although the primary objective of salvation is for the soul, Luke has demonstrated his great concern for other forms of salvation, which are economic, political, social, psychological and physical. On this basis, the Luke-Acts mission paradigm was found to be relevant in many cases to address socio-economic challenges affecting Southern Zimbabwe. The Narrative Critical Hermeneutic and Historical Critical Analysis approaches were used in this chapter to assess the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in solving socio-economic challenges in Southern

Zimbabwe. After confirming the relevance Luke-Acts mission paradigm, the next chapter summaries the research, presents findings and provides recommendations.

# **Chapter Seven**

## **Summary, Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter analyses the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe according to the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. A summary of every chapter is provided in this section. The chapter has four sections: a summary of study, summary of research findings, recommendation for mission perspective and a conclusion. The chapter provides answers to questions set out in chapter one. The study reveals the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm for the church in its ministry in order to bring socio-economic transformation in Southern Zimbabwe.

### **7.2 Summary of the Thesis**

Chapter one of this thesis is the introduction of the study. It lays out the background of the study, research aim, objectives, questions and justification of the study. Contextual Social Constructivism is the conceptual framework for the research. As such, qualitative research methodology was described and used in this study. The Luke-Acts biblical text was analysed using the Narrative Critical Hermeneutics and Historical Critical Hermeneutics to determine if it is relevant in addressing socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe. The research methods used include the missiological research method for the relevance of church mission, contextual method, theological method and inclusivity research approach. Ethics to research were also presented and considered. Key research terms were classified and defined. and key ingredients of Luke-Acts mission paradigm were reviewed.

Chapter two of the thesis analyses the current context of Southern Zimbabwe, beginning with the geographical and demographical characteristics. Southern Zimbabwe in this research comprises of Masvingo, Matabeleland South, Bulawayo and Southern parts of Matabeleland North, Manicaland and Midlands Provinces. The region has two distinct seasons; the summer rain from October to May and the dry cold winter from June to September. It is hot and prone to perennial droughts. There are many cultures and ethnic settings in Zimbabwe (Mawire & Mubaya, 2014). In some areas, Christianity is mixed with African traditional beliefs. The Bible is recognised as a tool to guide and deal with existing challenges and needs of society. Zimbabwe has cultural beliefs,

patriarchal attitudes and religious practices that threaten women's rights and freedom. Zimbabwe is a multi-party state but is run by a centralised government. Its economy mainly depends on mining and agriculture that enable the growth of secondary sectors like manufacturing, tourism and service sectors. The economy's decline that started in 2000 resulted in de-industrialisation and the rise of informal sector (Chirau, 2014). In education, Science and Technology, Zimbabwe is one of the countries with the highest adult literacy rate in Africa, but she is affected by the exodus of its trained personnel to other countries.

Chapter three presents the nature of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm. The concept paradigm was introduced by Thomas Kuhn in the 1962s and viewed as a universally recognised scientific achievement that provides model problems and solutions to the community of practitioners for a particular time (Kuhn, 1970). Luke-Acts mission paradigm by Bosch (1991) describes the way Luke views the reality in his community. It is extracted from the gospel of Luke and book of Acts. The main theme of Luke-Acts is forgiveness and solidarity with the poor. Bosch (1991) outlines the key ingredients of Luke-Acts, which are; Holy Spirit, correlation between the Jewish and Gentile mission, call to witness, repentance, forgiveness of sins and salvation, six dimensions of salvation, preaching the good news of peace by Jesus Christ, the church and that mission encounters adversity and suffering. The six dimensions of salvation are economic, social, political, physical, psychological and spiritual (Scheffler, 2011).

Chapter four investigated the history of the causes of the socio-economic situation in contemporary Southern Zimbabwe. Main factors that contributed to the socio-economic challenges are political, economic, social, spiritual and natural in nature. Political factors include colonisation that resulted in dispossession and displacements, loss of livelihoods, loss of identity and belonging, permanent disempowerment as well as loss of cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge (Mtapuri & Benyera, 2020). Ethnicity also had an impact on post-colonial nation building due to inherited ethnic polarisation characterised by political violence experienced during the during the Gukurahundi killings, election campaigns and the marginalisation of other ethnic groups and places. Economic factors include the ESAP, poor economic governance like poor policy decisions, unmet pension promises, costly DRC wars, unhealthy decisions to offer loans increased debts accelerated the economic downfall. Other economic factors include corruption, an increase in government control, the violent Land reform Programme, Operation Murambatsvina that involved

violations of human rights and resulted in the withdrawal of aid as well as economic and political sanctions (Chimhowu *et al.*,2010:10). Social groups like women, children and old persons are also negatively affected. Women are mainly affected due to patriarchy in family, education, economy, politics and religion.

Chapter five analyses the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe according to Luke-Acts. The church in Southern Zimbabwe has been doing its ministry through evangelism, pursuit of justice, peace and reconciliation through gospel ministry by individual persons or denominations and ecumenical groups challenging injustices by the government against the poor, marginalised, oppressed and others (Maforo, 2020). This is done through church service messages and pastoral letters. The church also ministers the economic empowerment gospel to encourage and give hope to the people. The church also provides material contribution through education by building schools and providing school fees, health facilities, emergency relief during droughts, floods, pandemics and others through individuals and as denominations. Material help has also been provided through Faith-based NGOs.

Chapter six analyses the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in dealing with socio-economic challenges affecting Southern Zimbabwe. It also examines the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe according to Luke-Acts. Narrative Critical Hermeneutics was mainly used with the help of the Historical Critical Hermeneutics to cover for the limitations of the Narrative Critical Hermeneutics in interpreting the Luke-Acts biblical narrative text. Luke-Acts can be used to guide, inform and inspire Christians today for political involvement and responsibility from the life and teachings of Jesus and the early church. Since Zimbabwe is a nation that has been frequently affected by political violence from the time of Western colonisation, ethnic marginalisation and Gukurahundi killings and violence during election campaigns, the theme of justice, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace is very fundamental in the church's mission in Southern Zimbabwe. Ecumenism is also important in demonstrating the unity of the church as she pursues the mission of God.

It was discovered that Southern Zimbabwe is affected by poverty and has two main distinct economic classes: the rich and the poor (Scheffler, 2016). In his writing, Luke was more concerned with economic poverty. Bad governance and injustice contributed to the suffering of the economy of the region. Luke is against social injustice as he emphasises on the care for the oppressed and

marginalised, the poor, widows and orphans (Dyer, 2016). He gives emphasis on equality, solidarity and putting wrongs to right. For example, Luke 4:18-21 shows that Luke had the poor and sinners who are oppressed in mind. Corruption by government officials and discrimination shows no concern for the poor. Repentance should be preached even in the marketplace to change the mind of the economic players, thereby correcting the wrongs in the market and leadership (Larkin, 2015). Renunciation and sharing of possessions are one of Luke's key themes as he challenges the rich to share with the poor and that the poor should be empowered to participate in the economy through their skills. Luke also challenges the marginalisation of women in the economy and that they can actively participate in church ministry. He also teaches about taking care of children, old persons and the interrelationship of religions. Spiritually, Luke emphasises on the reign of the kingdom of God through witness, repentance, forgiveness and salvation. The church should be empowered to minister the word and do works and miracles (Priscilla, 2010). However, it was discovered that healing can be achieved through natural agencies and not only through miracles. Luke-Acts also help to show how nature can be preserved.

### **7.3 Objectives Revisited**

This study managed to achieve its objectives. Chapter two explores the current context of Southern Zimbabwe and discovered that key factors that characterise Southern Zimbabwe are geographical and demographical, political, economic, social, spiritual and natural as required by the first objective. A critical engagement of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as required by objective number two was done in chapter three where the main theme of Luke-Acts was discovered to be forgiveness and solidarity with the poor. Eight key ingredients that mainly constitute the Luke-Acts mission paradigm were identified as the Holy Spirit, correlation between the Jews and Gentile mission, call to witness, repentance, forgiveness of sins and salvation, six dimensions of salvation, preaching the good news of peace by Jesus Christ, the church and that the mission of necessity encounters adversity and suffering. The objective number three was to analyse the history of the socio-economic situation in contemporary Southern Zimbabwe. It was achieved as the causes of socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe were analysed. The research discovered that key factors that contributed to socio economic problems in Southern Zimbabwe are political, social, economic, spiritual as well as natural in chapter four. Objective four required the evaluation of church ministry in Southern Zimbabwe. This was achieved as the research in chapter five found

that the church is doing its ministry through evangelism, discipleship, pastoral letters by leaders of ecumenical bodies and individuals as well as spiritual and material contribution to help the poor. The last objective seeks to discuss the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm as described by Bosch (1991) to bring possible socio-economic transformation in Southern Zimbabwe. It was achieved as the research in chapter six presents that Luke-Acts is relevant in addressing political, economic, social, spiritual and natural causes of socio-economic suffering in Southern Zimbabwe.

#### **7.4 Key Findings**

The first key finding is that before independence, the state used laws and institutions that define population into racial and ethnic classes. The post-independence state inherited some of these structures and they are created ethnic polarisation that is hindering unity and development in the country and the Southern region of Zimbabwe. During the colonial era, racial and ethnic identities determined access to resources and positions in society.

Secondly, it was found that the Luke-Acts mission paradigm that Bosch (1991) proposed has the following eight key ingredients: Holy Spirit, correlation between the Jews and the Gentile mission, call to witness, repentance, forgiveness of sins and salvation, six dimensions of salvation, preaching of good news of peace by Jesus Christ, the church and that mission encounters adversity and suffering. The six dimensions of salvation include economic, political, social, spiritual, physical and psychological that give space for holistic ministry by the church to bring transformation of life.

The third finding is that socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe were caused by various factors, including political, economic, social, spiritual and natural. Political causes range from the effects of colonisation, post-colonial violence and the marginalisation of other ethnic groups and regions, resulting in divisions and disturbance to national development. Poor governance and corruption resulting in violation of human rights also resulted in economic decline. This also led to economic and political sanctions. Natural factors like drought, cyclones, floods and pandemics like HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 are also major natural factors that affected socio-economic life. It was also found that social groups like women, children and old persons are most economically vulnerable, especially in poor economic conditions in Zimbabwe, women due to the patriarchal

mentality in society resulting in marginalisation, children and old persons due to the inability to provide for themselves.

The fourth finding in this research is that the church engages in holistic ministry through evangelism and social responsibility. It was also found that the church in Zimbabwe has pursued the ministry of justice, reconciliation and peace through individuals and ecumenical groups to challenge injustices through church service messages and pastoral letters. The church has also shared material resources with the community in the form of food, clothes, health and education facilities and many others through individuals, denominations and Faith-based NGOs.

The fifth finding is that Narrative Critical Hermeneutics is an appropriate method in analysing the relevance of Luke-Acts in dealing with socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe context. Narrative Critical Hermeneutics allows the reader to interpret from his/her context. However, because Narrative Critical Hermeneutics may fail to provide the historical background of the story, the Historical Critical Hermeneutics was found to be useful in this regard. The Luke-Acts mission paradigm has shown to be relevant in dealing with socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe because it was found to be applicable in many areas in political, economic, social, spiritual and natural situations. It is instrumental in bringing liberation and repossession of resources, especially in Zimbabwe a post-colonial state. Luke-Acts also guides and informs the church to participate in politics peacefully, avoiding violence. It was also found that servant-leadership is a better style that avoids oppression by authoritarian rule.

Forgiveness, justice, reconciliation and peace are crucial in bringing peace, unity and development through mission of the church in Southern Zimbabwe. This area often experiences political violence resulting in killings, assaults, loss of property and others. This is supported by Luke, who is against social injustice, but emphasises equality and solidarity. Political and economic repentance, according to Luke's theme of repentance and forgiveness, is key in transforming the mind of political and economic players, thereby bringing socio-economic transformation through good and fair practices and policies. It was also found that Luke-Acts is relevant in challenging the marginalisation of women in the economy and supports active participation in church ministry. It has also proven to be a relevant tool for the caring of children and old persons in society.

The last finding is that Luke-Acts is very instrumental in preserving nature as it is useful for the socio-economic well-being of humanity in Southern Zimbabwe. This is supported by Luke's



presentation of God as a benevolent creator, work of the spirit on creation, parables and nature, miracles upon nature, passion over nature as well as nature and apocalypse.

### **7.5 Recommendations**

Since Luke-Acts has proven to be relevant in dealing with socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe in several areas, including political, economic, social, spiritual and natural, the society, leadership, the government should listen to the church and give space for the church's contribution towards socio-economic transformation. The church should be ready to endure adversity and suffering, even against threats from political authorities, when doing its mission. The church should equip its members with this Luke-Acts mission paradigm so that they can engage in effective holistic ministry.

This research has analysed the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in addressing socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe only, but there are many other mission paradigms the church can use. This led the researcher to recommend that research on other mission paradigms and different contexts may also be done to enhance the mission of the church.

### **7.6 Conclusion**

This study has explored and analysed the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in solving socio-economic problems affecting Southern Zimbabwe. The current context of Southern Zimbabwe was explored. The study also describes the Luke-Acts mission paradigm according to Bosch (1991). The history of the causes of the socio-economic situation in Southern Zimbabwe was explored in this research. This research also analysed on the relevance of the Luke-Acts mission paradigm in dealing with socio-economic challenges in Southern Zimbabwe using the Narrative Critical Hermeneutics and Historical Critical hermeneutics. An evaluation of the ministry of the church in Southern Zimbabwe was also done where it was discovered that the church should engage in holistic ministry. The final chapter of this research comprises the introduction, summary of the thesis, key research findings and recommendations.

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