

TRIBALISM/RACISM IN THE PRESBYTERY OF ZIMBABWE:

A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE

BY

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Abstract

The Presbytery of Zimbabwe is faced with a very serious challenge of Tribalism/Racism and this is affecting the general membership.

This research seeks to call for a paradigm shift in interpreting the gospel by a way of embracing everyone as equal partners. The dividing walls in terms of tribe/race have been in existence for too long and they must be pulled down. The church must be on the fore front in carrying the beacon of hope and to minister effectively to all those who believe.

The research exposes the traumatic experiences that are caused by tribalism/racism in the church and how the affected respond as they seek to worship God in a challenging environment. Some of the affected stop coming to church and move their membership to other denominations that are accommodative. Those that remain in the church find it extremely difficult to be actively involved in the life and work of the church. This therefore affects their growth spiritually and worshipping God ends up being meaningless.

The thesis explored the Shepherding model by Charles V. Gerkin to be used as a means of offering Pastoral care to the traumatized. In essence the traumatized need healing more than anything so as to restore their 'dignity' and 'worthiness' in the eyes of both God and the community of believers. The model includes counseling as one seeks to journey closely with the affected as well as the perpetrators. The Bible has been used as the basic book for this discussion as the author sought to show how the church ought to be in terms of existence within the community. The church has to stand up to her true calling of preaching the gospel of reconciliation. The image of the church has been discussed extensively as a way of bringing understanding to what the church represents.

If the evil practice of tribalism/racism is to be allowed to continue in the church, ultimately the existence and relevance of the gospel will be questioned.

Declaration

I declare that this Thesis hereby submitted to the University of Pretoria for the degree in Masters in Trauma Counselling as previously been submitted by me or by anyone for the Degree that this or any other University that it is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained here in has been duly acknowledged.

Signed: Reginald Mudenda

Date: 13 April 2011

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Lastly, I would like to thank my family, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and the Njube congregation for the support rendered as I traveled using their finances to complete this course. Your words of encouragement, motivation and inspiration will always be treasured.

Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to the following

My parents, Mr & Mrs. J.D.Mudenda

And

The late Rev. K. L. Chuba and

Mrs. C. Chuba.

And

The Presbytery of Zimbabwe,

Njube Congregation.

Key words

UPCSA – Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

Presbytery – is an association of the Congregations of the Church within a particular geographical area.

Elder – Is mature elected member of a congregation whose role is to care for the congregation together with the minister.

Convener – Is an appointed member of the council whose role is to lead a given committee of the Presbytery.

Gukurahundi - (means the rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains) in this context means the deployment of the 5 Brigade (soldiers) in Matebeleland who were to deal with the dissidents and any other forms of trouble in the area.



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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 Background

1.1 Motion to divide the Zimbabwean Presbytery

A Commissioner from Matabeleland region at a Presbytery meeting in 2005 moved the following notice of motion, –At a time convenient to this court, I shall move that Presbytery be divided into two, thus reviving the old Matabeleland and Mashonaland Presbyteries respectively. □ I can still remember how this notice of motion hit me when it was first moved at congregational (Session) level and subsequently at Presbytery level. I felt that my position in Matabeleland was being threatened since I am of the minority tribe (Tonga) in the country. The Tonga people are part of Matabeleland, however the problem is that of the Ndebele who want to be indifferent. This motion as further analysis proves, sought to reverse the unity the Presbytery had achieved, especially that of uniting the Matabeleland and Mashonaland Presbyteries in Zimbabwe. It ultimately sought to separate people according to their tribal and geographical locations within the country, leading to the destruction of the foundations of unity within the Presbytery. From a distance I could see all the years of hard work and the invested resources going to a waste. It is critical to note that since the union of the Zimbabwe Presbytery in 1992, this was the first time that such a motion was brought before the council. The consequential effects of this motion were factors, such as language usage in churches; and leadership choices that have tribal and racial inclinations.

1.1.2 The researcher's personal experiences

1.1.2.1. The researcher's appointment to Njube Congregation in Bulawayo.

The researcher's appointment to Njube congregation in February 2000 was met with some strong challenges and resentment from the Ndebele people. Some elders harboured latent tribal and racial animosities. They would vent their bigotry when an opportunity presented itself regardless of the nature of the occasion, be it in meetings and worship. These divisive actions of the elderly population split the congregation, not only along tribal lines but also along generational lines, as the younger members did not consider the appointment of a Tonga speaking minister as threat to their tribal identity. Because the younger generation was willing to submit to a minister from a different tribe while the elders insisted on a minister who was from their own tribe. This automatically introduced a strain in tribal relations and widened the gap between the elderly and the youth. These utterances always left some members of the congregation and the researcher dump founded and ill-equipped to handle the challenge. It is one thing when signs of obstructing growth are exhibited by the congregation and another when the leadership champions the matters of non-progression.

1.1.2.2. The researcher's attempts to be appointed to a white dominated congregation.

In 2004 the researcher's appointment to lead a white congregation was hindered by the fact that he is black. At the time the congregation was under the leadership of a Minister who was not recognized by the denomination. The man did not meet the minimum requirements in order for him to be accredited within the system. The efforts by the Presbytery's Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to appoint the minister were blocked through a letter that categorically stated: -We are not yet ready for a black minister..... This affirmed that racism still existed

in the Presbyterian church many years after the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe.

The researcher is Tonga a minority language in Zimbabwe. However the researcher was raised amongst the Shona speaking people. He is thus so fluent in the Shona language that it can be thought be his first language. By virtue of his surname the researcher is well received amongst the Ndebele people as one of them. However his spoken language Shona betrays him and very often many people would want to know where he comes from. The frequency of this question raises a pastoral concern as to what people want in worship. This also happens in the reverse when he crosses over to the northern part of the Presbytery where it is predominantly Shona

1.1.3 Use of foreign language in worship

The congregation had a vibrant youth group that was so adventurous and introduced new songs particularly from the Shona hymnbook and choruses in worship. As if this was not enough the minister also was not very conversant in the Ndebele language to the point that he would preach using a translator. It seems as though the Ndebele language was being substituted for the Shona language. This was met with great resistance and resentment from some Ndebele members in the congregation and some youths were warned after worship never to sing –demonic songs again in the church,(this was said in reference to Shona songs). The following question is frequently asked; –Why is it that congregations in Harare have never used the Ndebele language in their worship despite the fact that there are some Ndebele speaking people amongst them? □ As Jesus Christ died for us, could this be part of the greater church Christ loves and died for?

1.1.4 Election of non- Ndebele speakers to position of authority

The Ndebele members resisted the election of non-Ndebele members to positions of leadership because it was viewed as the pastor's strategy of replacing the siNdebele language with chiShona. The elected non-Ndebele leaders were resisted and consequently withdrew their

membership to other churches that embraced them. Those who remained behind became inactive

to the life and work of the congregation. Psychologically and spiritually one would end up being at their lowest point without any solution to the challenge. Could these be signs of demonic forces at play within the church? Yes these feelings are generally well established in Zimbabwe. This is evident when a Shona person is elected to be a Councilor or a Member of Parliament in Matabeleland. The church is expected to rise above party politics and always endeavor to stand for the truth and unity.

1.1.5 A brief history of our country.

The issue of race and tribe in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe can be viewed from a social, political and geographical point of view. Thomas Sowell (1998: 8) states, –We do not live in the past, but the past in us.□ The past has an influence as to how we move into the future carrying along our burdens in an attempt to make life better. The history of our country particularly the Ndebele/ Shona uprisings in 1876/77 and the recent –Matabeleland Massacres□ of 1984/85 have harboured painful memories amongst the Ndebele and Shona communities.

It is however critical to note that despite our social, political backgrounds, racial or ethnical origins we are but one. We have our origins in relationships and are related to the fabric of creation. Tribalism/Racism shocks the victims to the point that faith alone is not enough to comfort and strengthen them.

1.2 Problem statement

Despite an encompassing administrative body of the Presbytery structures, the issues of tribalism and racism are prevalent in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. When ministers are appointed or placed to a charge cross-tribally/cross-culturally they are subjected or encounter tribally/racially motivated resistance from both the local leadership and congregates. How then does one minister effectively when placed in a congregation where tribal and racial attitudes are exhibited against the pastoral care giver?

Most of the –all white congregations□ within the Presbytery which have vacant ministerial positions and dwindling membership, and are financially not viable have not easily accepted a downgraded status which normally results in the appointment of a minister. Those that have the right of call take as long as they like under the pretext of –still searching□ and yet the church ordinances require that a vacancy be filled within seven months. To date all the White congregations within the Presbytery are ministered to by White ministers. Why is it that the Presbytery has struggled to appoint ministers in these congregations despite the great need of having the vacancy filled? Why is this so if we are talking about the oneness in Christ? The Presbytery has had to struggle to appoint black ministers in these congregations despite the circumstances and ever changing environment in our nation. When Presbytery ordains ministers, does it ordain one on the basis of colour or tribe? What is the driving factor and what does the church want to achieve? Is the church responding to the great commission in Matthew 28 vs. 19,

–Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...□ NIV Bible.

1.3. The purpose of the study

Firstly the study seeks to promote multiculturalism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and that obstacles like race, tribe must be transcended and bring an understanding that the church is above human order.

Secondly the study seeks to empower people that they may freely worship God irrespective of tribe/race etc.

Thirdly the study seeks to create awareness amongst ministers that the issues of tribalism and racism are a reality in their work and calls them to live and work above this social evil.

Lastly the study seeks to create a platform and strengthen the prophetic role of our Presbytery where these issues can be discussed openly, in a context that there is neither a Jew nor a Greek.

1.4. Significance of the study

This research seeks to call for a paradigm shift in interpreting the gospel by a way of embracing everyone as equal partners, thereby destroying the existing dividing walls. It seeks to challenge all of us to take a deliberate look at ourselves as we fellowship with each other in our Christian walk. Samuel K. Eloff says: This renewed vision will enable the church to redefine the same people who used to evoke fear and hatred and determine in a renewed way not just who they are but who and what they will be to us. (2005: 9). By taking this position the Presbytery will be strengthening its prophetic role in the ever changing environment and thereby being effective and relevant to the communities.

The researcher fully believes that this research would be of great benefit to the Presbytery as whole as it will help people to confront their daily hurts and sufferings and not bottle up difficult emotions. The research will attempt to cultivate the spirit of tolerance from all the age groups and thereby strengthening the family unit in worship. B.J Van Der Walt argues that by engaging one another the membership would be able: To determine what is beautiful, dignified and legitimate in all cultures, to confirm it and, on the other hand to be conscious of what is unacceptable, in order to avoid it (1999:4).

This will be a milestone achievement and will enhance growth of the church particularly in the Southern part of the Presbytery and even in the white congregations whose membership is dwindling due to relocating and economic/political factors. The suggested model will seek to assist the leadership and the wider membership who have suffered rejection and were denied their right of belonging in the life and work of the church on the basis of colour, language, race and tribe to find their place in the bigger family.

1.5 Assumptions of the study

The Presbytery has potential and capacity to improve its performance considering the fact that almost in every region there are ministers and strong leadership that needs to be empowered to be able to serve effectively. With the quest of wanting to study by both the clergy and the laity the Presbytery has the ability to solve its weaknesses of hanging on to some of the traditional beliefs that impede the growth of the church.

1.6. Scope of the study

The study was limited to eight congregations which are distributed all over Zimbabwe. The Presbytery of Zimbabwe was also included. The categories identified were as follows; two white congregations, two multi racial congregations, two black congregations with a right of call, two

black congregations without a right of call, and the Presbytery office. Within these congregations ministers, elders and the general membership were interviewed.

1.7. Methodology

The study used the shepherding model to investigate a phenomenon that is in existence within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. There is a commitment from both the researcher and the client in this research to study a system and involve the members who are part of the system. This model was used on the basis of qualitative strategy of data collection and interpretation as applied by A.V. Campbell in his book, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care* (1986 :37); suggests that pastoral care is about –shepherding□, which mediates a sense of integrity, wholeness and steadfastness to those in need. The imagery of a ‘shepherd’, according to Campbell embraces all what is involved in providing care as illustrated in the biblical usages of the term. Pastoral care is a relationship founded upon the integrity of the individual. Such relationship does not depend primarily upon acquisition of knowledge or the development of skill. Rather it depends upon a caring attitude towards others which comes from our own experience of pain, fear and loss and our own release from their deadening grip.

Campbell’s model will be blended together with Charles V. Gerkin’s ‘Shepherd model’ in his book *An Introduction To Pastoral Care* 1979. He traces the origins of pastoral care and creates a model based on the bible. Both authors discuss the caring of God’s people as a way of restoring their broken lives. Gerkin (1979:24) states, –Care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of justice and moral integrity in the life of people.□ Jesus Christ is depicted as ‘the good shepherd’ and this image becomes the focal point in doing ministry.

1.8. Research gap

Since the inception of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe in 1992 the researcher is fully aware that there was an attempt to deal with the subject of racism in 1995 through the Justice and Social Responsibility Committee of the Presbytery. The report attempted to deal with racism only and left out other issues that cause trauma among people such as tribalism, violence etc. It is also important to note that a lot of research has been done and literature published on the subject at different levels. Tribalism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe has never been dealt with and yet it can become a stumbling block to ministry. It hinders the development and growth of ministry. The trouble of tribalism is that it regenerates unpleasant issues such as segregation, as opposed to congregation, one tribe against unity, hatred against peace and tranquility awakening racism that mankind has worked hard to put to rest.

1.9. Definition of terms

1.9.1. Tribalism

In most cases some people would suffer a double tragedy. One is rejected on the basis of color or tribe by fellow human beings. The Macmillan English Dictionary defines tribalism as: –A way of thinking or behaving in which people are more loyal to their tribe than to their friends, their country, or any other social group (1998: 1536). Tribalism rejects the unity of all beings, disregards other tribes and from a distance it is like each tribe has its own god. In the last 15 years Matabeleland has produced the least number of ministers when comparing with the other provinces within the Presbytery. Those who have come through on completion of their Probation relocate to neighboring countries especially South Africa. It appears the Ndebele people identify themselves more culturally (especially the language) with the Zulus from South Africa. The

question to ask is, why is it that the Ndebele people do not envy to move to the capital city but would rather move to South Africa at all costs? What is it that they are running away from?

The few of our members who move from Bulawayo to other cities and towns in Mashonaland end up joining other denominations that are accommodative in terms of language and culture. The Ndebele speaking from our Presbytery who move up to Harare normally join the Ndebele speaking congregations such as Brethren in Christ Church and United Congregational Church in Southern Africa and these are not Presbyterian.. Those that remain in the system are either completely swallowed and would rarely speak their language in public. As tribalism is perpetrated against fellow beings even in the church, the other form of abuse known as racism can never be ignored. Therefore in this study tribalism will be defined as a practice, behaviour or a way of thinking in which people in a given community are very much loyal to their tribe than their fellow human beings. People are respect not on the basis of their humanity but on the basis of the tribe they belong to.

1.9.2. Racism

According to John W. De Gruchy and Charles Villa -Vicencio (1987:177): Racism is an ideology of racial domination which includes a belief in the inherent cultural and biological inferiority of certain races and racial groups.

Individuals and communities are judged not by what they can do but by the colour of their skin hence suspending the goodness and abilities of persons. Black ministers and congregates in white congregations have not found it easy to be integrated into these congregations. Some white people when a black minister is appointed or called to a charge, they either request for a leave of absence, transfer or stop coming to church but still wanting to maintain their Presbyterian membership. The suffering, exploitation, isolation and rejection one suffers is far too much to bear and it leaves an indelible print in one's life. This leaves us shaken and ushers in a feeling of incompetence and life ends up with no meaning at all. De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio (1987:

178). further alludes: Where this racism is regimentally imposed in church and communal structures it denies the community of believers the possibility of being human and it denies the reconciling and the humanizing work of Christ.□ The church generally is viewed as seeking the perfection of her people but at times we are confronted by the reality of evil in it's pews. The question can then be asked; where do we go from here and how do we realise the togetherness we often preach about? Therefore in this study racism will be defined as a practice, behaviour or a way of thinking in which people of a different race are treated in a dehumanising manner and being denied equal opportunities in the society they belong.

The researcher is fully aware that this is a tripartite issue affecting the Shona, Ndebele and Whites. It is being practiced against Blacks, whites or Blacks against Blacks. B. J. Van Der Walt (1999:3) argues: "We shall know each other or exterminate each other". The church is the place where all races/tribes can converge to experience and share the gospel together. Through the cross of Christ all races are drawn closer to each other and it is the responsibility of the pastoral care giver to bring people together. As a people we spend most of our time making desperate attempts to improve the quality of our lives and without thinking much of why we exist. The bottom line is that to live well means to learn to love my neighbour.

1.9.3. Pastoral care.

This is relating to the work that is done by a Pastor (Minister of religion) to help, advise and taking care of people through offering counseling.

1.9.4 Pastoral care giver.

Is the practitioner whose role is to give pastoral care to the people. In most cases it is the Pastor, Church Elder, or any other designated leader within the church whose function is to work with people.

1.9.5 Presbytery.

Is that of an association of the Congregations of the church within its boundaries in the form of a corporate body having perpetual succession and power to own and hold property (immovable, movable and incorporeal) in its own name independently of its members as well as power to sue and be sued its own name. (Manual of Faith and Order: 2007)

1.9.6 A right of call

This is a constituted congregation which is financially viable and fully able to support a Minister, (Manual of Faith and Order: 2007).

1.9.7 Church Elder.

According to our Manual of Faith and Order, An Elder is an adult member of the congregation who has been elected by the congregation and ordained and inducted to this office whose role is to assist the Pastor in offering pastoral care in their districts.

1.9.8 Congregation.

A congregation is a fellowship of Christian believers united in a corporate body to serve the purpose and function of the church.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used to undertake the research. The research methodology used is known as shepherding model and it is explored under the following subtopics: research design, research instruments, data collection procedures, data presentation, data analysis and the chapter summary.

2.1. The Shepherding Model – approach.

The main theory for this research is based on Charles V. Gerkin's pastoral shepherding model of the caring ministry as expounded in his book, **An Introduction to Pastoral Care**. This motif is clearly captured in the imagery of Psalm 23. Here the Lord is depicted as the good shepherd who leads the people in the paths of righteousness, restores the souls of the people, and walks with the people among their enemies, and even into the valley of shadow of death (Gerkin 1997:27). The defined leader has the role of offering leadership, protection and feeding the flock as the prime concern no matter the degree of hurting in an individual. The shepherding model will play a vital role in working with racism that is segregation based on race and tribalism that is segregation based on tribe in the Zimbabwean Presbytery. The model seeks to journey with the isolated, hurting, dejected and dehumanised who are constantly stripped off their dignity, value and self respect. The role is to empower and restore self worthy through counselling and guidance in

order to realise what it means to be a person in a world that is busy distorting God's image in individuals and churches/ communities.

2.1.2. The Characteristics of a Good Shepherd.

The picture language for the Shepherding model can be misleading or misunderstood by those who have not seen how a Palestinian shepherd operates. There is a big difference between an African shepherd and a Biblical shepherd. The biblical one specifically looks after the sheep and always leads the flock. The African one in most cases looks after the cattle and different environments calls for different methods of watching over the cattle. According to Taylor (1994:9), a Palestinian shepherd practically does the following;

1. He guides his flock to good pastures and safe resting places (Isa 40vs. 11)
2. He feeds the sheep and provides for all their needs, seeing that they have Water to drink and keeping the sheepfold in good repair (Ps 23)
3. He guards his flock and protect it from wild animals, or thieves, or other Dangers, even when this involves danger to himself (1 Sam 17vs.34.
4. He searches for any sheep that strays or gets lost, until he finds it, even If this means going into difficult and dangerous places, however dark the night or bad weather (Matthew 18 vs. 12)
5. He knows and names each sheep individually, so that they too know his
6. Voice and follow when he calls (John 10 vs. 1-4)

7. He carefully tends any sheep that are sick or weakly, and takes especial care of the nursing ewes and young lambs (Gen 33 vs. 13)

These are the basic functions of a Biblical shepherd. However it is critical to note that Taylor the writer talks about the sheep only emphasising the biblical perspective. His view is so strong that he assumes that a shepherd basically looks after the sheep. However in Africa and other parts of the world a shepherd not only looks after sheep but a variety of livestock for example cattle. Taylor further assumes that the shepherd is there on a day to day basis to watch over the flock. The assumption has an element of truth, however we need to note that some practice cattle ranching and most often see their flock once or twice a week. In Zimbabwe during the dry season farmers normally do not shepherd their flock but instead the cattle are left on their own to fend for food and after a few days are gathered together for regular check up. However the value and interest put on the flock by both the owner and the shepherd can not be underestimated. There is co-ownership by both the shepherd (worker) who does not own the flock but has got a big heart for his job and the flock and the owner who does not lead the flock to the pastures. His absence must not be measured as not having any special interest of the flock.

Taylor (1994: 9) points out that being a shepherd means to take a deep personal interest in the welfare of the flock as a whole and each individual sheep in the flock. It calls for strength and courage, patience and self sacrifice. The good shepherd must always put the welfare of the flock before his own comfort, even when this means losing sleep, and facing personal danger or even death.

The work of the leaders in the early church was modelled on this pattern. It included feeding the new Christians with the truth, protecting them against error and false teaching, caring for the needy and distressed, encouraging those who had become half hearted in their faith, keeping order and discipline, giving guidance and spiritual direction (John 21 vs. 15-17; Acts 20 vs. 28-31). Shepherding encompasses rejoicing with those who are rejoicing and mourning with those mourning. The shepherd supports those who have been victimised or violated and counsels them. The Shepherd must also be concerned about the perpetrators of evil deeds and call them to repent from their wickedness. This ministry helps the shepherd to shape and affirm relationships through interaction.

2.1.3. The Appropriateness/Value of the Shepherded Motif

The shepherding motif is appropriate in dealing with the trauma caused by tribal and racial segregation because it involves dialoguing and journeying alongside the affected. This empowers the participant to face trauma and find healing. This would be realised by the closeness that would then exist between the shepherded and the traumatised person. Furthermore the Shepherding approach considers people as the experts of their own lives. The assumption is that

people are competent enough to deal with their situations; all they need is to have their potential unlocked to deal with life challenges.

In the period of the Israelite history Yahweh is depicted as a Shepherd giving care to individuals, families and communities that are traumatised by life concerns. It is critical to note that whilst Gerkin and Taylor both write about the shepherding motif, they draw much of their picture language from the Bible and therefore in this research the bible is used as part of a resource book. The researcher uses the bible in conducting bible study coupled with prayers, because there is dialogue between the facilitator and the listener. The celebration of liturgy should be tailored to recognise the environment in order to realise the desired outcome. There is need for time to meditate and reflect on the circumstances. In the Presbyterian tradition, at ordination, one is asked if s/he will be diligent in studying the scriptures and prayer. Every ordained person promises to be faithful in undertaking their duties and at times representing the community. However the shepherd must be courageous and accept risks and consequences associated with being involved in dealing with people. Support normally is not on his side and usually there is an element of victimisation and persecution from the self proclaimed perpetrators and powerful people.

This approach helps to correct a polarised environment, unifies the congregation and gives it hope. As the church we are called by our master Jesus Christ who is the head of the church to express deeper concern for the community of both believers and non believers. It is our core business to respond in words and actions to all matters affecting humanity. In the gospel according to (Luke 4: 18 -19), Christ talks about the spirit of the Lord being on him and that he

was sent to proclaim the good news to the poor, captives, restore sight to the blind and release the oppressed. The church must be the beacon of hope that stands for the truth in a world where humanity is fast losing the meaning of relationships and life's purpose. When the state and other institutions come to abuse people the church must not condone these actions but instead should lead the way to the respect of individuals and life as sacred in the eyes of God. Jesus in his ministry was always drawn closer to the marginalised, segregated and written off members of the society, therefore the church needs to take the image of God to the less privileged members. The idea would be to encourage active participation from all the parties involved so as to help individuals make meaningful decisions.

2.2 Collection Site

The study was conducted in Zimbabwe over two years from October 2008 to December 2010

2.2.1. Population/unity of analysis

The population was the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa with specific reference to the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. The central focus was on both congregations with a right of call. A congregation with a right of call is the one that is financially viable and does not receive any subsidies from the General Assembly. A congregation without a right of call (transitional) is the one that is not financially viable and depends of subsidies to support the ministry. Some of these congregations had mixed populations in terms of race and tribe. The majority of our black congregations with a diverse population in terms of tribe do not have a right of call. The

congregation with a right of call is the one that is financially viable and is able to meet all its ministerial expenses, without receiving a subsidy from General Assembly. The congregation without a right of call (transitional) is not financial viable and receives a grant from the General Assembly in order for it to meet its monthly ministerial expenses.

2.2.2 Sample Size

Saunders et. al (2000:97) stated that probability sampling is a compromise between the accuracy of your findings and the amount of time and money you invest in collecting, checking and analysing data. The authors concluded that the following issues govern the choice of sample size within this compromise

1. The confidence the researcher needs to have in his / her data, that is the level of certainty that the characteristics of the data collected will represent the features or attributes of the total population
2. The margin of error that the researcher may tolerate, that is the categories of accuracy the researcher requires for any estimates made from her sample
3. The type of analysis the researcher will use in particular the number of categories in which the researcher wishes to subdivide
4. The size of the total population from which the sample is being drawn

2.2.3. The sampling method

Saunders et al. (2000:103), suggest that there are five techniques of sampling namely; –simple random, systematic, stratified, random, cluster and multi-stage. □ In this research the stratified random method of sampling was adopted. According to Francis 1999:53, –stratification of a population is a process which identifies certain attributes (strata levels) that are considered significant to the investigation at hand; partitions the population accordingly into groups which each have a unique combination of these levels. □ A stratum is a subset of the population that share at least one common characteristic.

In the light of the above considerations this study used the stratified method of sampling in which, the sample for this research was divided in the following manner. The first stratum had twenty elders who were identified by the participating congregations out of an approximate population of one hundred and twenty elders in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. It was emphasised that each Session was to consider the following characteristics; age group between 25 to 80 years, gender (male/female) and respondents were to be Ndebele, Shona and White (English). The general membership formed the second strata. In this stratum the researcher tactfully identified members who had been victims of either racial or tribal practices. This stratum provided stories or narrations of their ordeals. The last stratum that was identified included the Presbytery office holders, for example the Moderator, Presbytery clerk, and Conveners.

2.3 Data Collection Methods

This study used multiple instruments of data collection with the aim of enriching the quality of data and therefore enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings of the study. Intra-method and inter method triangulation also ensured that the strengths of one method of data collection complemented the strengths of any other methods. The specific techniques of data collection included historical documents, participant observation, scheduled interviews, and stories or narrations that are also referred to as Case studies. These techniques were arranged in such a way that the strengths of each method complemented the weaknesses of the other methods.

In this research, both qualitative and quantitative data were required in order to assess the impact of trauma caused by tribalism/racism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. The variety of research methods listed above enabled the researcher to gather both qualitative and quantitative data.

2.3.1. Historical Documents

These are also referred to as existing information and provide researchers with a variety of information. This material can provide evidence of past events relevant to a research question and can be collected in a portfolio. Written evidence is useful in trying to establish a baseline of what happened in the past and can be invaluable for comparing a new approach to a past approach.

This technique involved the review of existing documents in the organization. It involved the perusal of other projects and related literature associated with the attempts of addressing issues of tribalism and racism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe.

These documents included reports to the Presbytery; correspondence such as letters engaging a Session with the view of appointing a minister and minutes of meetings where issues relating to tribalism and racism were discussed.

2.3.2. Participant Observation

A technique that involves systematically selecting, watching and recording behaviour and characteristics of living beings, objects or phenomena. . Observation of human behaviour is a much used data collection technique. It can be undertaken in different ways:

Participant observation:

The observer takes part in the situation he or she observes.

Non-participant observation: The observer watches the situation, openly or concealed, but does not participate. Observations can be open and may serve different purposes. Observations can give additional, more accurate information on behaviour of people than interviews or questionnaires. They can also check on the information collected through interviews especially on sensitive topics.

Observations can also be made on objects. If observations are made using a defined scale they may be called measurements. Measurements usually require additional tools, for example, the

reaction of the congregation when minorities prayed and gave testimony in a less dominant language within a given set up. Advantages of this technique are as follows; it gives more detailed and contextual related information, permits collection of information on facts not mentioned in an interview, permits tests of reliability of responses to questions, provide rich data and may have positive spin offs for knowledge and skills by researchers and informants. Observation as a method of data collection has the advantage of taking account of events which are not verbalised, but which are critical in understanding the Church's response to tribalism and racism.

Disadvantages of this technique are firstly ethical issues concerning confidentiality or privacy which may arise. Secondly, observer bias may occur as observer may notice what interests him /her. Thirdly, the presence of the data collector may influence the situation observed, and finally, thorough training of research assistants is required in the use of this method.

2.3.3. Scheduled Interviews

The researcher developed an instrument in the form of scheduled interviews as contained in appendix A. The research design enhanced the capturing of the required data in dealing with the research problem. The first set of questions targeted those in leadership that is ministers, elders, Conveners and Church Association leaders and the second set of questions was meant for the ordinary members of the congregation. Participants were considered as co-researchers and not as subjects in attempting to find a solution to the problem. The value of considering participants as co-researchers is as follows; there is ownership of the whole project by participants leading to

attempts of seeking the solution together. This does not portray the researcher as the messiah who has got all the answers to their challenge instead they become part of the solution. By journeying together there is more room to look at issues objectively from both the affected and those not affected hence leaving little or no room for generalisation. The self respect and worthiness of the participants were upheld through out the entire research process so as to avoid an attempt to manipulate them directly or indirectly. The researcher played a dual role that of being a participant and yet maintaining the other role of being the researcher. When participants are treated as co-researchers they view themselves as part of the situation under consideration and questions can be asked from both communal and individual approaches.

Using the scheduled interview gave the researcher two main advantages; firstly, interviews permitted clarification of questions and gave the researcher a chance to probe for more. Interviews also had a higher response compared to questionnaires that were distributed to clients and media researchers. The interviews were also easily administered because the number of participants was small. The major disadvantages that the researcher experienced were that the presence of the researcher influenced the responses of some of the participants and that the reports of events were less complete as compared to the information gained through observation.

2.3.4. Case Studies/Story Narrations

1. The researcher used the art of story telling which is an ancient way of communicating and sharing life experiences and teaching of life skills, as one way of collecting data. This method predates the age of writing and bridges the gap that one can find in every class of human society in the sense that it involves the art of listening and by listening in most cases people have to be close to each other. This method is about giving an account of something for example an event that may have happened a long time ago or very recent in this context it is about those who have been traumatized by tribalism/racism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and were willing to share their experiences. Robin Gurney 1998:xi states that; A good story-teller keeps the audience enthralled, and what is told has a lasting effect. The supreme teller of stories, Jesus, lived in an age when, although history was being written down, ordinary folk knew how to listen and how to tell and retell stories both historical and contemporary.

2. The researcher, being mindful of the fact that the research covers the entire Presbytery of Zimbabwe and thus would be impossible to collect all the stories from all the congregations. The researcher had to focus on three main stories given by one from the youth, women's association and the pastor. These are a representative of much of the population that is greatly affected by the phenomenon under discussion. As they were narrating their stories the researcher was listening, observing and taking notes including that of non verbal behaviour like spontaneous reactions, facial reactions and probed further in the event that statements were not qualified. Their names are pseudo ones as a means of exercising confidentiality and protecting their

dignity. By sharing their tribal/racial traumatic experiences in the church they are confirming the existence of this phenomenon within our pews. The intention was that of getting an honest opinion of the traumatic nature of the phenomenon from the persons directly affected and the possible help expected from a pastoral perspective in terms of care and healing. In cases where participants were reminded of acute trauma the researcher allowed them to express their feelings uninterrupted and helped them to cope with their inner and outer worlds. Gerkin uses this method of case studies as he describes the subject matter. He alludes to the fact that, a narrative approach points us toward recognition that in the long story of the people of God the metaphor of care has multiple origins. Its meaning embraces many roles within the historic community and varying emphasis, which from time to time have asserted themselves as primary for the care of God's people in particular situations (Gerkin 1997:25). When personal history is told and retold it therefore helps the traumatized to link the past with the present and the future. This further helps a person feel secure and be in control of their emotions.

3. The advantages of story telling are that it brings about new revelation, relaxes the mind, eases the tension and thus effects emotional healing on the affected. Further more one is able to empathise with the participants. The researcher is favoured with first hand information or experience from the story teller there by leaving little room for assumptions.

The disadvantage on the part of the listener is that they may be room for concentration lapse in listening there by missing critical points. The researcher might also feel that the story is uninteresting then disregard it, there by compromising the validity of the research. The judgement is left entirely to the listener as to what one would take. There is also room for bias by the story teller as one might tell what they want leaving out other details.

4. The data collected through this methodology will sketch the three case studies as presented by the affected, and buttress that with the data collected using the above stated methods so as to verify and authenticate it within the context of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. As already alluded to the intra -method and inter method triangulation ensures that the strengths of one method of data collection complements the strength of any other methods.

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

The researcher firstly read existing documents that were available to establish the beginnings of the project and its major objectives. These were critical for establishing the position of the church in addressing issues of tribalism and racism.

The interviews were scheduled interviews and were administered by the researcher face to face. Prior to visiting the subjects, the researcher made contacts through the telephone to set up appointments to carry out the interviews.

The data collected through observation involved the researcher as a participant observer who also recorded events as they unfolded and also discussed the issues of tribalism and racism with some members of the selected congregations.

The data collected through case studies involved the researcher as a participant who played the listening and writing roles as the participants narrated their ordeals in their own languages. The story tellers were then given the scripts to verify the authenticity of the recorded contents.

2.4.1. Data Presentation and Analysis Procedures

There are many ways of making sense of the collected data. For the purpose of this study, the constructive method of data analysis was used because of its practicality. There are five aspects to this method:

1. Reading data —data are read or closely scrutinized in order to recall the events and experiences that they represent. What was done? What was said? What really happened?
2. Selecting data —important factors are separated from unimportant ones, similar factors are grouped, and complex details are sorted and simplified.
3. Presenting the data —the selected data are presented in a form that is easy to take in at a glance.
4. Interpreting data and drawing conclusions — Relationships are explained and a practical model constructed to fit the situation that has been researched.
5. Once a decision has been made to end simultaneous data collection and analysis, the information must be organised so that the analysis can begin.

From the steps highlighted above, the researcher created a study database. All of this material was organised in a simple way according to the research questions answered so as to facilitate the easy location of the data. Developing the study database involves fairly simple sorting of all the data.

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of one's data. All of the information that was gathered together and organized topically or chronologically was read through several times

from beginning to end. While reading, the investigator noted comments, observations and queries that were arising. Saunders (2000: 108) states –At this stage the researcher is virtually holding a conversation with the data, asking questions of it, making comments, and so on. These notes serve to isolate the most striking aspects of the data. The notes are developed into a preliminary outline or system of classifications into which data are sorted initially. The outline begins with a search for regularities —things that happen frequently with groups of people. Patterns and regularities then are transformed into categories into which subsequent items are sorted."

In this study, the researcher used the process of creating units of information that later led to the categorisation of information. Units came from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents. A unit became a phrase, a sentence and eventually a paragraph. Each unit of information was put onto a separate index card and coded according to any number of categories ranging from situational factors (who, what, when, where) to categories representing emerging themes or concepts.

2.5. Language used in Questionnaires

Given the demographic nature of our Presbytery that covers the whole country of Zimbabwe, it was important to be all inclusive in the three main languages. The questions were in the following languages, English, Ndebele predominantly spoken in Matabeleland and Shona predominantly spoken in Mashonaland. There are other languages which are dialects of these three official languages in Zimbabwe. Experts in these languages residing in Zimbabwe were consulted to verify the contents of the questionnaires and gave their approval for usage in this research. This was done so as to have accuracy of the language in order to avoid any distortion or double meaning.

2.6 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology used in this study as the shepherding model which is critical in bringing about healing for individuals, families and communities undergoing stressful situations. This chapter further revealed how data was collected and analysed. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in order to develop an alternative understanding of the phenomenon. The stories of the members who have been exposed to the evil of segregation in the church would be explored in light of the methodology. All participants were informed about the reasons why the research was being undertaken and their consent sought. The research focused on both male and females of different ages within the Matabeleland region of the Zimbabwe Presbytery as the researcher was investigating the issue of tribalism/racism. The next chapter will be discussing the probable causes of tribalism/racism within this part of the church, it's effects to the wider body of the church and how the Presbytery of Zimbabwe has attempted to deal with the issues of tribalism and racism.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Introduction

Tribal and racial discrimination exist in every country and every community and are as old as the human race. They appear in many forms, both crude and subtle. Discrimination exists when we allow colour, caste, language, nationality, tribe, ethnicity, culture or any such factor are allowed to erect walls between people resulting in contempt, prejudice, or lordship over others. Zimbabweans rejected the ideology of discrimination and fought for a country where the humanity of every person would be given equal recognition and equal treatment before God and the law of the land. The extent of wedging a war should have rendered tribalism and racism historical realities that would stand rejected by all Zimbabweans. . The situation in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe remains untransformed to this day. . The focus of this chapter is to identify and discuss probable causes of tribalism and racism.

3.2 Probable causes of tribalism/racism.

3.2.1. Colonial legacy.

Macmillan English dictionary defines colonialism as a situation in which one country rules another. Zimbabwe was under the British rule until 1980 when after a bitter war of independence she gained her independence. The ill of racial and tribal discrimination in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial era and beyond when the infamous deliberate colonialist policy of divide and rule was being practiced. Whilst it is true that some form of segregation existed in traditional Zimbabwe before the European settlers came, a historical perspective to the subject of tribalism/racism would help us understand that the nature of

segregation prevalent in the church today is largely due to political influence coupled by the settling of Europeans in Zimbabwe. In order to contribute meaningfully to the search for the root causes of racism in Zimbabwe, one can find a partial answer in some writings by authors from Europe who settled and governed the locals. They deliberately executed programmes to create disharmony amongst the local tribes whilst also upholding their belief of the undisputed superiority of their race. The development of an African was the very last thing the colonial governments ever wanted to see or appreciate in Africa. As Ralph Dodge writes in his book *The Honoured Crusade*, **Our superiority rests on the colour of our skin, education, cultural values, civilization and heredity...We must be sufficiently realistic to accept the fact that we have a paramount monopoly of these qualities.**(1991:4). It is very clear that the colonialists came and disregarded every aspect of the African way of living and since they failed to understand the way of an African, they called him a barbarian. It is amazing to note that some people claim paramount monopoly over culture and declare theirs superior to others. One wonders if that is not an illusion. The colonialists came with an agenda and their mandate was to fulfil it at whatever cost and hence they would not allow anything to stand in their way.

Terence Ranger quotes the following from European settlers,...as the Chief Native Commissioner, Matebeleland wrote on March 14th 1901, for example, it would be very dangerous to allow the return of Lobengula's sons to Matebeleland since at present there is absolutely no cohesion among the natives, each little tribe is, as it were, opposed to the other, a certain amount of jealousy has naturally arisen amongst the indunas, (kings) this jealousy has been fostered by me as it is the most politic form of governing the Natives.(1985:6). The attitude of racial supremacy and dominancy infiltrated to the other races and gross mistrust was created. That was one way in which the settlers used to control and take advantage of the local tribes. The settlers created false rumors about how bad each of the tribes were against the other hence causing disharmony amongst the tribes. There was no attempt to create any effective association and unfortunately the blacks inherited that mentality of considering one's tribe superior than the other tribe/race. The racialists/tribalists do not see themselves as Zimbabweans but are more comfortable to identify themselves as belonging to such and such race/tribe in Zimbabwe. The

matter of supporting the national cause is not what they believe in but rather look for ways of that will strengthen their race/tribe at the expense of the national agenda.

D.W. Waruta and H.W. Kinoti in their book *Pastoral Care In African Community* 2005:42 had this to say, **There is evidence to believe that the present African problems can be largely explained by the way Africa has historically and disadvantageously related with the West.** The relation that existed long back was that of one particular tribe/race dominating the other. People of a different race were not treated as partners but subordinates. That mentality eventually became the norm for existence and daily practice. Colonialism may be dead politically but it is still alive ecclesiastically. It is evidenced by activities and comments that are often passed by congregates who are of a different tribe/race. The way we still relate with each other still exhibit the residue of colonial practices.

In August 2009 at a women's conference one of the ladies from Matebeleland was voted the Uniting Presbyterian Womens' Fellowship (UPWF) president. The following Sunday as one of the ladies was giving a report in the congregation she said, –Bengisithi izinto zonke ziphelela eHarare zibanjwa ngamaShona □ (I thought everything else happens in Harare and being dominated by the Shona people). To the researcher's amusement people were very much excited and they demonstrated this by clapping their hands and ululating. One wonders if what so excited them was what had been said or that one of their own had been voted into office or both. There is no doubt that it was a combination of both.. This statement is said in church and exposes our deep rooted mentality against other tribes. These attitudes can be traced back to colonialism of which it is kind of a human creation and as a people we are stuck and easily cross the racial/tribal line. In some cases people have to face the older colonial ideas, which range from a racist/tribalist to a paternalistic (i.e. a sense of arrogance) attitude. There is fear that the traditional Ndebele way of life including the language would be threatened by the people of other languages (i.e. Shona) and the influence of these other languages have to be limited in the interest of the Ndebele community.

3.3. The Matabeleland massacres (gukurahundi).

The subject of political violence to the people of Matabeleland is not a new phenomenon. Both the pre and post independence periods were characterized by violence. Zimbabwe's war of liberation was fought on tribal lines and that seriously divided the nation come independence in 1980. Problems characterized by suspicion and mistrust between the two major black political parties, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe and Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU) led by JOSHUA. M. Nkomo resurfaced soon after independence. This led to outbreaks of serious violence in the holding camps of the former liberation fighters and these spilled into the general populace. It was not only an internal problem there were also external pressures that were aiming at destabilizing the Zimbabwean state. South Africa was not very kind to the young Zimbabwean nation; all its efforts were targeted at weakening this country. Accusations from both governments of harboring and empowering the guerrillas (ex Rhodesian freedom fighters) to destabilize the Zimbabwean state continued. In all this Matabeleland was the most affected by these acts of violence. The region suffered a double tragedy from the dissidents and those who deserted the national army and from the Five Brigade.

Political violence in Matabeleland region has been a very serious issue especially during the infamous Gukurahundi era of 1984-1987. The government instituted war against the dissidents and sent in the infamous Five Brigade. In 1981 about 106 Korean soldiers came to Zimbabwe to train soldiers later to be called the Five Brigade and on completion of their training their specific task was to deal with dissidents and any other trouble maker in the country. The then Prime Minister Mugabe was quoted as saying that dissidents should "watch out", and further announced the brigade would be called "Gukurahundi", which means the rain which washes away chaff before the spring rains (CCJPZ, 2001:9). This was a very serious response by the government upon its innocent citizens and Five Brigade hunted down "dissidents", resulting in the deaths of about 10000 ethnic Ndebeles. According to the government this was a

cleanup

exercise within the nation which was necessary for doing away with bad apples. Many people disappeared and could not be accounted for. Shallow graves were later discovered where some of the victims were buried but one cannot tell who is buried where and from which clan. This is a story which is associated with pain, it is not just about the past but also how that past affects the present and shapes the future. The **CCJP** narrates how some of the people are affected:

Many people can tell stories of how they have failed to get death certificates for those who died, or how such certificates have a false cause of death, which upsets them.

Others tell of mass graves or shallow graves in their areas and how this disturbs their communities. Some tell of how members of their families were taken at night and have never been seen again.

Many other individuals have to live with physical injuries, which mean they cannot work well in the fields, or travel easily on buses, for example. And still others lost homesteads or possessions and have been poor ever since **(2001:3)**.

The above statements depict the magnitude of pain in the communities which includes some of the people who constitute UPSCA congregations. People in Matebeleland region still have scars as a result of that violence. The government never gave an apology save to say that we cannot apologise because it was war. That remained against the expectations of many who have demanded that the current regime had to account for its actions and be able to apologise to the masses who were affected. It is important to note that the Five Brigade was mostly made up of the Shona speaking and it eventually turned out to be like war between the Shonas and the Ndebeles. Giving an account of what characterized that period (the 1980s), one lady said that, speaking Shona in Matebeleland was a licence to get one anywhere and everything even jobs. These are the people who have deep rooted scars and are hurting and their call for apology is falling on deaf ears. Some did seek counseling and others depended on the aspect that time is a healer and still have not had closure of the nasty experience.

In their book, *Breaking the Silence*, CCJP further states that;

One of the saddest outcomes of the 1980s violence is that people in Matabeleland believe themselves to have been the target of a war not against dissidents, but against the Ndebele and ZAPU. This was the result of the 5 Brigade being Shona speaking, and targeting any Ndebele speaker including women and children. The members of the 5 Brigade would say things like “all Ndebeles are dissidents”. Rapes were seen as an attempt to create a generation of Shona babies (2001:9).

The Gukurahundi era is still a very sensitive subject to discuss, despite the fact that the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace did manage to collect data and published a book entitled *‘Breaking the Silence’* so as to attempt to talk about these issues on a public platform. The research was well done but did not yield the much needed results because there was never an attempt of calling for healing and reconciliation by the government. The traumatic events of these massacres are being passed on from generation to generation and this is a cause of concern because people begin to absorb information and its distortions. This factor can lead to hate crimes and result in injury or even death. **There is great concern in Zimbabwe when one considers the high numbers of survivors in the country. Many of these are survivors from the 1980s violence and the multiple impacts on people in physical, psychological and material terms have been enormous. People have been tortured, seen their dead ones murdered or abducted, had their houses burnt. No efforts have been made to alleviate their plight and those who caused the damage have not been made answerable. (CCJP: 2001:25).**

Whilst the people in the southern part of the country (Ndebele speaking) were still expecting the powers that be to offer some form of compensation, they were yet to be subjected to further torture. This was during the political period stretching from 2000 to September 2008 in which most citizens were accused of supporting the opposition Movement For Democratic Change (MDC) party. Again ZANU PF had to use mainly the youth to beat up people for not supporting the ruling party, which revived the old wounds and struck fear in the people. The trail of this

destructive force has left a permanent damage in the lives of many and it is more like the Ndebele saying the Shonas owe them an apology. Judging from the events of the past, the hatred speeches pronounced by those in authority, the role the media played and the oral tradition passed on by those who witnessed these events, certainly an attempt to repair the damage has got to be undertaken. However it is not only about the past but the present as well as the future in terms of what is passed onto them and what is left behind as the legacy.

3.4. Stereotypes.

Racism has been defined as the belief that race is the primary determinant of human capacities, that a certain race is inherently superior or inferior to others. This ideology also asserts that individual persons should be treated differently according to their racial designation. The truth is that people are not born being racists just as they are born not knowing what is right and what is wrong. People begin to know these things as they are initiated into this world and begin to appreciate what surrounds them. It is commonly accepted in the society and from a Christian point of view that a child is born with purity without any knowledge of predetermined discrimination of other people. Children do not seem to feel any aversion for people of another color/tribe until it is taught to them. Beginning at a very young age, a child learns to become a good member of his tribe and from his/her parents a child learns the laws and customs of the tribe/race. Every member of the society is supposed to make a contribution to the tribe by doing his share of work and obeying its customs. In light of this reason an individual feels great pride in belonging to a tribe and believes that the customs of his own tribe are the best. The Africans in their country will want to always think of themselves as belonging to a particular tribe e.g. in Zimbabwe, one would be more comfortable to be called either a Ndebele or a Shona rather than say a Zimbabwean. Therefore one can conclude that humanity learns how to discriminate or hate others to the point of inducing pain in the lives of fellow human beings.

Some channels which have been used to spread this teaching or thinking has been the media (television, radio, newspapers, oral tradition passed on from generation to generation and any

other form of literature). These are very powerful means of communicating which have brought about the phenomenon of mental slavery. This form of slavery has no room for people to be creative. The damage caused through communication has left most of the people reacting to unfounded stories.

3.5. Denominational programmes and strategies.

The church has very often advocated for integration and inclusiveness in our approach to the gospel. However the congregational programmes and strategies still perpetuate structures that privilege dominant racial and cultural groups in the set up. Charles R. Forster in his book, *Embracing Diversity* states the following; **What the people of one culture deem beautiful may not even be noticed by those of another. The musical sounds and rhythms pleasing in one culture may be discordant or irreverent in another.** (1997:14). To a certain extent debate has been entertained as to how worship should be structured, whether to use instruments such as the African traditional drums (ingungu). One elder in the congregation was quoted as saying, **Ingungu iyasivusela amadlozi thina abanye** (the drum beats arouses the ancestral spirits in some of us). Further more an observation can be made when members are electing leaders for the various programmes and ministries but according to tribal and racial lines. Normally this is not done according to the gifts and talents of the individual persons. Also in existence are the unpronounced laws in congregations particularly when it comes to the usage of language. The Ndebele people do not wish to have their language sidelined or disregarded. On the other hand the Shona people take it for granted that they can use their language in any part of the country expecting that other people of different tribes/languages would understand them.

These and other causes have contributed to the Presbytery's failure to realize the desired growth in some of its regions. The researcher will therefore attempt to demonstrate the effects of some of these discussed probable causes.

3.6. How has the presbytery been affected?

The once vibrant Presbytery of Zimbabwe has grossly been affected by the effects of tribalism/racism. George M. Fredrickson in his book, *Racism: A Short History*, states that, **But human beings continue to mistreat other human beings on the basis of their ethnic identities. In a sense we may have returned to the chronological starting point of this inquiry. Before “the invention of racism” Christians persecuted Jews and Muslims because of their beliefs and the behaviour that was associated with them.** (2002:144-5). There are individuals within the church who are bent on spreading the gospel of superiority of their language and the colour of the skin as the major symbols of association. It is done as a way of discriminating other people who are considered to be aliens to those who believe in this practice. In response the affected would either challenge the undefined system or simply give in and play a passive role in the church. Divisions and lack of unity of purpose characterizes the church even at leadership level. This can further be exemplified by what the apostle Paul describes in his letters to the church at Corinth. These letters provides us with insight into the problems and processes of life in this particular church. 1 Corinthians 1 vs. 10 says, **I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.** (NIV.Bible). This is a clear testimony that the environment in the church was unhealthy. The perpetrators were weakening the newly founded church just as it is happening within the Presbytery.

Regardless of the well laid down structures and Presbytery work being done through its committees, it is still believed by the majority of people in Matabeleland that the Presbytery is in Harare. This has led to a deep rooted suspicion to the point that at times it is difficult to execute the given church duties without being described otherwise. The Presbytery has failed to attract the youth in the South West region to join the ministry of word and sacrament. It is very difficult to strike a balance in terms of the ministers that are available in the Presbytery. The bulk of them

12 are Shona speaking and just 1 is Ndebele and 1 English speaking. It appears other regions, especially the Mashonaland, are able to attract the youth to join the ministry whilst most of the Ndebele youths quickly relocate to South Africa once they reach the age of majority due to economic reasons. The richness of embracing all the languages and cultures at leadership level is lacking. The effects of this move are that the congregations will always be a breeding place for the young ones who will move on leaving a vacuum. The church will continuously be forced to move in the same circle without realising any meaningful growth.

The Presbytery has continuously witnessed the prolonged vacancies in full status congregations that are predominantly „white“. Request upon request have been made to the council meetings seeking to extend the vacancy period with the reason that they were still searching for a suitable candidate. However this is done in such a way that one would not easily realize that racism is at play. While it is a fact that there is a critical shortage of ministers in the Presbytery it however does not prevent the congregations from extending a call to those available. One of the congregations after a long extension of the vacancy had to call a minister from outside Africa at the moment when the whole nation is bedevilled by cash flow problems.

The entire Presbytery is facing a challenge that of numerical growth especially in Matabeleland. The numbers have been static for a long time and most of the members do not wish to move to Harare. For some it is a question of Harare (Shona) wanting to dominate and for the others (Ndebele) it is an issue for justice and freedom that is long overdue. It must be clear to the Presbyterians that Christ is being crucified one more time and His body being torn into pieces. This is demonstrated in the case studies the researcher will consider in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data presentation analysis

4.1 Introduction.

This chapter presents and analyses the results of the findings of the empirical research. They were obtained through the process of transcribing and listening to narrations of traumatized people, studying the questionnaires, rewriting observation notes and perusal of historical documents. The outline of this chapter is presented below as: Structure of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, the role of the Justice and Social Responsibility Committee, Brief demographic data, Definition of tribalism as understood by the participants, Definition of racism as understood by participants, Evidence of tribalism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, Possible causes, The impact of tribalism in the church and Dealing with tribalism/racism in the church.

Table 1: Leadership composition: Presbytery of Zimbabwe

Region/ Province	Dominant language in the Region	Total NUMBER of elders representing the Region in the Presbytery	Tribe/ Race		
			SHONA	NDEBELE	WHITE
Harare	Shona	22	21	0	1
Bulawayo	Ndebele	8	2	5	1
Gweru	Shona	8	6	0	0
Masvingo	Shona	2	2	-	-
Mutare	Shona	4	2	0	2

Table 1, above represents the composition of elders in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. This group formed the first stratum in the sample and the scheduled interview was designed specifically for this group although only twenty individuals participated in the study. From the above

information the Shona speaking people dominate the eldership in the Presbytery followed by the Ndebele and lastly by the whites as the minority in this community. This pattern follows the country's demographic structure in terms of language and race.

Table 2: Distribution of ministerial positions within the Presbytery of Zimbabwe

Region/Province	Total # of Ministers per region	Tribe/Race		
		Shona	Ndebele	White
Harare	10	9	0	1
Bulawayo	3	2	1	0
Gweru	2	2	0	0
Masvingo	0	0	0	0
Mutare	1	1	0	0

Table 3: Distribution of Administrative Positions in the Presbytery

Position	Region/Province of Origin	Tribe/Race of Provision holder		
		SHONA	NDEBELE	WHITE
MODERATOR	Bulawayo	√		
Presbytery Clerk	Harare	√		
Administrator	Harare	√		
Minute Clerk	Harare	√		
Justice/Social & Responsibility Convener	Harare	√		
Church development & Planning Convener	Harare	√		
HIV & AIDS Chairperson	Mutare	√		
Discipleship & Ministry Convener	Harare	√		
Church Office Convener	Harare	√		
Finance Convener	Bulawayo		√	
Ecumecal Relations Convener	Harare	√		
Church Associations Convener	Harare	√		

In the Presbyterian system much of the work of the church is planned in the various committees of the Presbytery. The committees report to the Presbytery which has the powers to approve or reject the work presented. This in turn helps the powers that be to lead the work of the church in

various contexts through out the whole country. The committees shown in the table above are the main (divisional) committees who have sub committees under them. The divisional committee Conveners, meet in between when Presbytery is not in session.

Basing on the survey as detailed in the chart above, one can conclude as to which tribe dominates in terms of the leadership of the Presbytery through the various divisional committees. The Ndebeles from Matabeleland often complain over the Shona dominance in the leadership of the Presbytery. It is common to hear mockeries that the Presbytery is in Harare. Consequently, voting for various positions often happens on tribal lines instead of merit. To register their discontent over the one-sidedness of this development some members have advocated for the splitting of Presbytery into two or three Presbyteries as way of widening participation to other tribes. . . The Ndebele speakers strongly believe that they are being sidelined in the Presbytery just as much as it is happening on the political front.

4.2 The role of the Justice and Social Responsibility Committee.

The specific role for this committee is to reflect on issues of justice within the church and the community at large. It is the voice of the voiceless and periodically produces press statements and pastoral letters and subject to the approval of the Presbytery publishes them, in public media and church letters. The committee covers a range of issues that affect humanity such as tribalism, racism, poverty, political and domestic violence and advancing civic education to the people.

The data presented in this section was collected through the use of existing documents namely the Presbytery reports of 1995/96 and the minutes thereof that were produced within the calendar years.

4.3. The Justice and Social Responsibility Committee of 1995 - 1996.

The Presbytery in its meetings of the years 1995/6 through the Justice and Social Responsibility Committee attempted to deal with the issue of racism that was bedevilling the church. Discussion on this issue occurred in a number of Presbytery meetings that were conducted within that church year. The main discussion centred objections on the dominance by the white Christians over the black Christians and sort to promote unity and equity in the church.

A matter that was brought before the Council concerned a black minister (Mr. D. Jonasi not his real name) who was on probation in a congregation in Harare that was under the care of an affluent white congregation. The probationer was living in squalid conditions that Rev. M. Sigauke (not his real name) in his report to the Presbytery meeting of August 1995 described as 'living in a toilet'. The mother congregation showed no concern about the probationer's disreputable living conditions. Most black ministers at the time were affronted at this and bitterly objected to this subjection of a minister to such disreputable circumstances. As the voice began to be heard by the powers that be, one of the black ministers was reminded –not to bite the hand that feeds him□. Those who were responsible for correcting this unacceptable situation were unperturbed upon hearing of it and simple continued with their business as usual. The report was tabled in three Presbytery meetings spreading through 1995 and 1996 describing how whites were practicing racism against the blacks. The accused whites defended their cause that this was an act of racism and went on tell of how they had actually helped black members logistically. The then Presbytery Clerk (Mr. R. Huston not his real name) who was white explain how his daughter helped most of the black people as a way of dismissing the accusation. The accusations eventually made him to resign from his position as the Presbytery Clerk and became less active in the life and work of the Presbytery.

4.3.1. Minutes of the Presbytery meeting of October 2005.

In 2005 the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee of the Presbytery attempted to appoint a black minister in a white congregation (full status) which had been vacant for more than five years. According to the Manual of Faith and Order, once a congregation stays for that long without a minister then the Presbytery has the right to appoint a minister in that congregation. In light of what the church law says the committee initiated the process in order to fill the vacancy. Consultative meetings with the congregation were held and progress reports were brought to Presbytery and noted. When the committee was in its final stages of the process the congregation through its session then **wrote a letter** to the Presbytery stating among other things that;

- The congregation was not yet ready to have a black minister as their minister.
- Accused the Presbytery of wanting to force them to have a black minister.

This letter was presented in the Presbytery meeting in the presence of the minister who was to move there as a means of blocking the appointment. Eventually the Presbytery abandoned the whole process and no one ever talked about it. There was no follow up in terms of offering pastoral care to the ministers whose hopes had already been raised only to be dashed by the practice of racism. The silence from the Presbytery's side was like accepting and affirming tribalism/racism as part of the church's culture. This is an inherent spiritual problem rooted deep in the life of the church as well as experience. Despite the glaring evidence of this evil practice, some of the Presbyters have demonstrated their spiritual and moral arrogance by trying to dismiss the existence of this scourge.

4.4. Definition of tribalism as understood by the participants

In presenting this data, similar definitions were grouped together and summarized to make three definitions presented below.

1. -The belief that some tribes are superior to others

2. -Tribalism is the discrimination of tribes with one tribe believing to be superior to the other

3. -A form of segregation on the lines of ethnic origins. It is coupled by geographical and language barriers.

4.5. Definition of racism as understood by participants

1. -It is inferiority and superiority complexes in terms of colour
2. -Discrimination between races
3. -The belief that some races are better or superior than others

4.6. Evidence of tribalism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe : Possible causes

Out of the twenty elders interviewed, sixteen of them agreed that tribalism exists in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. Several reasons were cited as the cause of this problem and those that are similar were grouped together and summarized below:

1. The placement/appointment of ministers into the congregations

This reason was referred to by at least twelve respondents directly or indirectly. The main issue emanating from this is that congregations are revealed as questioning the appointment of ministers especially the Shona speaking to other regions that are largely non- Shona speaking. The general feeling is that Shona speaking Pastoral care givers should practice in largely Shona dominated areas and Ndebele speaking ministers also should do the same. Respondents also felt that non- Shona speaking ministers were appointed into lesser important positions of Convenorship in the Presbytery. One responded referred to this as being appointed into –second fiddle positions □. Looking at the composition of the Presbytery administrative workers, all of them are Shona speaking and are from Harare. This has resulted in people from Matebeleland viewing the Presbytery as being located in Harare and not in the whole country. In council meetings one can even tell how the voting is undertaken, the Ndebele speaking would vote for their own and the Shona like wise. This creates a situation whereby people are not voted into position on merit but along tribal/racial lines.

2. The usage of Shona choruses.

The use of Shona songs and choruses in worship in areas that are largely non- Shona speaking is being done against the wishes of many. The Youth will gladly and prayerfully participate but the bulk of the elderly people would do it with reservations. However the non usage of specifically Ndebele songs in worship in areas where the majority of worshippers are Shona for example Harare is very evident. This appears like one part of the country is expected to embrace everything and make use of all the languages in the country. The other part only concentrates on their mother tongue. How then can the church consider herself to be one when she can not practice what she preaches? Within our Presbytery there exist three or more hymn books such as **Amagama Okuhlabelela** (Matebeleland), **Nziyo dzekurumbidza** (Shona speaking) and the **English hymnals** for the whites. It appears as

though each tribe/race would want to preserve their heritage without any attempt of looking outside their sphere of influence. These hymn books have songs that are different from each other save for a few.

3. The choice of language by Pastoral Care givers

The choice of language when Pastoral Care givers preached or conducted other services like funerals and weddings was a cause of concern to the listeners. They would use their own language which would not be understood by many. In communication one always aspires to get the message to the intended listener. If this does not happen then the communicator ceases to serve their purpose. Pastoral Care givers are called to teach using the most precious tool of language. It is therefore pointless to use a language that is not understood by the listener when communicating. The researcher whilst conducting a wedding on the 20th of December 2002 was specifically told not to use the Shona language. This was despite the fact that his knowledge of the Ndebele language was limited. The audience was at peace to hear him speak in English as opposed to the Shona language. It must be borne in mind that with the usage of language and words we build the world around us and hence when we communicate people need to understand what is being said. However there is a conspiracy theory that the Shona language appears to be the lingua franca of Zimbabwe in the public sector such as the army, police, schools, and other related institutions through out the country. At times people authoritatively demand for services in the Shona language, anywhere even in Matabeleland without the burden of having to speak in Ndebele. This has yielded passive resistance as the Ndebele feel cheated and taken advantage of even in their area.

4. Gukurahundi Massacres

The other reason given was the scars of Gukurahundi Massacres in Matabeleland 1984 -5. The efforts of getting the perpetrators of this act to apologise to the victims have not been successful. The people in Matabeleland still feel that justice has not been afforded a chance as hold on to the notion that the Shona speaking people wronged them during this era. Attempts have been made to call upon the government to address the situation but this has not yielded any positive results. Some still expect to be compensated because they lost a lot of property and others lost the bread winners (parents) and hence could not access the basic needs and documentation such as birth certificates and the national registration cards. Some still do not know where their loved ones are buried and could not get the death certificates as required by the state law. Therefore the coming of Shona speaking pastoral care givers in Matabeleland is often met with resistance as they are viewed as a people who are trying to reassert themselves in the country as the dominant and numerically superior group. This is viewed as one way in which the Shona are still perpetuating their dominance over the Ndebele there by consolidating their supremacy.

4.7. Incidents as experienced by respondents

Table 3. Record of incidents and responses rendered

Incidents of tribalism/ racism	The Church's response
A story was fabricated against a minister because of his tribe	The church transferred the minister to another congregation
The issue of regionalization	The church accepted regionalization as a way of growing the Presbytery.
Shona speakers elected to positions of authority in the congregation.	They were frustrated and eventually moved to other churches.
Most of the Ndebele relocate to eGoli than move to the capital city – Harare.	Attempted to create a fellowship in eGoli, but these members joined other denominations.
Reluctance in joining the ministry by the Ndebele speaking	Church has constantly called upon the people from this region to join without much success.

4.8. Dealing with tribalism/racism in the church

4.8.1. Dealing with victims

It is a fact that in some way different people have experienced some form of tribalism/racism at different levels. These traumatic situations basically lead to the most difficult times in life. This trauma will painfully test the victim's ability to cope. On the other hand to struggle with a crisis

in life avails an opportunity for psychological growth that would not be possible without the traumatic event. Being mindful of the pain one will be going through it is important to note that the will power also is with the affected who may choose to deal with the challenge in an assertive way. The assistance given to the victims would be to lead them to a position where they are able to have a sense of self reliance as a mechanism of coping with the trauma.

4.8.2 Dealing with Perpetrators

The perpetrators will always want to justify their actions without accepting full responsibility of their actions that they are causing injury to the body of Christ. In most cases the perpetrators think that they will be doing God's work and even asking religiously that the status should prevail. The deliberate approach that should be taken is to seek to understand why they behave this way without condemning them. The main aim is to seek to destroy the walls that separate us as human beings. There is need to confront the perceived cultural and personal tribal/racism, reject it and work extensively hard at effecting the proclamation that we are indeed one in Christ which is the biblical motto. The researcher is of the mind that the church and her Theology must reject this interpretation of God's word, because unity is very important and every being is created in the image of God.

4.9. An overview of the case studies.

The author came across Dumisani Moyo (pseudo name), Mrs. Runyararo Muomba, nee Mugomba (pseudo name) and Rev. Dennis Bonyongo (pseudo name) all have been involved in the leadership both at a local congregation and regional level respectively. These three as stated above are representatives of a wider group of both the youth and the women within the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, who were subjected to issues of tribalism/ racism and were left traumatised, surprised, dejected and their faith left shaken as to the treatment they received from fellow Christians during their tenure of office. Some of these women and youths became co researchers as they narrated their ordeal to the researcher.

4.9.1. Case study no. 1.

This is the story of Dumisani Moyo.

Dumisani was 19 years old when he became chairperson of the youth both at his congregation and at regional level in Bulawayo. He was exposed to a rude awakening when confronted by acts of tribalism during his term of office as a leader. Dumisani never expected that the scourge of tribalism would exist in the church. It all became vividly clear in the year 2000 when he assumed the position of Youth Chairperson that issues that seem political also affect the church in ways that one may never understand. The incident however took place at his local branch and slowly like a smouldering log began spreading to other branches.

The Youth at his local branch at that time was quite an active and vibrant group. They were as he would suppose now after the gospel in its fullness. They sang and danced and introduced the new songs during the services that were of any language. The main language that his local congregation uses is Ndebele, so different songs in the Shona language were sang, instruments played along and the youth danced along too. It was at this juncture that the adult population of

the congregation began to feel uncomfortable, threatened and left out and comments/complaints began filtering in.

Dumisani constantly wondered even today what exactly their fears were. Is it that the adults were scared that the foreign languages were becoming more dominant than their own local? Did they think that their own language was going to be obsolete? What is it that they real fought for? Up to this day it is still difficult to come up with an answer. The adult population complained and said that they did not feel like they were at a church in Matebeleland anymore because of the language. The actual words or language used was –lapha kusemaNdebeleni, isiShona sidingani enkonzweni□ (This is a Ndebele speaking region and why use the Shona language in the services?) They further complained saying, –AmaShona ayasibusa, lathi siphinde sihlabela isiShona enkonzweni, sikholise nini ngolwethu ulimi lathi?□ (The Shona speaking already are ruling us at political level, why then do we have to use their language in the church and when shall we have time to enjoy using our own language? □

The above said statements subjected the youths to harassment by the leadership and adult population that constituted the membership accusing them of attempting to Shonalise (enforcing the speaking of Shona) in the congregation. The minister of the congregation at the time was not able to speak the Ndebele language fluently and hence he could use the Shona language as well in most of his preaching. This became a popular phrase used against the youth each time they attempted to sing songs in other languages besides the Ndebele language during the praise and worship sessions. Some adults even went out of their way and approached the participating youths after the service challenging them to stop singing the Shona songs. Comments like these could be said, –Kanti linabantwana liswele yini ingoma zesintu, satsha ngesiShona senu?□ (Is it that you do not have any Ndebele songs that you keep on subjecting us to the Shona language?) The youths did not yield to these accusations initially. However the elderly stepped up the pressure and issuing threats of intending to suspend the praise and worship sessions and eventually all the youth programmes.

The resident minister for our congregation then called for a meeting with the youth so as to ascertain how they felt and to attempt to map the way forward. This did not yield any good results because the minister also was affected due to his lack of knowledge of the local language.

The youth did not open up for fear of victimization and psychological torture. Dumisani as the chairperson was subjected to a lot of questions and was expected to justify the usage of this language. His only justification was, when we praise God, language is not an issue as long as we explain the meaning of the song and there by conveying the message and part of the congregation love it. This answer was not good enough and he was demonized for misleading the youth and that could be said publicly. Though he was compelled to defend himself he was never afforded a public platform to do so.

Surprisingly as the minister was hurting and trying by all means to contain the situation, the elderly who were responsible for causing this drama were unmoved and continued to do church as usual. His congregational youth were grossly affected, they could no longer sing and praise God the way they wanted to. They began fearing the elderly and were no longer free to worship their God. This incident of singing in a different language in the church though may seem minor and of no consequence, it seriously impacted negatively on the youth ministry as they began a mass exodus with their unhealed wounds to join other churches. Their zeal and passion was dampened, faith shaken and with no one to guide them. The worst part of this whole story as he narrates; most of the affected youth are no longer active Christians at all wherever they are. The elderly remained unrepentant on the subject and Dumisani hoped that one day as the children of God we will be able to rise above the barriers that overshadow the presence of God in our lives.

4.9.1.2. Reflection on the case study no. 1.

The case study presented above clearly authenticates the existence of the practice of tribalism/racism in the church. It is indicative that no one is spared of this phenomenon; the Youth are affected in their own way. The researcher basing on the data presented raises four critical points as to how the whole subject happened. These are as follows; (1) the freedom of worship in the church was taken away, (2) trust was breached between the youth and the elderly, (3) the elderly were afraid that their symbol of pride and identity at church and in the community was at the verge of extinction and (4) no one was to offer pastoral care and healing because the

minister was also affected. These four factors will be analysed further in relation to the whole story in the following paragraphs.

According to the Manual of Faith and Order, **the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, whose faith, constitution and laws are hereinafter set forth, is a branch of the one holy Catholic Church, and maintains liberty of conscience and of worship, within the rule of scripture, of all members of the one holy Catholic Church. (1:2007)**

Dumisani and the other youth being aware of the above stated clause believed that it was their right to worship God in the manner they did as long as it was in line with the scriptures. They got encouragement from the other members of the church who were receptive to this initiative as it was aimed at enhancing the growth of the congregation. However an ultimatum was issued that the youths should stop with immediate effect to sing the Shona songs. This was not well received by the entire youth group and some other groups in the congregation. There was no explanation given and no questions entertained. That clearly demonstrated that the right of worship within this congregation was suspended and people were no longer allowed to express themselves freely. There was a conditional type of worship imposed in the church.

The action taken by the adults in the congregation led to the breach of trust between them and the youth. The researcher is fully aware that in the Zimbabwean context culturally it is very normal for a young person to look up to an adult for encouragement and protection as they regard them as their parents. Dumisani and the other youth had no one to turn to and even those who sympathized with them could not help at all for fear of being labeled as well. This created a scenario where people became silent sufferers and those who could not contain the pressure had to move elsewhere without even fulfilling the required procedure of getting a transferring letter. The caring attitude which had driven this congregation for long vanished and the leadership could not arrest the situation. It would seem though that all the relevant groups within the church were hurting. The adults feared that their language was being tempered with and therefore became more aggressive. It is understandable that without adequate explanation as to how things are happening especially of this nature suspicion becomes the order of the day.

The environment was characterized by suspicion and threats leading to the congregation not being the brother's keeper. The matter became more complicated because the minister too was hurting and vulnerable from both fronts (1) on the subject of tribalism and (2) the disintegration of the once united congregation. There was no one available to offer the counseling, caring and healing required by the majority of membership. The traumatic experience one is subjected to, that comes through negative comments in the process of doing what is right is just unbearable. This resulted in some people not being able to open up and speak freely in church. The victims therefore lived in fear of being brutalized verbally and were unwilling to participate in the church's programmes. The researcher is aware that no attempt was made to deal with the situation and all depended on the fact that **time is a healer** and that the situation will resolve itself. The question to ask would be how and when?

4.9.2. Case study no. 2.

This is the story of Mrs. Runyararo Muromba nee Mugomba (pseudo name).

It was in the year 2003 when Mrs. R. Muromba was elected to be President of the Uniting Presbyterian Women's Fellowship (UPWF) in Bulawayo. The women's fellowship is a constituted body within the denomination specifically for women to undertake their ministry. This is when she realized how brutal man can be in the church. For a long time she has always regarded the church as her second home due to the warmth and comfort she received during her time as an ordinary member. It had never dawned to her that one day she would be contemplating to leave the denomination to join other denominations that are more accommodative than hers.

The day she was voted in office she was received with joyous celebrations and even at congregational level the news was well received and prayers of dedication were offered. Little did she realize that this was the beginning of a long painful pilgrimage that was later to isolate her from within the women's fellowship.

After a period of five months in office from the date of induction a comment was made by one of the women saying **our fellowship is being led by an alien**. This was said in reference to Mrs. R. Muromba because she was born in a different region and was not Ndebele let alone Ndebele speaking. It all began as if it was a concern from an individual but later on turned out to be a voice representing many within the fellowship. This was not long before the matter got to her attention and she thought the best way was to deal with the issue head on assuming that her executive was going to be on her side. This was not to be as she eventually was left to fight alone and more comments of ridicule became louder and louder. Some of the programmes were boycotted, and required fees not paid. The worse part of it was that even some men who are not

members of this fellowship could be heard passing on tribalistic/racist remarks. One wonders how they got to be in the affairs that involved women only at the time.

The women did not denounce Mrs. R. Muromba's leadership capabilities but it all had to do with who she was and where she came from. She was encouraged by her minister to hold on citing that those were the challenges that come along with leadership. The perpetrators were never cautioned or asked to explaining why they were engaged in that path of destruction. It seemed like the church was blessing this act due to its silence and Mrs. R. Muromba continued to suffer. She was in tears as she narrated her tenure of office within the UPWF which was characterized by segregation on the basis of language and the breach of trust. The questions raised were as follows; does the church appoint people into office on the basis of tribe/race? Is the church's Theology not based on the fact that the Holy Spirit guides and hence God appoints the leaders using His people? **Romans 13 vs. 1; Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established:** (NIV Bible) When the church offer prayers of dedication and commissioning people into leadership - what does that mean? This means that the church is ready to submit to the authority of these people, God being their helper. Ultimately when the church criticizes, she is only doing harm to herself and no one else.

4.9.2.1. Reflection on the case study no.2

Mrs. R. Muromba's story reflects how she suffered rejection from fellow Christian women within their association. The rejection affected her so much whilst she had the desire to serve God meaningfully. In the process of expecting to get positive comments she got the negative ones that had to do with who she was and not what she could do. Edward P. Wimberly, in his book *Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity*, he wrote a story about how a young man was rejected even by his own family. He states that; **One loving voice that Clifford yearned to hear was that of his father, but instead he heard only rejection. Instead of hearing voices of friends inviting him to join in healthy camaraderie, Clifford heard the voices of his childhood peers and teachers telling him what an outsider he was. (2003:24).** The negative conversation can

lead a person to losing their personal esteem, sense of value and belonging. It is evident that Mrs. Muromba was denied her rightful place in a fellowship that was symbolized by its devaluing of other languages. This had a negative impact on her leadership, capabilities as well as her spiritual life.

Her minister only encouraged her to hang in there alluding to the fact that those were some of the challenges one encounter in leadership. Mrs. Muromba was made to believe that one does it the **Jesus way** and become a silent sufferer. The pastor is found unequipped at times to address such matters and ends up sending a double barrel message to the traumatized. The book of **James 3 vs. 11 reads; Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?** (NIV Bible.) The church is expected to speak with one voice and be able to be the voice of the voiceless. The minorities in most communities are disregarded and seldom is their voice not heard. What Mrs. Muromba needed was someone to journey with, someone who was to be the affirming voice in moments of doubts, anger, rejection and to instill the sense of belonging message. The researcher wonders as to how can one hang in there when all of a sudden they are attacked, degraded and the image of Christ is destroyed due to tribalism?

The perpetrators of this destructive path in the church are not even challenged at all. They continue participating in the fellowship without worrying about any form of discipline coming their way. The church clearly sends the message hear no evil and see no evil despite the fact that there are some who are hurting. The Manual of Faith and Order defines the role of the church as follows; **its purpose and function is to bear witness to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to all who do not yet believe in him, to build up in faith, hope and love those who already believe, and to proclaim his sovereignty over the world. (2007:1).** The researcher wonders whether the church is living to it's true calling of offering hope and love without applying this principle selectively. How can the church be able to discipline someone as a means by which she offers pastoral care? How can the church offer pastoral care to the traumatized whose world is being characterized by poisonous words? Mrs. Muromba internalized the poisonous conversation and it came to adversely influence how she thought about herself as well as the church.

4.9.3. Case study no.3.

This is the story of Rev. Dennis Bonyongo.

Having been a minister in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe for 10 years Rev. D. Bonyongo thought that he could be appointed to any congregation within the Presbytery without any challenges. He was well aware that other congregations had a right of call, meaning to say that the congregation would call any minister they wanted through the Presbytery. The other group was that of congregations who did not have this right regardless of their composition. It is against this background that one of the predominant white congregation had been vacant for years and could not afford to call a minister. The Presbytery therefore reduced its status so that it could be possible to appoint a minister. With that opportunity availing itself Rev. D. Bonyongo declared his interest of moving there. That happened in 2003 July and the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee (Presbytery's committee) started to facilitate the process with the view of appointing the interested candidate and this was agreed upon in the Presbytery.

The leadership of the congregation was consulted with by the said committee and a report was presented in the Presbytery meeting that a minister was to be appointed to that congregation. Rev. D. Bonyongo does not understand even up to this day what then happened and why the Presbytery did not go ahead and appoint him to the charge?

The Session in writing a letter to the Presbytery it was a clear testimony of protesting against the appointment. Part of the letter read as follows; **-We are not yet ready to have a black minister.** □ This letter with its derogatory language was publicly read in an emergency meeting that had been called to specifically deal with that matter. The matter was left hanging, Rev D. Bonyongo was not appointed to the charge and Presbytery was accused of forcing the congregation to accept a black minister. No apology was tendered by the congregation for using such a derogative language. Presbytery did nothing to offer pastoral care to the degraded Rev

neither did they reprimand the congregation for using this derogative language instead they succumbed to the resistance from the leadership.

4.9.3.1 Reflection on the case study no. 3.

The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa believes that; **the church has been called into being by the will of God, who gathers all people into a fellowship in Christ, which is created and sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit.** (Manual of Faith and Order: 2007:1) This statement is affirmed by what Paul says in Galatians 3 vs. 28; **there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** These statements affirm that we are truly the children of God and we are called into one body which is that of Christ under the directive of the Holy Spirit. This is the language of the church which Rev. Bonyongo was brought up into, taught at a Theological seminary which therefore helped to shape his understanding of ministry. Wimberly therefore writes, **but these conversations were silenced as he encountered conversations in a society that devalued him because of his race. (2003:21)** Rev. D. Bonyongo's confidence and trust were destroyed in a stable where he thought he could freely minister. From this story it appears like the church is still operating on the principle based on a Jew for Jews, Greek for Greeks, without changing to be a coat with many colors. Whilst the community around is fast changing in terms of embracing diversity the church is struggling to conform to this standard. The said Rev. did not realize that his color of skin could be a symbol of rejection in the church too. The message that we are all equal in the presence of God is often forgotten and the church becomes a mouth piece of negative conversations.

The reading out of such a nasty letter publicly was to further the message of rejection much louder into the ears of the said minister. Wimberly reiterates that, **these disjointed conversations not only drowned the voice of God with a cacophony of noise, they distorted other potential healing voices. (2003:23).** Knowing fully how Presbytery functions Rev. Bonyongo felt betrayed and ridiculed in public and the Moderator who is the pastor of pastors at

the time did not even console him. The desire by the said Reverend to serve in a different context was shuttered. There was a clear voice of rejection which was to continue traumatizing him for a long time. The majority of the membership used the color of skin as a symbol of identity and acceptance, of power and control. This changed the said Rev in terms of his views on ministry, whether we worship the same God or that our God is of color? The Presbytery was nowhere near to offer pastoral, it was assumed that as a minister he could handle the situation.

4.10. Application of the methodology.

Pastoral care and counseling is all about accompanying those who are ready to explore themselves and their issues. These may be problems or feelings that are causing difficulties in their lives. Wimberly (2003:24) states that, **in pastoral counseling we try to get counselees to review the stories that have made dominant claims on their lives. Such claims help form the person's predominant feelings about himself or herself.** This process is not about being judgemental or giving directives. It is about helping people to be truly self possessed and live their lives according to their core values. The researcher as already detailed in chapter two proposes to use the Shepherding model by Charles Gerkins. This theory suggests that the pastoral care giver assumes the critical role of journeying with someone and being his/her shepherd. The end result of this action must be able to produce life, justice, harmony and reconciliation in an individual. Gerkins (1997:27) wrote, **this motif is most clearly captured in the imagery of Psalm 23. Here the Lord God is depicted as the good shepherd who leads the people in paths of righteousness, restores the souls of the people, and walks with the people among their enemies, and even into the valley of the shadow of death..** Though the writer reveals a western perspective in his description it is so clear that the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep is a very close one. The journeying together makes people to feel empowered to taking ownership for their mental well being. This eventually leads to being able to respecting their choices and decisions.

Shepherds sometimes are less respected due to the nature of their job. In the Zimbabwean context at times they are referred to as boys and can be addressed using their first names

regardless of their age. However in some sections of the society they command great respect and their work is highly appreciated. The shepherd basically cares for the flock be it sheep or cattle and he often leads from behind taking the flock to greener pastures. His prime concern is that they get enough food, water and protection from any dangers in the forest. There is deep communication, which might not be understood by a stranger, between the shepherd and the flock and the flock clearly understands his voice as depicted in the bible; **John 10 vs. 2-3 the man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listens to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.** (NIV) The shepherding model as used by Jesus Christ becomes the basis for the ministry of caring and healing in the church. You can never be called a shepherd without the love of the flock and you can not be called a pastor without the love of the people. The role is that of nurturing and growing people spiritually and removing obstacles that continue to destroy the image of Christ in individuals.

One of the committees of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe is called the **Justice and Social Responsibility**. It is responsible for dealing with the issues of justice and injustice whilst having a social responsibility to the wider community. It is unfortunate to note that with such excellent structures some members of the church feel denied of their right of belonging to the body of Christ. In reference to Dumisani's story the church should have carefully considered the situation than ignore it. By listening it means we are open to challenge and be challenged, we do not condemn but rather be receptive. A shepherd is able to pick a sound from afar and when the environment is no longer conducive to his flock he keeps on leading them to better places to realize growth. The elderly should have attempted to journey together with Dumisani by listening with the desire of understanding where the youth were coming from and going. At that point dialogue would begin thereby embracing a common vision and the desire of worshipping together. Both camps (the adults and youths) had genuine cause and both sought what could be the best for the congregation. Gerkins further explains his shepherding model stating that; **It also places along side that image one of a pastor as prophetic leader who cares for both the people and for the tradition that gives the community its identity. Care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of justice and moral integrity in the life of the people.** (1997:25) The Presbytery through its various ministries and structures is best positioned

to offer the care and support needed by the hurting and this can only happen when we begin to take pastoral care seriously.

Mrs. Muromba and Rev. Bonyongo both suffered humiliation and rejection. Using Edward P. Wimberly's (2003:25) phrase they were both „**dismembered**“, which he explains as, **The process of separating persons from their original meaning legacies and recruiting them into alienating conversations and stories.....** This is a deliberate effort in creating an environment that is no longer favourable for the normal survival and development of an individual. Having been exposed to the negative criticism, the two were not able to contribute meaningfully in the life and work of the church. There is no doubt that they were traumatized by fellow Christians and this cannot be justified. The care giver will have to ease out this phenomenon and its effects on the recruited individuals so as to make them whole. When human beings are stigmatized and everyone reads from that label, they tend to believe that, this is who really they are. Wimberly challenges this thinking saying;**we realized that this meaning into which we had been recruited was not only false but also inadequate to liberate us and bring victory into our lives.** (2003:112) Humanity can get to the point of killing for tribalism/racism but in most cases no one is willing to die for it. The liberation has got to begin with an individual as Bob Marley sings his song „**emancipate yourself from mental slavery**“ and this is so true. Individual beings are trapped mentally and they do not seem to get past that. In seeing that which has been planted in the past, people have been stripped off all innocence, filled with frustration, and anger leading to a violent pattern of life.

The church needs to understand that tribalism/racism is the deepest level of hurt that can be placed on any community. Further to this it must be noted that relationships are a part of the basic fabric of any given community. In most cases the perpetrators would not judge their actions as being tribalistic/ racist but a cause of wanting their culture respected. However the victims would define it otherwise according to what they experience. This therefore needs to be our understanding as we begin the education on addressing this phenomenon.



4.11. Summary

This chapter set out to present the data as collected from the traumatized individuals. The process interrogated a number of areas such as the Presbytery structure and composition, usage of questionnaires and conducting interviews, writing of observations and the historical documents such as Presbytery minutes and reports covering the period of 1995 to date. Over and above that there are three case studies (one youth member, lady member of the Womens' fellowship and a minister) of those who were subjected to some form of tribalism/racism. The data collected revealed the existence of the phenomenon under discussion and that it is perpetrated by both the leaders and general membership. Tribalism/racism has been taken to be a part of our existence even in the church. It goes without saying that some use the bible to justify their cause. The discussion exposes how tribalism/racism redirects the course of life in a negative way hence retarding people's spiritual growth. It further exposes how people then become suspicious of one another and eventually the work of the church then suffers. The phenomenon not only affects the work but the individual's relationship with God and also those whom they share the world with.

To facilitate the much needed dynamic growth, numerically and spiritually, the chapter illustrates the shepherding model that can be used as a tool by both the clergy and the laity. This will enable the care givers not to create problems, firstly to themselves and secondly to the communities they serve. Once the care giver is not immersed in confusion he will be better equipped to clearly see and be able to better care for the others. Jesus calls himself the good shepherd in the book of John and further demonstrates the relationship between the shepherd and the flock. This clearly indicates that Jesus assumes a role that he is very much aware of what it means and is expected of a shepherd. Hence the care giver must also have this understanding and be very clear in order to be effective in their duties.

The church itself has to equip the practitioners and emphasize the subject of caring for one another because that is the reason for her existence. In the process of offering pastoral counseling the care giver must always be aware of the ever presence of God in offering grace above everything else. The care giver needs to exercise a lot of patience and also anticipating

manifestation of the God's presence to bring in transformation in an individual. The education that comes along through caring has got to challenge our attitudes to one another and also help us understand what the church represents.

As in one body we have many parts and each part has its own function, so all of us together with Jesus Christ are of the same body, and we all belong to each other. In our life together we are to display the new reality that sin is forgiven, reconciliation accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility torn down. This will eventually create a more conducive platform for dialogue and confronting issues with the hope of bringing about the much needed reconciliation in the church and this will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

The church

5.1 introduction

The main theme of the church lies on the eschatological promise of having been called to „**one hope**“. The bible in Ephesians 4: 4 states; **There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called** (NIV Bible). This is the hope God has destined the saints/the Christians. But one has to understand what it means to be the church in our contemporary culture and whether the church is living to its expectations in preaching the good news. In this chapter the researcher will define the church and expound on her significance. The chapter will further discuss the marks of the church and the gospel of reconciliation. Undoubtedly there are varying answers as to what the church is. This reinforces the fact that human beings are always asking questions and seeking meaning out of their daily experiences. Converging both at religious and social levels means that we are bound to define what it means to be the church.

5.2. What is the church?

What is a church? This seems like the easiest question of all times, and one might answer in a more casual way. This is evident in that some do not even give much thought to the question and stick to the overall assumption of what the church is. One response would be that a church is a building in which Christians meet to worship God. The other response would suggest that the

church is a group of Christians who gather specifically for religious purposes. These above responses have some elements of truth and cannot be condemned to be bad answers at all. However they are limited in their definition and would not suffice to fully and truly explain truly what a church is and ought to be. In responding to this question there is no other book of reference in this world that is more authoritatively in what the church ought to be than Christian Scripture. Therefore in this discussion the researcher seeks to use much of the scripture to define and explain in detail some of the major themes. The following themes would be covered; the church, church as the body of Christ, Christ as the head of the body, church as the bride, fellowship of believers and the image of the church.

According to E.V. Harrison, W. Bromley, and C.F. Henry, Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology, 123:1999, states that; **Our word church, like its cognate forms, kirche, kerk, kirk, comes from a Greek adjective, to kuriakon, used first of the house of the lord, then of his people. The New Testament word, ekklesia, is used of a public assemblage summoned by a herald (Acts 19:32, 39 and 40).** It is critical to bear in mind that the word ‘*ekklesia*’ had a common and quite specific meaning in the Greek language. A number of scholars have it that it denoted the gathering of citizens in a Greek city. These citizens as they gathered had authority over the city in as much as the Mayor and the city fathers (councilors as they are known in Zimbabwe) are, and these would be part of the city council. Their role is to govern at local level, come up with budgets, among other items, for the city.

Harrison, Bromley and Henry 1999:123, further explain that, **In the LXX, however, it means the assembly or congregation of the Israelites, especially when gathered before the Lord for religious purposes. Accordingly, it is used in the N.T. for the congregation which the living God assembles about his Messiah Jesus.** In this definition the editors raise some critical phrases such as, **‘house of God’** which could mean a building set apart for religious purposes. Then an **‘assembly or congregation’** this refers to a group of people who have specifically gathered after heeding a call to come and worship God. The apostle Paul in writing his epistles qualifies his usage of the phrase *ekklesia* and seeks to bring an understanding by including the phrase **‘in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.’** He further demonstrates that the Christians

gathered at Corinth and in Thessalonica were not equivalent to the civic ekklesia. He sought to reveal that, they were a different assembly, in the sense that they met in Christ's name. The overall meaning would be that they were doing the work of, or for the sake of, or that they were under the authority of Jesus. Their cause of gathering would be none other than that of God and by God.

The word church has constantly been used as referring to a building facility or a place where one goes to worship. However the word church must not be confused as to mean a building structure, denominational structure or tradition or a place of worship, but a gathering of people who have a sense of belonging to God through the salvation they received by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. This group of people seek to search, understand and share their religious experiences as they are the sphere of the action of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ. They are knit together by the kinship of the Holy Spirit.

The Historical Dictionary of Reformed Churches state that, **In the Reformed Theology, the church is the people of God, the communion of saints, who are called by the Holy Spirit to receive the benefits of Christ's work and by faith to carry out God's will and purpose in the world.** (R. Benedetto; D. I. Guder; D.K. Mckim, 66:1999). These people strongly believe that they are elected and called by God's gracious provision to create a fellowship of believers and to build up human relationships. The church is indispensable because it was created upon the death, resurrection and ascension to heaven of Jesus Christ by God Himself. **Karl Barth (66:1999) called the church "the earthly – historical form of existence of Jesus Christ Himself"**. The church is in Christ, a living community according to the purpose and counsel of God in eternity and is united to Christ by the indwelling Spirit of God. The disposition of God is that grace is for all humanity, breaking all the partitioning walls of tribal and racial in nature.

The Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA clearly states that; **The church has been called into being by the will of God, who gathers all people into fellowship in Christ, which is**

created and sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit...The church is holy because it is of God, and not of human creation. It is catholic in that God of his love calls all people to share in its membership....The Lord Jesus Christ is the King and Head of the Church. Under his authority, and with the Holy Scriptures as its supreme rule, it seeks to frame and administer its laws and exercise its functions under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Chap 1; 1: 2007) It is clear that out of the material of the Jew, Ndebele, Gentile, Shona, Zulu, English and other tribes and races found here on earth the assembly of Christ is formed. The operations of God's spirit in these individuals who form this gathering creates the oneness in Christ and cease to carry their tribal or racial tag but are referred to as the holy assembly of God. This assembly therefore seeks to understand its mandate and mission in much broader terms not confined to race, tribe or culture but dictated by the guiding principle of the Holy Scriptures.

The understanding of what the church is by the Reformed tradition, Presbyterians included, has no room for individualism but room for individuals and what all of us together can be in the sight of God. Literature constantly defines this body as one that is color, tribal and cultural blind and emphasises on its existence as a corporate body. The church exists to carry out the mandate in Matthew 25 to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ in our care for the hungry, sick, poor, thirsty and the imprisoned. It is through the mutual caring and loving of one another that makes people qualify as the disciples of Christ, who embody his love and seeks justice for all man in the world. Charles R. Foster in his book Embracing Diversity writes that; **It is to be, as more than one person has put it, " the hands and feet of Christ." (28:1997).** The racial/tribal barriers were destroyed through the death of Jesus Christ and the spiritual privilege was then extended to everyone who believes. The bible in Ephesians 2: 19 says; **Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household (NIV Bible)**

It is by God's grace that the church exists in a pluralist society where many languages are spoken, cultures and standards of living differ immensely. This is a challenge to both Christians that this can be a recipe for disaster but offering us an opportunity to co exist and savour the joys of unity in diversity. Every one is capable of removing injustices by expressing tangibly their

faith and unity in Christ as one body. God in his wisdom gave to all humanity inclusive of all races/tribes various gifts so that all are equally empowered and that there will not be any overall superiority or inferiority. He did it in such a way that all humanity knows and understands what failure is? The church has a common spiritual heritage and God continuously reveals himself in his creation especially the human being.

5.2.1. The church as the body of Christ.

The church is constantly referred to as the body of Christ. Many scholars and writers such Karl Barth and others have written extensively on this subject. The researcher seeks to also contribute to this discussion of the church as the body of Christ. Christians would want to say they have a common understanding on this subject which might not be true. The definition on this subject is influenced by people's familiar environment and experiences. It would be not surprising to discover how people may vary in explaining and yet talking about the same subject. A look at the usage of this phrase in the New Testament would shed more light in describing the church. The key word that needs to have a clear meaning of its usage is the expression „body“ as it is used in the New Testament. In the book, Karl Barth Preaching Through The Life Christian Year, J.M.C. Tavish and H. Wells states that: **To understand the New Testament usage we must not forget that in the first instance it means a dead body, a corpse. But in relation to the human body it also means the living body, either as contrasted with the soul, or with its individual parts, the members, or even with the blood in which it has its life... 243:1978).** The body is crucial organ in the existence of man and it is through it that one experiences both the good and bad. It is an instrument of all designated activities. The emphasis of this description will be that of a living organ that exists for a cause.

The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. This is an inclusive phrase that brings together each individual component to form a unit. When the Christians gather together from all walks of life they form a very unique body.

This assembly is not only gathered around him, it is united in him and in his body. This assembly is not only referred to as a body but in actual sense it is Christ himself.

In referencing the Church as the Body of Christ there are other aspects that need to be discussed further such as, Christ as the head and Christ as the bridegroom.

5.2.2. Christ as the head of the body.

Jesus Christ is the head of the church, the centre of creation, and both his human and divine natures depict the existence and fullness of God. In the book of Ephesians 5 vs. 23 reads**as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.** (NIV Bible) In reference to this text, it means that we are discussing one thing. If Jesus Christ is the head basically he is the body, besides him this body does not exist. He is the author and finisher, lord and king and constitutes this community as his body. He is therefore the principle of creation and redemption according to God's purpose, who raised him from the dead and ascended into glory. Jesus Christ provides for our growth especially in the church the gifts by which we help one another in the journey of faith. His omnipresence provides for our growth towards him and extends his ruling over everything.

5.2.3. The church as the bride of Christ.

There is a unique and very special relationship that exists between every Christian and Jesus. To demonstrate his love and commitment Jesus Christ refers to himself in the parable Matthew 25 vs. 1-13 as the groom becoming the central figure. Christ is the divine Bridegroom of the Church as described in the book and the title is suggestive of his ever divine presence and watchfulness. The relationship depicted here is that of a couple who have committed to each other through the institute of marriage. The church is viewed to be in preparation and waiting for the coming of the groom. It is Christ himself who chose the church which he has purchased with his own blood. In the book of Acts 20 vs. 28, Paul states that; ...**Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.** (NIV Bible). The whole church inclusive of its members is referred to as the bride betrothed to Jesus Christ in order to be united with him in an everlasting covenant.

5.2.4. The fellowship of believers.

The very much fellowship in question is one with Christ and it is Christ himself. JMC Tavish and H Wells further wrote; **It was the body of every man which became a corpse in Him and was buried as a corpse with Him. All men, “Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female,” as they are now representatively gathered in the community, were one in God’s election (Eph.1vs.4)....(1978:244).** God through his son having performed the act of grace on the cross drew us together to form this unique community. The unity and fellowship of all the members is as a result of the power of resurrection. This community is entirely united with the body of Christ. The book of Romans 12 vs. 5 reads; **so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.** (N.I.V. Bible). It is evident that Jesus Christ established and endowed this community for the necessity of the unity and plurality of gifts. The various gifts are meant to enrich this community and they come from one source which is the Holy Spirit.

5.2.5. The image of the church.

The day of Pentecost marks the day when the church came into existence as a fulfilment of what Jesus Christ had said to one of his disciples Peter,... **And on this rock I will build my church...**(Matthew 16 vs. 18; NIV Bible.) The beginning of the church was so small but from that day a word of prophecy declared that this work was to go on and grow much bigger than one could imagine. This is well captured in the great commission to the disciples in Matthew 28 vs. 19: **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit,.....**(NIV Bible). He does not speak of language, race, culture or colour of skin but that of „**all nations**“. The church was to exist in the world and make a difference without giving room for individuals to pursue their interests and occupations. In essence the church was to be the continuation of Jesus Christ since it was rooted and sustained by Him. In terms of character Jesus loved everybody and pursued that the will of God be known here on earth.

To understand in more practical terms as to how the church began its ministry, the researcher will utilize the text in the book of „Acts 2 vs. 1-44“. On the very day the Holy Spirit came down the on lookers heard clear, strong and joyous voices proclaiming the great wonders of God. The strangest thing is that this group of men was proclaiming in various languages and yet was very harmonious to the listeners who understood them very well. This small group was speaking in all the languages known by the spectators. The bible says that everyone heard them speaking in his/her own language. Those who received the apostles' message as it was delivered were baptized, and that day three thousand persons were added to their number.

These people devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles, fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers daily. They were all amazed because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles in the name of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that all those who believed continued in the fellowship and had all things in common. The book of Acts of the Apostles provides a basis and clear summary of the activities of the early Christians as they persevered to spread the gospel to all nations. JMC Tavish and H Wells continue to state that, **Apart from Jesus Christ there is no other principle to constitute and organise and guarantee this body. Even preaching, teaching, Baptism, Eucharist, Faith, Love, Hope, work of the Apostles, cannot have this function.** (1978:244). The writers acknowledge that it is Jesus Christ who enabled the Apostles to do this great work. Those gifts received by the Apostles were meant to build God's people for the ministry to one another in order to continue building Christ's body. The activities of the Apostles in the community bring out four special marks to be held in high esteem and these are:

5.2.6.1. Fellowship.

The early Christians began participating in that deep intimate relationship and fellowship with God as well as one another. They managed to embrace the community of believers as they were also embraced by them. They therefore became adopted into a new Christian family. In this fellowship people were able to be moved to personal commitment and sacrifice and had to exist as a unit. This was a one continuous movement of a group of people who continued to experience the salvation of God together. Tony Campolo and Michael Battle in their book, *The Church Enslaved*: wrote, **The classic phrasing of this intrinsic relationship was first stated by African theologian John Mbiti and carried on by Desmond Tutu, as an Ubuntu sensibility, namely, I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.**”(2005:83). This is so true about the African community in which power is not vested in an individual but the community. It is an African’s business to know how the neighbour is and what would be happening in their lives. There is a connection to the early church in terms of this practice. However the present day communities seem to be moving away from what used to hold the communities together be at religious or social levels. The church seems to have lost one of its critical marks that of being all inclusive in practice, of creating a fellowship that knows no color or tribe/race. If the church is in fellowship with Christ and it is Christ himself one wonders why they are elements of segregation amongst itself or why other members want to believe that their tribe/race is superior to the others and whether the church still identifies fellowship as one of its marks.

5.2.6.2. Proclamation of the gospel.

The church having been called into existence by the will of God thus exists to carry out what it was commissioned to do. The UPCS Manual of Faith and Order states that; **Its purpose and function is to bear witness to the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to all who do not yet believe in him, to build up faith, hope and love to those who already believe, and to proclaim his sovereignty over the world.** (2007:1) The early Christians from the very onset undertook seriously the aspect of proclaiming the gospel and that increased their membership on a daily

basis. The apostles did not just bring some new religious beliefs to their world view and then continued with life as usual. They did not immediately withdraw from the crowd and engage in private worship. Their approach to the gospel was public and continued from where Christ had left. Having inherited this mandate the present day church need to continue from where the apostles left. The church's efforts must be that of seeking to extend the fellowship of Christ to all the people of the world. The proclamation of the gospel seeks to break the walls that separate us such as those of tribe/race. In their book, *What Color Is Your God?* James and Lillian Breckenridge (1995:69) state; **Philosophically, however, Christianity cannot be committed to pluralism. The church may be composed of many people, but the Christian message is not pluralistic in content.** When the church fails to exist within the context of its mandate this injures the unity of the body and there is no meaningful growth. This is also a clear indication of failing Christ Himself and rejecting him and causes a scandal to the gospel and the body of Christ. The call from God is for people to work towards the transformation of the society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the word of God. The manual further states that; **Word of God is always God's living Word that addresses us in real life, in the power of the Spirit, and points, or witnesses, to Jesus Christ. That Word is thus in the most exact sense the living and present Lord Jesus Christ himself addressing us. In his life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension God has spoken unambiguously, so that the test of sound teaching is its accord with the gospel.** (2007:6). It must be understood that throughout history Christians have been defining their faith in Jesus Christ. Since the God head is one this calls for us to recognize that our lives are interdependent though at face value different.

5.2.6.3. Administration of sacraments.

The two sacraments baptism and Holy Communion are a very important part of our faith as Presbyterians. To understand the administration of sacraments, one has to know what exactly they are and why they are highly valued in one's spiritual journey.

Sacraments are viewed as the outward and visible signs in the form of words, and symbols that produce an invisible presence and action of the Holy Spirit in conferring grace on a believer. The Manual of the UPCS states that; **the same Word of God that addresses us verbally through Scripture, preaching and personal witness comes to us visibly and tangibly through the sacraments. The sacraments are not just symbols of the Word or visual aids to it but visible, material forms of the Word itself that apply, confirm and seal the promises of the gospel to the individual. Through them Christ comes to us with saving grace in the power of his Spirit.** (2007:11). The sacraments are a very essential part of the ministry in the church for both the individual and the community's spiritual development. They form part of the doctrine thus the faith, identity and message of the denomination. This religious ceremony which is very formal in nature confers grace on all those who receive and believe. The two traditional religious rites are accepted as having been instituted by Christ himself. In Matthew 28 vs. 19 Christ instructs his disciples to preach to all nations and make disciples and those who repent are to be baptized. In Luke 22 vs. 7 – 20 the Lord had the last supper (holy communion) with his chosen twelve (12) and instructed them to do this in remembrance of him all the time.

The church strongly believes as contained in the scriptures that Jesus himself gave us these sacraments. These sacraments are a continuous reminder of what Christ did for his church and to show that there can be no unity without a sacrifice. The membership of the body can only be open to each other by emptying ourselves to Christ and to each other. This can be achieved by sharing the message of the cross and the power of the cross of Jesus Christ. The church receives the grace of God each time it celebrates these rites and is drawn closer to him. This is the ever

present visible sign of God's unconditional love for humanity. In this way God continuously comes to us, becomes part of our life and draws us closer to him through his grace. The church is not only drawn closer to Christ but all also to one another as we declare the peace of the Lord to be with each one of us. The church has no right to choose in terms of who should or should not come to the table with the Lord. The church needs to continue asking itself as to how it can bring people to repentance, discipleship and transformation regardless of tribe/race so that together it can enjoy God's unconditional love and intention for humanity. The body of Christ is one and baptism and holy communion affirms this bond of unity and Christ brings us into the new covenant with him and one another. The church must welcome all persons who respond to the gospel and must transcend the barriers of tribe/race, and hate.

5.2.6.4. Prayer

Prayer basically is a communication process that allows an individual or a community to have a deeper conversation with God through Jesus Christ. It is the christian's direct line to the heavens as revealed in Jeremiah 33 vs. 3, „**Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know**“ (NIV Bible). In most cases people primarily think of prayer as asking God always for something. Prayer has to be understood in the context that it is a conversation in which God is involved with an individual or a community that believes. In communication people always expect the other person to be listening and it is a two way process. Hence the very act of praying is an ultimate recognition and acceptance of the presence of God. This is the moment of claiming one's dependence upon God, admitting one's unworthiness and need, and being humbled. Further to this pride is abandoned and one's hope is lifted in anticipation that God is in charge. This is the needful practice of the Christian where one exercises faith and hope.

Prayer is a privilege given to believers of touching the heart of God through Jesus Christ the Lord. The book of James 4 vs. 8 says, **"Come near to God and He will come near to you....."**(NIV Bible). It is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit who is the enabler that prayer lifts one up from isolation to a conscious level of loving communion with God. In essence prayer is a personal dialogue with God, a spiritual breathing of the soul and that is why the Church recommends that people pray frequently (1 Thessalonians 5 vs. 17). All believers are very much encouraged to make prayer an important part of their day to day lives. In light of this disciplined life of prayer everything is experienced in a new light. However at times people often ignore prayer and seek to employ their imagination and strength to accomplish those things that one desires. In the process of praying one's recognition of the presence of God is strengthened, and one is drawn closer to Him and other human beings. The bible itself encourages people in Psalm 99 vs. 5, **Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.** (NIV Bible). Prayer is one key element of worship and it changes lives as one continues confessing his short comings and dependence on God's grace. The book of Philippians 4 vs. 7 says, **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** (NIV Bible). By this people are reminded that if they submit and remain in Christ he is able to control their conduct and thinking.

The church from its inception was formed on a strong foundation and that foundation is Jesus Christ himself. The church is Christ himself who is omnipresent and must cultivate a loving attitude to its members and spread it out to the society. However today's church is witnessing a tragic scenario in which there is clamor to power, rationalization of evil and the institutionalization of hatred due to tribalism and racism. The Zimbabwean society has been characterized by brutality and believes somehow that a violent relationship is normal. This thinking has been dragged into the body of Christ. The church ceases to see itself as a unit but begins to describe individuals using their tribe/race. This is so because people see God with eyes that have been conditioned by a multiple of factors that include the society around. There is a pressing need for the church to rethink and get a clear understanding of who they are and what they stand for. The leadership prides itself that the church is growing according to their statistics

and it is like a selling story. But if one asked what that means certainly one gets to hear different explanations and meanings. However Charles R. Foster explains it as follows; **Church growth has come to refer more to such things as location, marketing, architecture, programs, and head counts than the maturity of the body of Christ.** (1997: 31) The church must be sufficiently realistic to accept the fact that it has taken the above stated as of paramount qualities of defining the growth of the body of Christ. It has been used as a measuring rod of tremendous success and yet the body of Christ is injured and in terrible pain.

Worship and unity only happens if one understands and is willing to give up oneself. Douglas W. Waruta and Hannah W. Kinoti in their book: Pastoral Care In African Christianity; Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology, state that; **For each person to develop normally and spiritually, worship must not be tampered with and should be left to develop and evolve naturally. If this does not happen then one can talk about „worship pathology“ in a situation where physical, spiritual and social conditions become unfavorable for the normal survival and spiritual development of a people.** (2005:42). Churches must be growing places where individuals are able to freely express their faith without fear of segregation. The church must be like an incubator whose environment is carefully controlled so that those who are too sick or weak are able to maintain their own body temperatures. As the body of Christ the church must always aspire to proclaim the gospel, administer sacraments, pray without ceasing and to exist in harmony. This can only happen when people begin to appreciate the humanity in each other and to know that they are all created in the image of God. The church has been perceived as one, whole, true body of Jesus Christ without any conflicts. The church needs to move on by acknowledging its mistakes and failures and to begin to preach the message of reconciliation and what life should be like in the name of Jesus. The church must exist as an island of integrity within the community and be the model of peace and oneness.

5.3. The gospel of reconciliation.

The church whatever denomination worldwide was founded on the will of God and has taken upon itself to proclaim the gospel in relation to its context. This is the purpose of its existence and ushers in a unique contribution derived from the scriptures. This is the mark of its identity and relevancy within the society. It is very evident that from the scriptures the Christian faith commits people to work for reconciliation and peace. The power given to the church is to denounce sin and never to attempt to reconcile what is good and evil. The church seems to be struggling to make herself effective and relevant in the society. Beautiful statements of faith have been crafted and well kept in the church such as the following **vision** of the UPCSA.

The UPCSA is a Church which is One:

- **In obedience to its Sovereign Lord**
- **In celebrating its living heritage as a Reformed Church in Southern Africa**
- **In celebrating its cultural diversity**
- **In addressing injustices and poverty in Church and Society**
- **In providing a model of racial reconciliation**

The above stated vision is supposed to be the driving factor for the denomination in terms of reliving the great commission. There is no doubt that the denominational emphasis is on the oneness of human race. Humanity is one and inconsequential differences for example language and color, which are being used as symbols of association, are a part of the false ideology. The bodily functions such as the capacity to reason or speak are almost the same and these make humanity different from the rest of God's creation. The message of oneness and how to live by one's commitment to each other must be retold now and again.

The question to be asked relates to the state of preparedness the church is, to live by her vision and to translate this vision into actions. Constantly she needs to examine herself if she has church lived up to her word in **providing a model of reconciliation?**

In order to understand reconciliation the church needs to take a look at God's view of sin, repentance, and restoration. The biblical teaching speaks of every man being a sinner through Adam and being redeemed through Jesus Christ. Sin, according to Christ can be committed through thought, or deed. The book of Romans 3 vs. 23 says, **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, (NIV Bible). It is a fact in life that human beings are sinful. Therefore it means that sin is always with people and must never be ignored. Most of the tragedies that are heard of in the history of the human race are caused by sin. God then invites sinners/people at his table for repentance. It is an act of realization that one needs the grace of God to change after feeling sorry for his/her sin. The church has a responsibility of reconciling the fallen Christians. However issues pertaining to the means by which the church fulfills her mandate and whether the church knows when there is true repentance remain outstanding.

There are so many questions that can be raised and the church finds itself challenged to conclusively maintain a position. It is true that the survival of the fittest culture still reigns supreme. The body of Christ is still finding it difficult to come together in the kingdom of God as reflected in the previous chapter. Klaus Nurnberger and John Tooke who edited a book called, *The Cost of Reconciliation in South Africa 1988*: 167, state that; **Virtually every denomination that embodies within its life something of the diversity of our culture, is experiencing such tension and division, and often feels as if it is being torn apart.** This is the place that emphasizes mostly the Godly language such as;

(1) **the peace of the Lord be with you and**

(2) **„Jesus loves you**

The church has been losing its credibility that of being a safe and caring place for its members. Individuals have been left confused as to how loving God is whilst they endure abuse and

trauma. The church needs to make a comeback and be able to uphold its prophetic role in the

society. The role is that of affirming the presence of God when God seems to be absent and unconcerned about human pain. The Christian tradition speaks of working towards true reconciliation and building genuine relationships. Reconciliation stands as a prerequisite for unity at any given level and also for the promise of salvation by God. However before reconciliation there must be forgiveness and before forgiveness there must be repentance. The temptation that befalls humanity is that of wanting to start with the word reconciliation as the action word for unity without considering the past and drawing lessons. The biblical teaching is very clear that nobody can be forgiven and reconciled with God unless they repent of their sins. There has been too much rhetoric on the theme of reconciliation and little has been realized in practical terms. The early Christians never sought the enemy in others but managed to focus in transforming the whole world by their actions. Transformation begins with an individual with the hope that this would influence the lives of others. The sad thing is that much has been invested in restructuring programmes, buildings, committees and with less individual transformation.

The ideologies that seek to dominate and resist any possibilities of change must be discarded. The world and its preconceived ideas must never be allowed to influence the church on what it should be and whom it should associate with. The creativity of each generation has been shaped to conform to the long established patterns of conduct. Humanity has been made to accept the status quo, rather than the creation of new forms of condemning tribalism/racism with all its negative implications. This has been one of the most destructive features of human existence. In so doing this has resulted in communities that are individualistic. The approach defeats the African understanding and gospel of „**ubuntu**“ where persons are in the community. Tony Campolo and Michael Battle 2005:79 wrote; **the ultimate, or eschatological, hope we present here is one in which there will be community enough for all people to discover their destiny together. It is often only through either direct cross cultural experience or vicariously through study of other cultures that one begins to imagine in intelligible ways how those who are different may find a common destiny.** For this to succeed the church needs to accept the fact the each tribe/race is unique in its own way. The historical teaching on racial and cultural prejudice does not immediately disappear when the people come together. Human beings have a

tendency of favouring themselves at the expense of dominating, excluding and oppressing others who are deemed to be the other. The church members must overcome their prejudices and accept the need for creating a new and conducive environment. There is greater need to search one's human qualities and virtues and then apply these to the major task of reconciliation. This would be a positive direction and dedication to providing equal opportunities and privileges in the process of reconstruction.

The envisaged Kingdom of God is explained in the vision found in the book of Isaiah 65vs.25 **The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox..... They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain says the Lord.** (NIV Bible) The community which God promises is that of coexisting, differences are acknowledged and respected. Charles R. Foster expands on the vision as written by the prophet in the book of Isaiah; **The power dynamics of culturally diverse congregations metaphorically chastens the tendency in “wolves” to ignore the fear of the “lambs” who have experienced years – perhaps centuries of their aggressive and dominating ways and requires them to alter their carnivorous ways. It also challenges “lambs” who have traditionally avoided or submitted to the “wolves” to assume new ways of relating to structures of power, to take on new roles and responsibilities.** (1997:38). The very small step to be taken by both groups is that of cultivating a sense of trust, appreciation of others as co-workers and equal partners. The old attitudes, old forms of religious and social affiliation must be replaced by attitudes that are positive and forward looking. The process of improving tribal/racial relations must never be guided by extremes rather by a sober approach in the pathway of moderation. God has a special way designed for human living and fellowship within the church.

The church needs to remind itself of its critical role of being the „**servant church**“ in the changing community. Its mission must be in the context of finding meaning within the experiences of individuals. There has been a tendency of just adopting the traditional creeds of the early generations without recreating new forms of creeds that are in context. The **Belhar Confession** is one such example that can be adopted and used by the church if it has not yet done

so. This is a Christian statement of belief that was first written in Afrikaans in 1982 under the leadership of Allan Boesak in South Africa. This confession seeks to empower the church to address the following; **-unity of the church and unity among all people, reconciliation within church and society, and God's justice.** The ministers need to recognize the significance and richness of employing the biblical texts, creeds, liturgies and rituals that can bring about individual recovery such as the one stated above. As the ministers begin to challenge tribal/racial abuse through their teachings, this would cultivate a sense of openness and repentance.

Many members who have suffered silently for a long time would begin to acknowledge their experiences and describe their experiences associated with the trauma. The whole aim would be to break the silence, effect change and empower the membership to deal with this phenomenon at individual level. The ministers must assume the responsibility of service and caring as exemplified by the Jerusalem church and by confronting tribalism/racism as evil.

Mutual recognition can be viewed as the key to accepting the otherness of the other. This would lead to multicultural worshipping establishing common grounds for fellowshiping as Christians. Various multiracial congregations have adopted models that they believe would be accommodative to every member. The following are the models;

- The **_assimilation model_** is the idea that those who are few in that group are absorbed by the larger group through its institutions, norms and values. However this does not do away with the feeling of being segregated and inferiority complex haunts the minority.
- The **_accommodation model_** agrees on the laid down principles in order to achieve equality. Accommodation would be creating a level of tolerance after having had perennial conflicts. There is an element of superficial relationships being created.

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These models can bring people together but without bringing any life changing results. The required models must be those that would be able to make people realize that we are**called to one hopeone lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.** (Ephesians 4 vs. 4 - 6). Any forms of addressing this challenge that allows the other part to continue existing as it used to, is false and must be denounced.

Albert Nolan in his book, *God in South Africa the Challenge of the Gospel* writes; **When the church preaches and celebrates a gospel that does not challenge anyone to transcend the status quo with all its sinfulness, that church has lost contact with the transcended God in our midst and is worshipping an idol.** (1988:213). The power of God must be seen to be operating in our lives and the church structures. The gospel therefore needs to leave permanent markings in the lives of the believers. Preaching is not all about denouncing or venting frustration or offering hope but it is the usage of words to destroy and rebuilt. Only the courageous will stand up and speak out, only the courageous will admit their short comings, only the courageous will stand up to forgive and only the courageous will reflect and laugh over their experiences though the laughter will be in deep anguish. It is very much impossible to journey into the future having been traumatized this would hinder any developmental progress. As instruments through which God's kingdom is brought about, we need to live according to the standards set by Christ. Jesus Christ had the ability of translating all his words into action for the purposes of reconciling God and human beings.

As lessons are drawn from the past people should accept that tribalism/racism is an iniquity that should never be justified. All means must be employed to achieve unity in the Body of Christ. There is need to have insight as to why some of the systems operate the way they do. The divisions that are within the body are a mockery of what Christians profess to be and stand for. Confessions made in worship every time are just words that do not change Christians' being. In the Lord's prayer Christians speak of **_thy will be done on earth here as it is in heaven_** but

thereafter go and do the opposite. In the Apostles' Creed Christians **believe in the communion of all believers** and in return they discriminate against one another. Whites have been called to minister to white congregations only and blacks to black congregations. When today's church gets to a level where she begins to appreciate the realities of the gospel then all these walls of separation will fall. This is done in contrast to the calling of the Catholic Church whose doors are open to everybody.

5.4. Summary

It is very important that before one embarks on the proclamation of the gospel of reconciliation one understands the dynamics at play. When people lacks adequate knowledge this eventually leads to not knowing what they will be dealing with. The researcher in this chapter dealt with what the church is and how it ought to stand strong in pursuing the eradication of the virus of tribalism/racism using the gospel. It is a fact that this is a perennial problem and has come a long way, hampering the growth of the church despite the ever changing environment. The church cannot continue bemoaning that this is a universal problem without doing anything about it. Each context is different and has to be approached different through contextual theology. The shepherd must be practical enough to be able to apply his skills into the situation in light of the gospel. It is best to understand that the shepherd is a steward and God is the one who effects the change of heart and attitude.

In the next chapter will be the conclusion of this whole discussion, results from the questionnaires, findings of the research and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Conclusions and implications for future research

The whole purpose of this thesis was to explore how traumatic tribalism/racism is to those affected in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. The traumatic experience of segregation and rejection has negative effects in the lives of those who experience it. The negative effects include creation of a struggle within one self as answers are sought so as to understand what is happening. This may further lead to distressing emotions such as feeling guilty, anger, fear, low self esteem and depression. Much of literature has been written encouraging or challenging the church to be relevant in the various communities they serve. Suggestions include seeking new ways of preaching the gospel and seeking mentors who have the wisdom to share based on their spiritual and emotional journeys as members of the church. Ministers and all forms of leadership in the church is encouraged to play a role of offering encouragement necessary to face the pain and joy of being a member of the body of Christ. The challenge is on the manner the church embraces one another and be able to appreciate the otherness of the other.

From the research the participants expressed the desire to improve the quality of their spiritual relationships as well as forming meaningful relationships with other people of different tribe/race. Many voices seem to be suggesting that the church today need to embrace diversity in order to be relevant and effective. The lack of commitment from the church in addressing tribalism/racism is a serious crisis for both the church and society. The expressions by the church and civic society that there is a problem and attempting to get together in various ways to address it are extremely positive signs. Whilst the church is attempting to breakdown the tribal/racial barriers there is still the issue of blatant homophobia being expressed. The efforts by the church

are largely constructive though polarized. The membership continues to journey and reconnecting with the spiritual development in a traditional faith that is not easy to change.

6.2. The crisis.

The church today amongst many evils is confronted by tribalism/racism. The interviews, questionnaires and the case studies authenticate the existence of trauma caused by the phenomenon under consideration. The findings of this research reflect a number of areas where this evil practice is adhered to such as in the calling of ministers, the voting system in the council when appointing Conveners, the usage of language and the singing of music during worship. Members tend to align themselves with their own tribe/race. The recruitment drive of candidates for the ministry in Matabeleland has not been successful as most of the people are not willing to come join the ministry. For a period covering 25 years only four (4) candidates for the ministry from Matabeleland have come through as compared to about thirty (30) who have come from Mashonaland. In the period covering 2009 - 2010 the Conventionship (is the person responsible for calling of meetings of a said committee) of the majority of the Presbytery committees almost 80% were in the hands of the people from Matabeleland. Comments like.... ‘people from Matabeleland are always complaining....’ have been repeatedly said amongst the ministers. Most of the ministers when they visit the southern part of the Presbytery assume that they will just use their language (Shona) expecting congregates to understand them. The ministers from the southern part when they visit the northern part to attend meetings hardly use their language (isiNdebele) because people would not understand the language. The white people hardly attend combined services organised by the region especially if the service is not at their congregation. They rather would have their own service and ministers caught in between as to which way they could go. In most cases as the saying goes,... ‘he who pays the piper calls the tune’. The minister called to that congregation would rather be excused from the combined services to go and minister to the group no matter how small. The church remains exposed as failing to provide a model that can be lasting in building up multicultural congregations. The reasons for these challenges are complex and numerous and the solutions are equally complex and elusive.



6.3 The shepherding model.

The assumption of this researcher is that so much damage has already taken place in the Body of Christ. The shepherding model which has been explored, suggests that a therapeutic healing of journeying together is vitally necessary for people to be able to grow both spiritually and emotionally. Church leadership has to take an active role in helping the membership to heal, build trust and form lasting relationships. This will enable the individual members to discover the spiritual dimensions of their lives and the essence of accepting all humanity. In relation to the church all people need to journey in search of a sense of their new identity in Christ. The process of shaping this new image takes place in the context of defining ourselves by a sense of belonging to the Body of Christ. It is a fact that in life Christians have faced traumatic moments and their faith has been shaken. The shepherd needs to help us return to the various authorities in reshaping our foundational beliefs. Scriptures, worship and the liturgy come in handy in responding to some critical questions and to strengthen our convictions and spiritual lives. This helps us get to a point where we enjoy living with the mysteries of life yet affirming that life is an exciting part of the journey. The climax of our efforts in this journey with the help of the Holy Spirit is the nourishment and perpetuation of the Body of Christ. The whole aim is an attempt to answer the questions; how can we be able to see God in all Human beings? How are we to embrace diversity be it cultural or otherwise in order to live together as one?

Norman Pittenger, in his book; *Becoming and Belonging: The Meaning of Human Existence and Community* writes, **None of us can live to, of, and for self alone. To be human is not only to „become“ but also to „belong“ to belong with other people, sharing with them in the human situation, participating in their interests, receiving from them and giving to them....(1989:29).** The writer expresses the Ubuntu ideology (African) though a Westener, that a person is totally bonded in the community leading to the salvation of all mankind. As already

alluded to in the chapters before the ideology states that; „**Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu** –I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am. In here people come to celebrate a life, success, etc. walls of privacy are minimized and the individualistic mentality is discarded. Community members are encouraged to relate with each other on more than a superficial level. The theological reflection and understanding of a Christian community is defined by Frank Kirkpatrick in his book, *Community: A Trinity of Models*; **At the heart of the religious vision of community in the Western tradition, in both Judaism and Christianity, is the fundamental conviction that human freedom is ultimately meaningful and fulfilling only in a community of love,... Neither Judaism nor Christianity makes any sense unless it is rooted in the belief that through love God intends to achieve a universal community for and with human creation..... In the Christian faith love is disclosed as the centre and spirit of... history. Love is not an idea which we add to our beliefs about God and his self-revelation. Love is what God’s spirit is in his action in history, as he deals with human loves and lovelessness, and opens the way to a new community of life whose spirit is informed by love.** (1986:138). The writer brings in a western perspective which I believe is vital to the existence of every community. This is also depicted in the 1 Corinthians Chapter 13, Paul in this letter brings out the theme of love as one of the key elements for a genuine community.

In an effort to continue building this community the church needs to deal with tribal/racial issues within its pews. This does not necessarily mean that the church should negate addressing the other vital themes that affect the church on a day to day basis. History has it that the church played a critical role in bringing about equality in the country. The political activists would not have accomplished freedom without the involvement of the church. This they have publicly acknowledged. The subject of social transformation was successful because the church stood firm and spoke with one voice despite its plurality. In their book, *Community of Faith*, E.E. Whitehead and J.D. Whitehead wrote, **The one faith that Christians confess has from the beginning of our history been believed and expressed plurally. This was necessary the case for a faith that was intended for all nations. (Matthew 28:19): as a universal religion, not limited to a single culture or race, Christianity would necessarily find plural expression on**

different continents and in diverse cultural contexts. Also, as a faith which confessed God's presence throughout history and not just in a single, privileged moment of revelation, Christianity was committed to continually attending to God's voice in human history. (1982:5) It is the researcher's contention that some Christians have gone back to the Judaism era who thought that they were the only chosen race. Some of the membership desire to experience personal wholeness in an inclusive, pluralistic spiritual community. Many have been traumatized by being excluded and the rigid religious traditional beliefs have been used as a tool to advance this abuse. This was revealed in the process of data collection through the questionnaires designed by the researcher.

6.4. Questionnaires feedback.

From the onset the author had indicated that, the questionnaires would be distributed to two group settings;

1. For the leadership both clergy and the laity.
2. For the general membership

Part of the leadership includes those who were confronted by the powers that be in advancing tribalism/racism. Some of the members were not willing to participate citing personal reasons. However it was encouraging to note that some were courageous enough to be part of this research.

6.5. Findings.

The results of this research point out to a variety of issues at play within the body of Christ. Despite being divided the church still stands as the only place that can provide its membership to experience oneness in community. This can be achieved through doing justice to the scriptures

and the gospel. The preachers must be heard preaching against tribalism/racism just as they denounce other evils such as murder, stealing etc.

The church also needs to constantly study and take seriously the spiritual development for every individual. If we are to remain effective and relevant, we need to provide contexts which will enable people to move from traumatic situations and life experiences.

The church needs to find ways of encouraging the powers that be, which are relatively comfortable with pursuing the road of division in the body to begin the often painful process of questioning and self-discovery. The whole idea is them to be able to adopt a new approach to spirituality and the growth of the church.

The shepherding model which is rooted in scripture if genuinely utilized by the church leadership in light of contextual theology can affect the way we function as a church. This model would impact the lives of many in the church because it is re-modelled in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus' model meets people at the point of their need and offers them a context of reconnecting with the entire community.

6.6 Areas of further study.

In the near future further research could be on the subject of _how can existing practices in the church be altered that seem to be hampering personal growth for its members. The church needs to be a place where individuals grow to their full potential.

6.7. Recommendations

The researcher would humbly suggest to those who will have had time to read this research need to understand that this is not conclusive. They need to begin to engage the church and begin to question the theology behind segregation. Both the clergy and the laity need to revisit our confession of faith, our mission and vision and be able to read and understand it. The next step would be able to begin to teach and be accountable to what the denomination stands for. Further to this there must be a deliberate effort to radically move and make available this literature in vernacular languages. The books of confessions must not be treated as reserved for the clergy and few leaders only but the book must be readily available to all those who want it. The general membership has no idea what this book is and what it contains. Most of them are comfortable to identify the **Manual of Faith and Order** as the „green book“. The church has to take serious the subject on provision for a model of racial reconciliation as one of its priorities.

6.8. SUMMARY.

The research is opening an opportunity for dialogue within the church and that evil must be confronted. The reality is the forces are at play to protect their tribal/racial identity instead of working towards the culture of Christ. The church must be challenged to stop seeking self-righteousness and begin to live what it stands for. John A. Sanford, in his book, *The Kingdom Within*, writes, **The idea that one's morality must go deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, who seemed the paragons of virtue, must have been deeply puzzling and disturbing to those who heard Jesus's words. But Jesus can say this with authority, for he knows that a man is made of an inner self as well as an outer front, and that only the ethic which reaches to what is within..... that is, only an ethic of consciousness.... is a fit ethic for the kingdom.....It is not a matter of becoming a person who has no shadowy or dark thoughts or feelings. All of us have murderous thoughts, adulterous feelings, and the like from time to time. It is a matter of not leaving them „in the heart“; that is, not burying them in the unconscious..... We may lose some of our moral self-esteem in this way, but we also lose our mask and gain moral humility.....(1970, 98-110)** Jesus warned in Matthew 5 vs.

20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. In other words the standard set by Jesus Christ is that of being true to oneself and to the gospel. We need to be more morally pure than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. The model provided in this research will help those who will utilize it to the benefit of the whole church.

Appendix A: research interview questions

This scheduled interview is part of a research, which seeks to assess the extent and impact of practices of tribalism/racism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe.

1. Are you a Church Elder?
If yes, for how long?
2. Please list all the languages that you are conversant in?
3. What is the dominant language in your locality/church?
4. What is tribalism or what do you understand from the word?
5. What is racism or what do you understand from the word?
6. Do you think tribalism/racism exists in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe? If yes please explain with examples.
7. What do you think are the possible causes of tribalism/racism in your congregation or what do you see as the major causes of tribalism/racism in the church?
8. Are there any particular cases of tribalism/racism that you have ever dealt with from the time you became an Elder? Please give examples.
9. How were these cases dealt with?
10. Do you think the manner in which these cases were dealt with encourages or inhibits the practice of tribalism/racism?
11. In what levels do you think tribalism/racism is prominent in your congregation/church?
12. What tribes/race is your church leadership composed of?
13. Do acts of tribalism/racism affect your worship in your church and how?
14. What would be the reaction of the congregation if one of the members prays or testifies in his mother tongue, which is different from the dominant language?

Appendix: B

The Informed Letter of Consent

University of Pretoria.

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Hatfield

0083

Researchers' Name : Reginald Mudenda

Contact Details : (263) 11 729902

mreggie@mweb.co.zw

Student Number : 27455093

Title of the Study : An Investigation of

Tribalism and Racism in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe: A challenge to Pastoral Care.

This serves to confirm that I ID No
..... have agreed to give my story to the Researcher for the purpose of
the study being conducted. The purpose of the study was explained to me thoroughly. I am aware
that my participation is voluntary and I am assured anonymity and confidentiality. The research
will not use any real names by fictitious ones when referring to and places.

The information given by me shall be treated as Confidential.

Signed at on this Day of
..... 200...

Subjects signature:

Researchers Signature:

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