

## **CHAPTER SIX: THE INFLUENCE OF INDIGENOUS AND FOREIGN TRADITIONS ON GOSPEL MUSIC IN ZIMBABWE**

### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter explores how African and Western music have affected one another in terms of instrumentation, musical styles, song text, song themes, religious issues, language, dress and concert/ public performance. The chapter responds to the research question that deals with elements of music borrowed from both exotic and indigenous musical cultures.

### **6.1 Influence of Foreign Traditions on Zimbabwean Gospel Music**

Impey (1998) remarks that all countries in Africa with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia, underwent a period of foreign (Western) domination and this brought foreign musical cultures that later affected original African music traditions. Thus, traces of foreign musical cultures are evident all over Africa. Stone (1998) points out that when Western scholars started to study African music, their findings emphasized that African music was primitive and monotonous. Thus, no emphasis was put on its musicological content.

In Zimbabwe the economic domination of the West has many reflectors, and the most outstandingly hit area is that in the realm of culture, under which gospel music falls. Nkabinde (1992) observes that in the early eighties, the schools,

colleges and university (University of Zimbabwe was then the only university in the whole country) were teeming with Rastafarians. Bob Marley, a religious human rights activist performed at Zimbabwe's first independence celebrations in 1980, and his influence on Zimbabwean religion and music was felt with no doubt. Reggae did not only affect the secular music scene but gospel music as well. Rastafarian culture flourished as both a religious and musical culture spilling into secular and gospel music circles.

During the war of liberation, freedom fighters were trained in East and Central African countries such as Tanzania, Congo and Zaire where rumba music is popular and has its origins. When the war ended in 1979, the freedom fighters imported the popular musical style into Zimbabwe. To begin with, there was a lot of secular rumba music and later, gospel musicians such as Knowledge Kunenyati (a war veteran once based in Zaire) popularized rumba in gospel music circles, and has continued to do that to date. Some gospel artists also adopted the rumba dance although there has been heated debate on its incorporation into gospel music. Most people believe that the dance has a lot of sexual connotations, which are not socially acceptable. Zindi (2003) refers to this type of rumba as *sungura*.

On the other hand, there were several people who were in exile staying in the Americas, Britain and other western countries who returned to Zimbabwe in 1980 after the attainment of independence. These brought with them popular musical

cultures that were later adopted by both secular and gospel music artists in Zimbabwe. Of note were the Rusike Brothers who grew up in Zambia and returned to their homeland, Zimbabwe at Independence. They were a Zimbabwean version of the American Jackson Five. "With the influence of their father Tawanda, Abbie, Kelly, Philip and Colin became Southern Africa's answer to the Jackson Five," (Zindi 2003: 81). Fungai Malianga a gospel musician who grew up in Britain adopted the funk-jazz beat, and was influenced by the music of James Brown and Ray Charles. Zindi notes that there are traces of Western pop and rock in most Zimbabwean popular and gospel music.<sup>1</sup>

## **6.2 Influence of Indigenous Traditions on Zimbabwean Gospel Music**

Although diverse, African music has certain common traits. One is the use of a distinctive theme on which the musician develops improvisation or the antiphonal call and response pattern that is also cyclic in nature. The other is a structure in which several melodies are usually sounded simultaneously resulting in polyphony and interlocking rhythms. Cephas Mashakada's gospel music is characterized by the use of polyphony.

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<sup>1</sup> Zindi, F 2003. *Music Work Book: Zimbabwe Versus the World*. Harare: Zindsc Publications

Indigenous musical styles that have been adopted by gospel artists are both vocal and instrumental. The *mbira*<sup>2</sup>, marimba and the *hwamanda*<sup>3</sup> (horn) are two of the most popular Zimbabwean indigenous musical instruments that are still in use today. The styles that mark these instruments have inspired many Zimbabweans today to the extent that the electronic keyboard and the guitar have imitated the marimba, *hwamanda* and *mbira*. Although *mbira* is a Zimbabwean indigenous instrument, it is also found throughout Africa.<sup>4</sup>

In Zimbabwean traditional religion, the *mbira* and *hwamanda* play an important role during rituals and ceremonies where a spirit possession and communication with God takes place. Some Zimbabwean gospel artists play the *mbira* and *hwamanda* styles and tunes on Western instruments such as the guitar or keyboard. A few artists have ventured into the actual use of the indigenous instruments in gospel music bands, despite being encouraged to shun their own traditional instruments and these are Thomas Dyson and Areketa Saizi.

The use of vocables that feature in the song **Ndire ndire** is borrowed from Zimbabwean indigenous musical cultures. The accappella groups have adopted this element to a greater extent. The vocables may not have definite meaning but

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<sup>2</sup> African instrument with metal keys that are plucked with fingers to produce sound. They are melodic instruments and are now often tuned to the Western scale.

<sup>3</sup> Blown instrument made from kudu or buffalo horns

<sup>4</sup> Zindi, F 2003. Music Work Book: Zimbabwe Versus the World. Harare: Zindsc Publications

allow for melodic improvisation especially on the part of lead singers in call and response songs. The response also has room to use vacables.

### **6.3 Research findings on musicological and thematic influences on Zimbabwean gospel music.**

Each of the research questions that prompted this study is discussed in relation to the data collected from interviews with twenty gospel musicians, fifteen church leaders and fifteen church members, also data collected from observation of gospel music concerts and data from Zimbabwean gospel song text analysis. The discussion will also establish the main findings of this investigation in relation to the research questions.

#### **6.3.1 How Zimbabwean gospel music content has evolved between 1980 and 2007.**

Evidence gathered in this study through interviews and gospel song analysis shows that gospel music has evolved in terms of stylistic content since 1980 when Zimbabwe attained its independence. Some respondents felt that foreign musical styles were imported especially during annual gospel music festivals where South Africans and other foreign gospel artists shared the stage with Zimbabwean gospel artists. Musical styles varied since 1980 to include foreign styles, and the themes of lyrics now even cover socio-economic and political

issues.<sup>5</sup> This was not apparently the case in the early eighties when gospel lyrics were more centred on religious concerns of baptism, victory, repentance and salvation.<sup>6</sup>

One gospel musician, Factor (pseudo name), further explained that the artiste shapes his song themes by what would be happening around him at a particular time in relation to gospel, social, emotional and economic environments. He says that as artistes they are forced to move with time and capture the current trends in the country, lest they risk losing customers by composing lyrics that are not relevant to people's lives. He also remarked that the political and socio- economic situation in Zimbabwe could not be ignored any longer as it was deemed to be at its worst. The artist also believed that it was safer to express disillusionment towards the government through gospel music rather than its counterpart, secular. Secular artists have got themselves into trouble for making political sentiments that opposed the government.<sup>7</sup>

A very experienced gospel artist who wished to remain anonymous pointed out that gospel music has changed because of commercialization. He accused upcoming gospel artists of loving money and dragging immoral dances and 'hard' musical styles like rock into gospel so that the artists would gain money and celebrity status. The artist claimed that around 1980, only people with known

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Sammuel Kumbirai, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2007

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Dryden Chateya, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Factor, an artist, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.

Christian backgrounds like Freedom Sengwayo of the Apostolic Faith Church, Mechanic Manyeruke of the Salvation Army and Jordan Chataika of the Methodist church were accepted as gospel artists. He claims that artists who are not Christians are performing gospel music for money and some are bringing gospel music to disrepute by their 'worldly' orientation.<sup>8</sup>

Another change that has been brought about by gospel music of late is music festivals. As from the late 1990s there have been annual gospel music festivals hosted by Zimbabwe. 'Ngaavongwe Explosion' and 'Nguva Yakwana' are the two major shows that Elias Musakwa and the Gospel Train stable host annually. These festivals have brought in artistes from South Africa and other neighbouring African countries. This influx of foreign artistes has facilitated changes to Zimbabwean gospel music in terms of adopting elements of new musical styles and new dances. As a result of performing jointly with some of the South African gospel artists like Makhabane, Malope, Vuyo and Lundi that attended the Zimbabwean gospel music festivals, some Zimbabwean artists started to copy the stylistic traits and tunes of their South African counterparts' music, and only changed the language of the lyrics. Mercy Mutsvene translates songs by Malope from Zulu to Shona and it would only be proper to refer to her as a song translator rather than song writer.<sup>9</sup> There is apparently a copyright agreement

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with anonymous gospel artist, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2008

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Peter Chikwama, 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2008

between the two gospel artistes. There is no doubt that South African musical styles like mbaqanga had influence on some gospel artistes.

An analysis of selected Zimbabwean gospel song texts and themes also reflects a shift shaped by the other social, political and economic environments making up the history of Zimbabwe since 1980. It emerges from the song texts that issues like AIDS/HIV, poverty, corruption, political violence and hope for a better Zimbabwe feature quite often.

### **6.3.1 Factors that determine the features and changes in Zimbabwean gospel music.**

From the data collected from interviews, newspaper articles and analysis of song text, there are several factors that determine the features and changes in Zimbabwean gospel music. The socio- economic and political environment was found to be most influential as far as textual themes are concerned.<sup>10</sup> Available literature on Zimbabwean music shows that musical compositions of the early 1980s were centred on celebrating independence but this later changed due to the changing socio-political environment.

As the Zimbabweans began to express dissatisfaction with the ruling government, gospel music themes sought to address the socio-economic and political

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Farai Muzondo, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.



problems. Artists probably felt it would be safer to express their grievances through gospel music than using secular music, which could easily lead to political victimization by the government.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of gospel song texts, shows that issues that affected Zimbabweans in their daily lives were raised in the song texts. It has been discussed that issues mostly raised have to do with poverty after 1980, corruption, political violence and HIV/AIDS unlike themes before 1980, which mainly had to do with repentance, salvation and deliverance.

The other factor that brought about changes to Zimbabwean gospel music are regional gospel music festivals hosted by Zimbabwe. Soon after independence in 1980, various South African bands and choirs visited Zimbabwe where they made great impact on gospel music. The Holy Spirit Choir from South Africa frequented Zimbabwe to perform in the early 1980s, and soon afterwards many gospel choirs emerged, that started using mainly the keyboards just like Holy Spirit Choir, and also dressed in fashionable uniforms. Prior to 1980 local gospel artists like Manyeruke and Chataika mainly used the guitar and rarely had accompanying dances.<sup>11</sup>

Pentec has also had an impact on Zimbabwean gospel music with regards to its thematic emphasis and the array of musical instruments. Most Pentecostal churches believe in the power of music, and own expensive music equipment that

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with a Masvingo Church leader, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007

attracts the youth to church. Earlier, musical instruments that were synonymous with gospel music were guitars, tambourines and brass.<sup>12</sup>

### **6.3.2 Indigenous and foreign music styles that have influenced the musicological form and content of Zimbabwean gospel music.**

The analysis of a number of Zimbabwean gospel songs and observation of gospel music shows, as has been observed reflect that some elements of music like rhythm and harmony have their roots in African music and others in Western music. The form, shape and structure of some gospel songs derive from indigenous as well as foreign musical cultures in and outside Africa.

Chorus and solo structure that is common in African songs where one person leads the song and the rest respond is also found in the West. Beethoven is popular for its use. It has been observed that some Zimbabwean gospel artists use that binary form effectively. The song is in cyclic form and will only end when the lead singer decides to stop. The chorus could be short and repetitive, while the solo theme varies as per new textual settings. A lot of improvisation involving the use of vocables and shouts is also prevalent as in indigenous African music.<sup>13</sup> Other gospel artists have used an instrumental solo voice to lead chorus responses.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with church member, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008

<sup>13</sup> Vabati vaJehovha, Hakuna zvinorema; Mercy Mutsvene, Mitoro

Some musical styles and structures have been borrowed from other African countries such as Congo and South Africa. Congo has a variety of rhumba beats and performing attire that have been adopted by Zimbabwean gospel artists like Mahendere Brothers. Other musicians like Elias Musakwa, Charles Charamba and Fungisayi Mashavave have adopted the *sungura* music style which is an off shoot of rhumba. Pansula and other South African styles have been borrowed by some Zimbabwean gospel artists like Mercy Mutsvene and Kudzai Nyakudya. Apart from Mercy Mutsvene, Nyakudya has taken a lot from South African gospel artist Lundi Tyamara.

Reggae has also been used in Zimbabwean gospel music and this was borrowed from Jamaica. Bob Marley's performance at Zimbabwe's first independence celebrations made the genre popular. Several artists have adopted the style and used it effectively.

#### **6.4 Analysis of selected Zimbabwean gospel music**

The process of analysis involves breaking down content into smaller units and finding out how each individual unit contributes to the whole. Scholarly analysis of African music is, to a great extent, based on Western theoretical frameworks which hardly represent African musical constructs, (Ndlovu 1991). Most of the African music history and notation have been surrounded by controversy on representation of African cultural heritage by foreign scholars. While the debate

on the suitability of staff notation for African musical idioms continues, this study will use staff notation for analysis since it is readily accessible. It should be noted that in some cases where a song is repetitive in terms of melody, only a few bars are transcribed. It would mean that the song text is the only aspect that would change as the song progresses. As has been highlighted in previous chapters, this study will concentrate more on the structure of the piece with regards to arrangement of voices.

For the purpose of analysis, ten songs have been transcribed (see Appendix xii). Three of the transcribed songs have been analysed. In some cases the whole song was transcribed but in cases where the stanzas are repetitive in musicological content, part of the song has been transcribed. The song structure determines the category of a song.

#### **6.4.1 Category A**

The song selected in this category is in common quadruple time. **Aya Ndiwo mabasa** consists of a short chorus and a solo part that has repetitive lyrics and rhythmic content. The chorus part of the song features homophonic rhythmic patterns and has four voice registers which are soprano, alto, tenor and bass. The tenor voice assumes the solo role.

Only the vocal parts will be analysed in all songs for the purposes of this study. This is an accapella piece in the key of B Major. The tenor voice leads the song while soprano, alto and bass answer in harmony. When the tenor is still sustaining the **sa** syllable of ***Aya ndiwo mabasa***, the other voices overlap with the same phrase, such that a kind of alternation recurs. The homophonic structure of the responses is maintained throughout the song.

### **Literal translation of Aya Ndiwo Mabasa.**

<b>Lead:</b>	<i>Aya ndiwo mabasa</i>	These are the deeds
<b>Response:</b>	<i>Aya ndiwo mabasa</i>	These are the deeds
<b>Lead:</b>	<i>Anodiwa nababa</i>	That please the father
<b>Response:</b>	<i>Anodiwa nababa</i>	That please the father

There is a lot of repetition, indicating and emphasizing that God is only pleased by good deeds. With a lot of evil deeds like corruption, rape, political killings and theft, the song encourages people to do good as this pleases God. In a bid to survive, a lot of people are forced to engage in corrupt deeds.



### Example 1

## Aya Ndiwo Mabasa

Vabati VaJehova

The musical score is written for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). It is in the key of A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first two measures of the piece. The second system contains measures 3, 4, and 5. The lyrics are: 'A ya ndi wo ma ba' and 'sa'. The Soprano and Alto parts have a melodic line that repeats in the second system. The Tenor part has a more active line, including a long note in the second measure of the first system. The Bass part provides a steady accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'A ya ndi wo ma ba' and 'sa'.



6

Soprano: A no di wa na ba  
Alto: A ya ndi wo ma ba  
Tenor: A no di wa na ba  
Bass: A ya ndi wo ma ba

Soprano: ba  
Alto: sa  
Tenor: A ya ndi wo ma ba  
Bass: sa

Soprano: A ya ndi wo ma ba sa  
Alto: A ya ndi wo ma ba sa  
Tenor: A ya ndi wo ma ba  
Bass: A ya ndi wo ma ba sa

### 6.4.2 Category B

The song falling under this category is **Toita Zvedenga**. The song features an extended solo statement and a short chorus answer. The extended solo statement is executed by the soprano voice and it is a four-part song with soprano, alto, tenor and bass. The chorus part is homophonic.

This is a tune in A major,  $4_4$  time and begins with an upbeat. The harmonising parts adopt the same rhythmic structure (monorhythm). The 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase of the solo eight bars long statement is a repetition of phrase no.1 with slight intervallic modifications. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> phrases also are like sequences of the no.1 phrase with minor intervallic rhythm variations. Melodic movement is primarily stepwise and has intervals of 3rds. The chorus answer is four bars long in homophonic chordal structure. The four part harmony is obviously influenced by Western hymnody but not necessary chordal theory, rather more of intuitive harmonization that is found in indigenous music of the Shona.

The melody sung by the solo soprano is essentially *ad libitum* and can be freely adapted to suit the lyrics and this also applies to the chorus. The chorus is made up of a single phrase that is repeated throughout, another element of African music. This repetition emphasises the song theme which is 'Jesus will come and we will go with him'. It is like the solo (lead) is the preacher exhorting the congregation (response) about the second coming of Christ and the repetition



helps to bring out the theme. The song has a happy mood and listeners are likely to rejoice and even dance to the song.

### **Literal translation of Toita Zvedenga**

*Tiende kudenga, tiende kudenga* Lets go to heaven, lets go to heaven  
*Tiende kudenga* Lets go to heaven  
*Mwari ndinovaziva vari vanogona* I know God to be able  
*Baba ndinovaziva vari vane mbiri* I know the Father to be able  
*Ise ndinovaziva vari vanouya* I know the Lord to be able

The song gives praise and glory to God and acknowledges that he has the supernatural power to solve all problems.



## Example 2

### Toita Zvedenga

Funigsayi Zvakavapano Mashavave

Musical score for the first system of 'Toita Zvedenga'. The score is written for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics for the Soprano part are: Tie nde ku de nga tie nde ku de nga tie nde ku de nga Mwa ri ndi no va zi va va ri va na go na Ba. The other voice parts (A, T, B) are currently blank, with only a few notes visible at the beginning of the system.

Musical score for the second system of 'Toita Zvedenga', starting at measure 6. The key signature and time signature remain the same. The lyrics for the Soprano part are: ba ndi no va zi va va ri va ne mbi ri I she ndi no va zi va va ri va nou ya. The other voice parts (A, T, B) are currently blank, with only a few notes visible at the beginning of the system.



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The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Va nou ya to e nda". The second and third staves are piano accompaniment. The fourth staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Va nou ya to e nda". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. The score is in 4/4 time and D major.

NB: The melody sung by the solo soprano is essentially ad libitum and can be freely adapted to suit the lyrics. This also applies to the choral part above.

### 6.4.3 Category C

This category is represented by the song, **Ndire ndire** which is in four parts, soprano, alto tenor and bass. The song has short melodic phrases that have repetitive lyrics and rhythmic content. The song also obviously takes after Western hymnody in chordal harmonic structure and there is no solo and chorus.

This piece is in  $3_4$  time, in the key of E Major and begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> beat. There is simultaneous sounding of different melodies and texts, providing a polyphonic texture that characterizes most African music. The song text is repetitive in the soprano voice and the bass and inner voices sing vocables that are repeated, and a harmonic procedure that is common with African music.

#### Literal translation of Ndire ndire

*Ndire, ndire, ndire (vovables)*  
*Vanorwara handei Zioni*

Those who are ill lets go to Zioni



### Example 3

## Ndire Ndire

ZCC Band

1

S  
Ndi re ndi re ndi re ndi re re re ye ye

A  
Boom de ra Boom de ra Boom de ra Boom de ra

T

B  
Hou hou hou hou

6

S  
Va no rwa ra ha ndei Zi o ni wo ye ye

A  
Boom de ra Boom de ra Boom de ra Boom de ra

T

B  
Hou hou hou hou

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the song 'Ndire Ndire' by ZCC Band. It is arranged for a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a ZCC Band. The score is in 3/4 time and the key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system (measures 1-4) features the Soprano part with lyrics 'Ndi re ndi re ndi re ndi re re re ye ye', the Alto part with 'Boom de ra', the Tenor part with a rhythmic accompaniment, and the Bass part with 'Hou'. The second system (measures 5-8) features the Soprano part with lyrics 'Va no rwa ra ha ndei Zi o ni wo ye ye', the Alto part with 'Boom de ra', the Tenor part with a rhythmic accompaniment, and the Bass part with 'Hou'. The Alto and Bass parts have a consistent rhythmic accompaniment throughout both systems.

## 6.5 Summary

“Any name given to present day Zimbabwean music is subject to debate,” (Zindi 2003:10). This is because most, if not all artists have fused several musical styles from indigenous cultures as well as from foreign musical cultures. It then becomes difficult to coin a common term for the styles since each musician would prefer to name the resultant styles in different ways. Some artistes fuse gospel music with some western and indigenous elements to cater for the musical tastes of the youths. Pastor Stanley Gwanzura, Oliver Mtukudzi, Shingisai Siluma, Gospel Trumpet, Gospel Power, Prince Mafukidze and Carol Chivengwa Mujokoro are some of the Zimbabwean gospel artists who have incorporated some western elements in their music. On the other hand, Vabati vaJehova, Vabati veVhangeri, Leonard Zhakata, Fungisai Zvakavapano, Charles Charamba, Hosiah Chipanga, Cephas Mashakada have borrowed a lot from Zimbabwean indigenous music.

## **CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.0 Summary of the study**

This research intended to trace the evolution of Zimbabwean gospel music from 1980 to 2007. The main research question focused on: **How Zimbabwean gospel music evolved between 1980 and 2007.** The study was undertaken in Zimbabwe's main towns of Harare, Mutare, Bulawayo, Bindura, Chinhoyi, Gweru, Chitungwiza, Masvingo, Norton, Kwekwe and Kadoma. This chapter further summarises the whole investigation and develops conclusions on the factors that shape the development and evolution of gospel music in Zimbabwe. The implications of the research findings for gospel music in Zimbabwe are also outlined in this chapter and recommendations for further studies made.

### **7.1 Research Findings**

Major findings of this study were established in response to the objectives of the study which were: **To trace the development and evolution of Zimbabwean gospel music between 1980 and 2007.**

It has been established through document analysis, observation and interviews that Zimbabwean gospel music has undergone a lot of change and continuity in terms of musicological, social, economic and political content. It has been observed that the song text evolved over the years due to the hardships faced by

the Zimbabweans. Mixing with other music cultures during festivals has also resulted in evolution of musicological content. Not all Zimbabwean gospel artists necessarily abide by Christian morality expectations. Some of the artists were cited in scandals and other activities that are deemed not to be socially and religiously acceptable.

**To identify and establish factors that have influenced the musicological form and content of Zimbabwean gospel music.**

The research also found out that there are indigenous and exotic influences on Zimbabwean gospel music and those elements are reflected in textual themes and stylistic resources it has incorporated. Gospel music touches on spirituality, endurance, repentance, worship, hope, healing and other themes that are necessary for survival within a society faced with adverse living conditions currently experienced in Zimbabwe. This enables people to remain hopeful despite the hardships they face.

The transcribed Zimbabwean gospel songs imply that colonialism has resulted in cultural hybridism. The results of this study have various implications for the future of Zimbabwean gospel music. In 2000, the Zimbabwean government imposed on broadcasting stations that their music be 75% local content. This apparently resulted in gospel artistes adopting Western musical styles and adding



Shona lyrics. It could also be good to borrow cultural traits from other countries since Zimbabwe does not exist in isolation.

**To establish to what extent Zimbabwean gospel music reflects gender opportunities.**

It is also evident that Zimbabwean female gospel artists have been able to create public space for themselves through their performances. However, women were observed to be mainly singers while their male counterparts sing and at the same time perform on musical instruments. Women were observed to be sidelined from prominent music making roles in the Zimbabwean gospel music industry. It was also established that female gospel artistes are more prone to public scrutiny than their male counterparts.

**To determine how the prevailing political and socio-economic climate influenced creativity and practice of Zimbabwean gospel music.**

This study established that there are several political, social and economic factors that inform the content and practice of gospel music in Zimbabwe. Gospel music in the country has gone through many changes and sustained continuity since 1980. It started off with themes of glad tiding around 1980, changed to reformist themes (1985- 2000) that portrayed the deteriorating socio-political standards, and finally moved to radical themes (2000-2007) when life became unbearable to the majority of the Zimbabweans. Independence from colonial rule gave birth to

a new breed of gospel artistes who do not seem to be easily intimidated by the government. The worsening situation in Zimbabwe has forced gospel artistes to play an active role as societal critics. Gospel music in Zimbabwe has become very popular because of its ability to subtly communicate sensitive issues (protest music) without being censored as compared to secular music.

The violence, lawlessness and confusion in Zimbabwe have led gospel musicians to create music with political and economic themes thereby identifying with what is taking place around them in current Zimbabwean politics. This study discusses how gospel music has played the role of presenting alternative truths on Zimbabwe and its people.

The study has shown how Zimbabwean gospel music has helped create new political, social and economic spaces. Most Zimbabweans now enjoy gospel music because it resonates with their crises, concerns, unresolved issues and at the same time offers hope for healing and peace. Gospel musicians have made themselves political analysts through their compositions as evidenced by sampled song texts.

## **7.2 Conclusions of the study**

Zimbabwean gospel music contains relevant economic and socio-political content. Aspects of Western music theory and African music theory are intuitively fused in

most Zimbabwean gospel songs. Thus, knowledge on theory of Western music and theory of African music can be drawn from the content of Zimbabwean gospel music since it borrows from both indigenous and foreign musical cultures.

Several ideas on good governance, tolerance, healing and regeneration can be derived from the textual content of Zimbabwean gospel music. Perceptions on governance start from family level up to national level where issues like corruption and immorality are interrogated. These basic principles on humanity are necessary in life irrespective of religious affiliation, hence the textual content of Zimbabwean gospel music could bring hope and healing to the whole nation.

Despite economic, political and social problems, life goes on for most Zimbabweans and gospel music contributes to inspiring and encouraging people to keep on aspiring to subsist. Zimbabwean gospel music should be taken seriously because of its ability to effectively communicate educational, social, spiritual, political and economical issues.

### **7.3 Recommendations of the study**

- 7.3.1 The study has indicated that Zimbabwean gospel music is shaped by economic, political and social environments so there is need to incorporate its study in the National Curriculum.
- 7.3.2 It was observed that there is no governing body or an association that

sanctions creativity, protects and regulates performance practice. Such an association is necessary if gospel music is to thrive.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for further research**

7.4.1 More studies should be done on the musicological features of gospel music and Shona traditional secular music in Zimbabwe in order to establish creative inspiration and resources.

7.4.2 Through this project new insights on how to preserve gospel music and lyrics should be developed.

7.4.3 Comparative studies within Africa on how indigenous cultures have been affected by foreign styles could be carried out.

7.4.4 Gospel music as an aspect of culture is dynamic so there is need to continually research on its change and continuity so as to keep track of social, political, religious and economic trends in the context of Zimbabwean societal milieu.