"MISSION STATION IN CRISIS": THE CASE OF EPWORTH METHODIST CHURCH MISSION IN ZIMBABWE

BY

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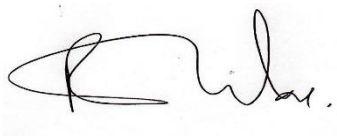
Declaration

1 declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed:  Date: 14 August 2020

As the supervisor, I have agreed to the submission of this thesis

Professor Thias S. Kgatla…….

Date…….

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Dedication

To my mother Jane Siziwe Ncube and my late father John Mlandu who taught me to read and write while schools had been closed due the Zimbabwe war of Liberation, and before I started my formal education in 1980. My parents gave me immense inspiration while I was still young.

To my wife Sikhangezile, my daughter Sindisiwe and my two sons Sibusiso Rich and Sibonginkosi Ephraim.

Abstract

This thesis is a missiological analysis of the crisis of the phenomenon of the mission station in post-independent Zimbabwe. Using qualitative methods that included archival, desk and ethnography, it explores the mission station in the context of the wider missionary enterprise of the nineteenth century, in terms of its limitations, weaknesses and challenges, but also its strengths. Focussing on Epworth mission of the Methodist church in Zimbabwe, it engages the wider mission enterprise, in relation to the manner in which mission was conducted during the missionary era and how that approach gave birth to the current church. With so much promise at the start, Epworth has become anything but success. The thesis considers the underlying causes of the current challenges facing Epworth and mission work of the church as a whole. The underlying missionary motivations and attitudes are explored, the proximity of mission to the colonial forces are engaged and how this affected mission praxis. The research revealed that mission station was a phenomenon adopted by missionaries on the mission field without proper missiological reflection on implications and ramifications for the future. As a result, as political, social and religious circumstances changed particularly with the coming of independence in 1980, the mission station struggled to withstand the pressure and hence the crisis. Considering that the Methodist church in Zimbabwe was born out of the missionary enterprise and that it is from the mission station that the majority of its membership has been constituted and nurtured, and from the mission institutions such as schools, clinics, children's homes and theological colleges that its influence has radiated, it explores the limitations of such a model of mission in a post missionary and post-colonial paradigm. It proposes new and relevant models of doing church, which are contextual and border on decolonisation of the mind and a bias towards the poor. Missional theology as the new approach embodies such a range of contextual theologies and can be useful in the case of Zimbabwe.

List of abbreviations

AACC	:	All Africa Council of Churches
AME	:	African Methodist Episcopal
ANC	:	African National Congress
ATR	:	African Traditional Religion
BCU	:	Boys Christian Union
BSAC	:	British South African Company
CCAP	:	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
DRCSA	:	Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa
ELCR	:	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rhodesia
ELCZ	:	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
ETC	:	Epworth Theological College
FROLIZI	:	Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe
GCE	:	General Certificate in Education
GCU	:	Girls Christian Union
IMC	:	International Missionary Council
IMC	:	International Missionary Conference
LLM	:	Local Leaders Meeting
LMS	:	London Missionary Society
MBE	:	Member of the Order of British Empire
MCA	:	Methodist Connexional Archives
MCSA	:	Methodist Church of Southern Africa
MCU	:	Men's Christian Union
MCZ	:	Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
MMC	:	Methodist Missionary Committee
MYD	:	Methodist Young Disciples
NAZ	:	National Archives of Zimbabwe
OAU	:	Organisation of African Union
PCR	:	Programme to Combat Racism
PF	:	Patriotic Front

RCC	:	Rhodesian Council of Churches
SCM	:	Students Christian Movement
TEF	:	Theological Education Fund
UANC	:	United African National Council
UCCAR	:	United Church of Central Africa Rhodesia
UCCSA	:	United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
UCCZ	:	United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
UCRN	:	University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland
UDI	:	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UMC	:	United Methodist Church
UNISA	:	University of South Africa
USA	:	United States of America
UTC	:	United Theological College
WCC	:	World Council of Churches
WCCPCR	:	World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism
WMMS	:	Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society
WMA	:	Wesleyan Methodist Archives
WWCAC	:	World Council of Churches Advisory Committee
ZANU	:	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU (PF)	:	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	:	Zimbabwe African People’s Union
ZCBC	:	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop’s Conference
ZCC	:	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZIPRA	:	Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Historical Background

The current study concerns the Methodist church in Zimbabwe since its arrival in 1891. The Methodist Church was introduced into Zimbabwe by Rev Isaac Shimmin in September 1891. Isaac Shimmin became the first Methodist missionary to Mashonaland and he was accompanied by Rev Owen Watkins who then was the chairman of Transvaal District of South Africa and the person in charge of the work to the North of Transvaal (Thorpe 1951:39). Rev Isaac Shimmin was around twenty-nine years of age when he came to the then Rhodesia. It need also be mentioned that he was little known in influential Methodist circles. Isaac Shimmin is described by Rev Watkins as 'an earnest Christian and a devoted worker, very popular amongst white men, and would do well for the Chaplain to white men' (Zvobgo 1991:20). Yet as far as leading the mission Watkins was not convinced. Watkins doubted Shimmin's experience. Watkins argued, 'as a leader of a mission, he would fail, being easily cast down and turned back in his work by difficulties. Acting by himself he would soon get discouraged and request to be removed' (Zvobgo 1991:20). However, Shimmin eventually succeeded in going to Mashonaland, ahead of Rev Robert F. Appelbe of Johannesburg and Rev George Weavind. Comparatively, the two had significant experience, Rev Appelbe having worked in Botswana and well acquainted with J. S. Moffat a British resident in Matabeleland, and George Weavind who had significant experience in the mission field but, Appelbe did not have enough personal fortune, and since the mission to the north lacked adequate financial backing, there was fear he would fail. Weavind had health issues. True to his name, Shimmin succeeded on account of Cecil John Rhodes' support. Isaac Shimmin was popular with Rhodes and the white community, including soldiers, evidenced by his ability to successfully negotiate funding for mission in Mashonaland. Shimmin met Rhodes on the 20 November 1890, and received a distinct promise of substantial practical help (Zvobgo 1991:18). The Mission in Mashonaland lay mostly on Rhodes' benevolence, as the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London was unable to support it.

On arrival, Isaac Shimmin successfully negotiated with Cecil John Rhodes that they be given three farms near the present-day Harare which they were granted. Epworth was one of these farms; it fell under chief Chiremba to the South East of Harare (Gundani 2007). Isaac Shimmin is said to have marvelled at that allocation, commenting that, "The principal importance of this farm lies in

its proximity to town. What Kilnerton is to Pretoria I expect Epworth will be to Salisbury" (Zvobgo 1991:24). Epworth is named after John Wesley's (the founder of Methodism) village of birth, it is a small town in North Lincolnshire; in England. Epworth was the second of the Mission stations to be established by Methodists in Zimbabwe. Others included Fort Salisbury (1891), Hartleyton (1891), Nenguwo (1892), and Kwenda (1892) (Banana 1991). Later more stations were established in Matebeleland after the defeat of the Ndebele King Lobhengula and the fall of the Ndebele state in the Anglo Ndebele war of 1893. Thekwane mission to the west of Bulawayo and close to the border with Botswana, was opened in 1897. Epworth recorded the earliest successes of the Methodist Church mission. Zvobgo (1991) notes that from the beginning the congregation numbered 200 adults on Sundays, and in addition about 40 children attended school regularly. The pattern of missions was similar, a church was central to worship, a school for the education of children, a clinic for modern means of health care and a farm for settlement of new converts and their agricultural purposes.

The Methodist church has been in existence in Zimbabwe for the past 129 years up to 2020. It became autonomous from 1977, and in August 2017 it celebrated 40 years of autonomous mission in Zimbabwe. Methodist church in Zimbabwe was granted autonomy by the British Methodist Conference in September 1977 (Pritchard 2014:232), which was during the height of the war of liberation, and three years before the political independence of Zimbabwe was achieved. Since then the autonomous church has registered growth numerically, geographically and expanded infrastructurally. There is evidence that education, health care and social welfare delivery has improved in Zimbabwe courtesy of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (Banana 1991:16, Zvobgo 1981). The church has also played a significant role in nation building, as evidenced by a number of people who are leaders in both business and government. The church has been a champion is social justice, its voice is evident in society (Madhiba 2010:4).

The Methodist Church is also at a critical point in terms of its life and future in a number of angles. However, the Methodist Church's ability to attract new members, its ability to grow, to maintain its influence and missional impact in society as it used to be is becoming difficult. Since 1991, the growth of the church has been minimal or to say the least insignificant as compared to the total percentage population growth of Zimbabwe. In 1977 the total membership was 77 000, in 1991

the membership lept to 110 000, since then the growth has been marginal, from 1991 to 2017, the numbers had managed to reach only 115 000 (MCA 2017). Between 1980 and 1991, the Methodist church engaged in aggressive *imvuselelo/vhuserere (*revivals), but these methods seem to have been overtaken by newer approaches which include tele-evangelism by younger churches (Ncube 2011:17). There is growing competition with younger and mushrooming churches, even adjacent to mission stations. These newer churches appeal to younger generations. Studies elsewhere show that this kind of competition is not unique to Epworth and the Methodist church in Zimbabwe (Maluleke 1995, Hovland 2013). The Methodist Annual Conference 2017 acknowledged that in general the church is an ageing church, constituted mainly by older population. The statistics provided by the World Council of Churches[1] in 2006 with regard to religion in Zimbabwe, show that the total Christian community in Zimbabwe stood at 8 815 180, a figure which accounts for 68% of the total population. Of this figure Catholics and Protestants constituted 3 374 060, a figure which constituted 38% of the total Christian community, this is despite the historical contribution in terms of pioneering Christian work, social intervention, education and health in Zimbabwe. Out of this figure, Methodists constituted 3.3% behind Anglicans who were 9.6% and Catholics who led the group by a significant 37%. The remaining 52% of Christian constituency in Zimbabwe is dominated by Pentecostals and Independent African Initiated churches.

While the population of Zimbabwe is largely young[2], accounting for 52% of the total population, it is a paradox that Methodist membership is composed more of older people. The church has managed to maintain the institutions it inherited when it became autonomous in 1977, the challenge has however been to improve and create new ones, both in urban and remote areas in line with the church's earlier mission thrust. The farms in which mission stations are situated, are experiencing problems due to politically motivated land grab problems and unfavourable general government policy issues. From invasions, and infiltration by both land hungry villagers who are now contesting the ownership of land by the church and other newer religious movements which are sheep stealing from the church, the church's ability to maintain these farms hangs in the balance. The church recently instituted a farms commission whose major mandate is to investigate

[1] www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/regions/africa/zimbabwe.html, accessed 13/04/2020
[2] UNFPA estimates that 62% of the population in Zimbabwe is young, aged 25 years and below. https://zimbabwe.unfpa.org/en/topics/young-people-2, accessed 13/04/2020

thoroughly issues pertaining to problems in mission farms which are threatening the viability and maintenance of other mission institutions like schools. It was mandated to bring recommendations to address these issues.

1.2. Background to the Study

This research is inspired by the experiences of the researcher as a practitioner and also as a result the Master's level missiological studies which he completed successfully. The researcher is a Minister of religion in the Methodist church in Zimbabwe. He has worked in a 'Mission station' of the Methodist church in Zimbabwe and has also been involved in Mission and Evangelism policy structures in the church. As an active participant in the life of the church he has been exposed to the issues and challenges facing the church as it endeavours to develop relevance in its current context. The researcher studied Mission and Evangelism in England and then went on to do Theology and Development both of which studies inspired the researcher in a number of ways.

The current majority membership of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is a product and a result of the influence of the 'Mission' or mission station and yet it is arguably struggling in dealing with new and emerging problems. The Methodist church in Zimbabwe is the result of the western missionary enterprise of the late 19th Century, where mission and colonialism intermingled and collaborated after Berlin 1885 scramble for colonial land. The missionaries who came alongside the Pioneer Column OF 1890 established mission stations in places allocated to them by the British South Africa Company. The mission stations were villages established for the purposes of spreading Christianity, nurturing believers in an environment seen conducive for that particular purpose. The thrust was multi-dimensional; proselytising, education, teaching of new farming methods and the provision of health care services.

Each mission station comprised of a church at the centre, a school, a clinic and a farm, where those who had converted, as already stated, were settled away from their unconverted relatives who were likely to lead them to backsliding. The village was led by an evangelist who often was a black subordinate of the white missionary heading the entire mission (Guenther 1977, Hovland 2013, Frescura 2015).

The mission station was modelled after a traditional African village, where the king at the centre was surrounded by subjects. Normally, the mission stations would be placed on a hill overlooking a village, with missionary houses erected a few metres from the converts' compound. The other reason for the mission was the isolation of African subjects from their community in order to civilise them through Christianity and western means. The mission was the new community where the Church and the priest was the centre of the village which was surrounded by believers. As Franco Frescura alludes, 'mission stations were surrounded by moral atmospheres, or have a moral and civilizing influence to a considerable distance around, beyond which it is extremely hazardous for white men to go' (Frescura 2015). From here came the rules and laws governing the life of the community. The house of the missionary was a modern one, and it was built on the edge of the hill, it could be seen from a distance as Matthew 5:14 teaches. More often than not, missionary wives were catechetical teachers and Sunday School instructors. Black evangelists who doubled up as teachers occasionally came to consult and report at the mission and the success of their labour would be credited to the missionaries during their deputation tours to England.

The mission was governed by strict rules and regulations. People were allowed to stay here as long as they conformed to the rules, and failure to abide by these rules led to eviction or severe punishment. Rules included not brewing African beer, observing new farming methods and not marrying a second wife. They also had designated places where the dead were to be buried within the mission farm and away from heathen cemeteries. Zvobgo observes that this approach was more of a civilising act than Christian mission (Zvobgo 1991). It was as it were conversion by cohesion. Converts would also receive clothes and other gifts from abroad, something that attracted some to stay at the mission station.

Epworth was one of the first missions to be established, and the first to show signs of success in terms of missionary standards. It was established in 1892, with a school, a clinic, a children's home, a theological college and a farm. The farm is bordered by a wetland which proved to be good land for agricultural cropping and grazing purposes.

1.3. Problem Statement

The Methodist church has relied on the mission station as an approach and breeding ground for its membership drive, but today, in a post colonial epoch, that ground is shifting faster than the church has ever anticipated. The political, economic and resultant social changes have significantly shifted the ground under which the mission was established. Land in Zimbabwe is currently a hotly contested issue accompanied by issues of chaotic land grab and land invasion which results in squalid living conditions. The notion that much of the land used by missionaries was improperly and forcibly acquired has made matters even worse. The rural to urban migration has shifted the majority of the young and active population to urban areas. The resultant shift has implications on how Methodism handles the tense competitive environment. The majority of mission stations were in the rural areas. The practice then was that each church was given a separate mission area to operate. Consequently, there was no competition. The country was divided into Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian and so forth. The school was a place for catechetic activity and learning, while the farm was for building individual Christians and their families. The hope was that those outside would admire the new way of life at the mission station and join the Christian faith. Enforcement of the rules was not difficult because the missionary was in the same category as the colonial master with the ability to use means of control and dominance, as missions were also established to ensure peace and order for colonial interest. The colonial government was always available to support missionaries in the event of any disruption, resistance or riot. Those who had converted were usually afraid of the white missionary who looked like and was supported by the white government. Since independence, there has been a huge rural urban migration. Many young people have come to the conclusion that arrogant and violent means are the best way to success. The rural area is no longer the mission field, but the urban, where there are more vulnerable and susceptible populations.

Since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Rhodesian white ruler Ian Smith in November 1965, a great deal has changed, and particularly after independence in 1980. The Church lost a significant authority in schools, as Smith's government punished the church for opposing the UDI. It included clipping of priviledges that were often accorded to the church including management of funds for teachers' salaries and school development (Zvobgo 1980:246). The church was left with a few secondary schools and a few clinics, the rest were taken over by

government through local councils. Since the missionaries left, little support has been available to sustain projects like clinics and infrastructural development. The 1980 independence led to self-assertion of the majority blacks and as a result, many of the church's farms have faced a number of problems, ranging from squatters to contestation, and invasion. More and more people are now free to express their freedom, and as parents grew old (the original tenants of mission farms), their children have not been compliant with farm regulations, hence perennial conflicts have erupted. Because the majority of schools are now in the hands of local and city councils and government, the traditional hunting ground for converts of the church has shifted. Many people are moving from rural areas into towns, where competition is stiff, and the church has to adapt. The Methodist church has been grappling with the problem of the farms and the mission land, with no clear respite. Recently, as earlier indicated in section 1.1 of this chapter, the church commissioned a farms commission to look at a holistic way of addressing the challenges. This study intends to investigate all these problems and propose a way forward.

1.4. The Scope of the Study

This study is a missiological inquiry that focuses on Methodism in Zimbabwe in general and Epworth mission in particular. It addresses the issue of the mission station as a method of carrying out mission in Zimbabwe and mission's inherent weaknesses. Other churches in Zimbabwe and in Africa in general will refered to in order to identify parallels and patterns of the manner in which mission Christianity was introduced and spread on the continent. The black unsung pioneers who fought against white establishment and mission philosophy in particular will be discussed critically in order to put issues into clear perspective. The period being studied is the entire period of Methodist existence in Zimbabwe, since the establishment of the Methodist Church in 1891 to date.

1.5. Key Research Questions

The following questions shape the inquiry:

a) Why Mission stations were created and how they were created?
b) What motivated missionaries to establish mission stations?
c) Were these occurrences unique to the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe or not?
d) What issues arose around the mission station?

e) Is the Mission station approach still sustainable in a post missionary, post-colonial era?
f) Is it not time for the Methodist church in Zimbabwe to look for an alternative missional approach that takes into the account the current context?
g) What form or framework can such an approach have?

1.6. Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to carry out a missiological evaluation of the mission approaches employed by the Methodist missionaries to the spread of the gospel and Methodism in particular in Zimbabwe in light of current challenging developments. David Bosch (1991) has ably aided mission thinking by bringing in the idea of paradigm shifts in mission. Paradigm thinking enables mission thinkers to understand how changes in context affect mission and how missiology can employ the same framework to assist the church to move forward instead of being stuck in the past. Thomas Kuhn's (1962) paradigm shift as used by David Bosch (1991) is a helpful framework in engaging change dynamics, especially as it applies to mission. Although it was used in a scientific context, David Bosch has brought it to bear on mission helpfully. He argues that new information, new innovations and changes in the structure and form of society give rise to new understandings of mission. Nothing is static and new theologies emerge because of challenges in Africa. Black theology and theology of liberation have emerged in the light of the new experiences of people in Africa and Latin America. These discoveries have shown how God is on the side of the poor, in comparison to the white mission thinking which sought to say God is on the side of the powerful, whose imperialist thrust came to conquer and take land. The differences between Kuhn in science and Theology is that in science new paradigms may completely remove the old, while in theology, old paradigms live on, or may find redefinition or evolve. Bosch's explication is sufficient here, 'in the natural sciences, for instance, the new paradigm replaces the old, definitely and irreversibly. In theology old paradigms can live on. Sometimes one may even have a revival of the former, almost forgotten paradigm, this is evidenced, *inter alia*, in the rediscovery of Paul's letter to the Romans by Augustine in the fourth century, Martin Luther in the sixteenth and Karl Barth in the twentieth' (Bosch 1991:186). Also, in another sense, the "old" paradigm seldom disappears completely. David Bosch says that mission is in 'crisis' in 'context'. New contexts challenge old paradigms leading to a crisis. Crisis engaged creatively gives rise to new and better ways of engaging in missio. During crisis new ideas, perhaps previously discarded are tried, and a new

paradigm develops. Mission stations were created in a particular paradigm, and now context has changed, what has caused this change, for example *Chimurenga/umvukela* (the Zimbabwean war of liberation of 1970s to 1980), perhaps there are also new developments which are changing the situation on the ground.

The current paradigm is a result of the ecumenical paradigm, which came about in the context of failure of the missionary model, a model which was inspired by Christendom and the Enlightenment. The current paradigm is also influenced by the rise of nationalism in the Southern and Eastern world, the growth of the church in the South and the decline of the church in the West which led missionary councils to ask the question, what is mission in this context?
The emerging ecumenical paradigm, the coming together of churches, for example in the World Council of Churches (WCC) provides a critical lens through which mission must be conceived and practised in the current circumstances of the world.

World Council of Churches statements on mission and World Council of Churches documents, especially the *Together towards Life* (2012) inspire a broader, holistic view of mission, a mission that takes the mission from the margins seriously, a mission that talks of empowerment, transformation and liberation (Jongeneel 2014: 273, WCC 2012:261). Bosch observes that 'It has become abundantly clear that in each historical epoch of the past two millennia the missionary idea has been profoundly influenced by the overall context in which Christians lived and worked' (Bosch, 1991:349). Bosch is saying that mission is in crisis because of these changing paradigms. As Niemandt observes, 'the church does not pass through time and context in hermetically and hermeneutically sealed containers but rather like yeast that takes new form and changes every culture' (Niemandt 2012:4). Mission must be incarnational, in response and obedience to God.

The Methodist church is a product of mission Christianity but uninformed by African realities. The missionaries grounded their assumptions on inadequate knowledge of the African people and their specific and/or perculiar contexts. As a product of Christendom, missionaries had a poor grounding in their understanding of mission. Christendom was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment, a strong belief in the adequacy of human agency, and together it gave rise to a mission approach

which did not regard mission as God's very own work but as a purely human endeavour, and as such became completely divorced from its biblical and theological underpinnings (Macllvaine 2010:94). Bosch further concludes therefore that 'an inadequate foundation for mission and ambiguous missionary motives and aims are bound to lead to an unsatisfactory missionary practice' (Bosch 1991:5). The change of context therefore necessitates a review of the approach used to do mission in the past. The question is whether the church can adequately and/or effectivelyrespond to these changes. The study is being done in the context of changes in society, due to economic, political developments, globalisation and advances in technology. These changes tend to either frustrate or provide new opportunities for doing church mission.

The framework guiding this study is a departure from the modernist paradigm, it recognises the state of transition, and maintains that society is not stagnant, it is continuously in a state of change, and mission should continue to adapt and change in light of praxis. As Shenk agrees: 'the prevalent perception today is that we are in transition from the modern to the post-modern paradigm. As people, we are moving beyond the mechanical worldview that defined the modern paradigm and are entering a new period marked by the search for wholeness and connectedness (Shenk 1996:10). The approach is not to completely overhaul the past, it takes full advantage of the past advances in knowledge and builds on it in a progressive and dynamic manner. 'The harsh realities of today compel us to re-conceive and reformulate the church's mission, to do this boldly and imaginatively, yet also in continuity with the best of what mission has been in the past decades and centuries' (Bosch 1991:8).

The study goes on to question the sustainability of the approaches that were used by early missionaries, in the light of cultural and world-view differences. It seeks to dig deeper into how Methodist missionaries carried out their mission work with a view to examine whether there existed gaps which require attention for mission to be relevant today, sustainable and prosperous in a post-missionary, post-colonial Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular.

1.7. Research Methodology

The above framework informs the methodology of this study. Research methodology and data collection aim at providing necessary steps and guidelines for researchers to reach credible findings. The researcher begins by defining missiology and how it benefits from methodology.

1.7.1. Defining Missiology

Missiology is both a historical, theological and contextual reflection on mission. Mission is defined by McCoy as the 'creating, reconciling and transforming the action of God which flows from the community of love found in the Trinity, made known to all humanity in the person of Jesus. It is entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and the instrument of the reign of God' (McCoy 2003:36). Bosch argues that mission is contextual. He defines mission as the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, but always related to a specific context of evil, despair, and lostness (Bosch 1991:412). Mission in both these cases is viewed as God's activity in context, as opposed to mission as church's or para church organisations' activities, a view that dominated the nineteenth century missionary enterprise (Langmead 2013, Penner 2018:190). Scholars like Goheen (2002), Macllvaine (2010), Langmead (2013) and Penner (2018) show how mission understanding has developed over the years, from a church orientation to *missio Dei* in the mid twentieth century. Missiology grapples with the questions of how this mission of God has been carried out in history, its pitfalls and potential. With the decline in church life in the West and growth of the church in the South, the latest scholarship has focused on how mission can be carried out in the changing context. Hans Kasdorf positions missiology at the cutting edge of the expansion and extension of the Christian faith. It assists the church in building the kingdom of God to the glory of the Triune Lord. The missiological task entails reviewing the church's missional involvement, altering her course of action whenever and wherever necessary, and gaining objective perspectives on all her activities, be they assets or liabilities, successes or failures, challenges or opportunities (Kasdorf 1994:67). Missiology services the mission of God by reviewing what the church and missionaries have done, and are doing so that mission can be carried out better in the future. Mwandazambi observes that Christian missions (events, activities of missionaries) are the starting point of any missiological reflection (Mwandazambi 2011:1). The question is how this can be properly done. It is this inquiry that forms the focus of this discussion. Langmead observes thus, that missiology draws from a number of disciplines to accomplish its task:

> Missiology… draws heavily on anthropology, sociology, and cultural analysis to better understand culture, context, and how people act in groups. It draws on linguistics and communication theory to better understand the dynamics of translation and faith-sharing. In its commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation it draws on politics, economics, law, international relations, peace studies, and ecology. In its commitment to understand and work with those of other faiths it draws on religious studies. In its practical

> outworking in mission situations it may draw upon community development, international aid, health sciences, education, agriculture, language teaching, ((Langmead 2013:75.76).

A number of qualitative research approaches will be employed, that is, desk, archival and ethnographic methods. Scott *et al* (2013:1365) show that using a number of methods together helps bridge gaps and overcome limitations of other methods.

1.7.2. Qualitative methodology

The focus of this study is the mission station. As observed earlier, the mission station was used as the major means through which missionaries executed their work (Agonga 2013:139, Maluleke 2003, Hovland 2013:7). To study the mission station phenomena, this thesis will be guided by a qualitative research approach. According to Starcher; Dzubinski and Sanchez, the use of qualitative inquiry in missiological research is a helpful approach to uderstanding phenomena surrounding people and their cultural contexts (Starcher *et al* 2018:51). Allan Bryman defines the qualitative approach as a strategy that emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data, and that this process is inductive (Bryman 2008:366). Considering that missiological research deals with cross cultural engagement, and the responses and reactions of people, this methodology is considered appropriate. Qualitative research is a journey of constructing meaning with the people who share their stories with us (Starcher *et al* 2018:51). Starcher; Dzubinski and Sanchez go further to say, one huge advantage of this approach for missiologists is that it allows us to identify "variables" nobody had thought of before, which is particularly important in cultural contexts where little empirical research has been conducted (Starcher *et al* 2018:52). Qualitative method is helpful in seeking to understand the underpinning attitudes, perceptions and issues affecting people within their contexts.

1.7.3. Desk research

Desk research refers to the use of secondary data or that data which is already available through the work of other researchers and can be accessed without having to go to the field. With the advent of internet this is now one of the most economic and yet comprehensive way of engaging with what is already available. Smith (2010) defines secondary data as 'a collection of data obtained by another researcher which is available for re-analysis or even re-analysis of one's own data is secondary data analysis if it has a new purpose or is in response to a methodological critique' (Smith 2010:324). Data of this kind includes published reports and statistics which are important

sources of information. In the context of this thesis the term is widened to include all sources of information that do not involve a field survey. This includes researching libraries and the internet. Desk research helps the researcher to make use of what is already available, to review previous research findings and gain a broad understanding of the field, without having to go into the field itself. Among advantages of desk research Johnson notes one of them as the cost effectiveness and convenience that it provides (Johnson 2017:624).

1.7.4. Archives

An archive is a collection of documents and records relating to the history of an organisation, an institution or an entity, these come in the form of written minutes, reports, pictures of events and people. With improved technology, some of the records can be stored in videos and audios. Archival research involves the searching of the stored records, usually in libraries, physical or electronic to gain critical information on the activities related to the phenomena being studied from the past. Archives are good sources of information. Starcher, Dzubinski and Sanchez aver that archival documents are not normally a scholarly source, like a journal article or a book. Rather, they are almost any other kind of "documents" (or artifacts) that provide relavant empirical data about the topic. Some examples might be a church's or mission organisation's web page or their constitution and by-laws. Any type of handout, newsletter, or bulletin produced by an organisation, whether in print or online, would be an archival document (Starcher *et al* 2018:58). This research will use both the Methodist Church archives as well as National Archives of Zimbabwe.

It must however be noted that archives are not neutral, they represent a particular era, they are created and organised by someone within a specific paradigm which must be understood. Therefore, archives must be contextualised. Bastian posits that when using archives, a researcher must remember that documents are not neutral, all documents were produced by someone for a specific purpose; furthermore, they were created for a specific context. As such, they shed light on people, contexts, and cultures (Manof 2013:14, Starcher *et al* 2018:58, Bastian 2006:268). The researcher is aware of the predominant and overarching paradigm in which documents in Zimbabwe have been collected. Documents were collected within a colonial paradigm. As Jeannerat cautions, reading the missionary archive poses the challenge of how to read an institutional archive for indications of faith of individuals who were neither the authors nor, often,

the direct subjects of the documentation, but rather the vehicles by which progress of the mission work was measured (Jeannerat 2009:301). So, archives must be complemented, by other methods such as desk and ethnographic methods.

1.7.5. Ethnography

Ethnographic research methodology is effective in bridging the gap of archival and desk research and making up for the limitations and desire to achieve set aims. Ethnography is defined by Morgan-Trimmer and Wood as a form of field research that seeks to learn the culture of a particular setting or environment. The ethnographic researcher participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned (Morgan-Trimmer and Wood 2016:1). In the context of this particular study, the method is important in helping the researcher understand the underpinning attitudes of both the recipients of the missionary effort and those who brought up missionary intervention and why problems emerged later. The researcher is part of the community of Epworth and the Methodist church at large. As shown below, the term 'ethnography' also refers to the product of the research, as well as the method: it is a distinct piece of writing which summarises an ethnographic study of a particular community or people (Morgan-Trimmer and Wood 2016:2). Ethnography involves understanding a complex set of processes and events and how they are linked together in causal pathways (Morgan-Trimmer and Wood 2016:2). Ethnography has long been a primary methodological approach used to study religious practice, specific religious communities, and local forms of religiosity. It offers a perspective that complements textual and historical approaches (Murchison and Coats 2015:989). Ethnography involves Practicing participant-observation, conducting interviews, and employing other ethnographic techniques, such as documentary analysis and the researcher's field notes (Murchison and Coats 2015:989, Morgan-Trimmer and Wood 2016:3).

1.8 Delineation of the Study

The study comprises of eight chapters focussing on mission station approach and other related developments around the concept.

Chapter One: **Introduction**

Chapter one is a general introduction, and it lays down the guidelines and procedures followed to formulate research problem, set theoretical framework, put up key research questions, how to acquire data and the delineation of the study.

- Historical Background
- Background of the Study
- Problem Statement
- Scope of the Study
- Key research questions
- Theoretical Framework
- Research Methodology
- Delineation of the Study

***Chapter Two*: Methodist Church and its Missionaries Arrive in Zimbawe**

Chapter two engages secondary, archival, internet, and other sources for presentation of findings on mission station approach and its consequences for mission today. It begins by outlining how the Methodist church came to Zimbabwe as a general movement of missionaries alongside colonial powers at the conclusion of the Berlin congress. There is an indirect link between the Berlin congress resolutions and the Pioneer column, in that both had an element of conquest imbedded in them. It considers the methods it employed to do mission in Zimbabwe and their motivation.

- Historical survey of the arrival of the Methodist Church missionaries in Zimbabwe
- Western Missionary Expansion after the Berlin Conference of 1884
- Western missionary methods to mission
- Motivation for Mission
- Authentic motivations for mission
- Missionary vocation
- Conclusion

***Chapter Three*: Mission in Shifting Paradigms**

Chapter three focuses on Mission theory and its development during the missionary era and in the post colonial context. The chapter explores David Bosch's understanding of mission in Shifting paradigms and how this is influencing mission even today.

- Mission in Shifting Paradigms
- Mission in the 19th Century
- What is Mission – towards a working definition?
- Mission according to David Bosch
- Church and Mission
- Conclusion

Chapter Four: **Mission in Crisis in post-colonial Zimbabwe**

Chapter four interrogates the crisis of mission in the present Zimbabwe as exemplified in the case of Epworth Mission. Using Epworth as a case study, the research sketches a brief history and effect of Methodism in Zimbabwe. The conditions that precipitated the crisis, the interplay of mission and colonisation leading to the struggle for independence and how these have played out post independent Zimbabwe.

- A Brief description of Epworth
- A short history of the establishment of Epworth Mission
- Socio religious and socio-cultural orientation of the people
- The Effect of colonisation and Methodist missionary work on the life of the Shona community in Epworth
- The war of liberation and mission work

    Grievances leading to the War

    Missionary role

    Methodist Church involvement in the war of independence

    Legal instruments used during the colonial era

***Chapter Five*: Unsung Heroes in the Formation of Relevant Mission in Zimbabwe.**

This chapter traces the responses and reactions of indigenous people to the manner in which mission was conducted and how it highlights the limitations of the mission theology of the day. The chapter proceeds to show how these began pointing out towards a relevant missiology. It samples a few church persons, both clergy and lay players in the history of the liberation of Zimbabwe.

- Prominent Methodists who participated in the liberation struggle

  Rev Thompson Samkange

  Rev Dr Canaan Banana

Dr Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo

Josiah Mushore Chinamano

Stanlake John William Thompson Samkange

Nathan Shamuyarira

Enoch Dumbutshena

Rev Andrew Ndhlela

***Chapter six*: Mission and Decolonisation of the mind**

Chapter six discusses the relationship between mission and colonisation, and how that relationship gave birth to a mission which was flawed and then leading to a crisis in post-independent Zimbabwe. The chapter defines colonisation of the mind and how mission institutions were used to colonise Africans.

- Mission and decolonisation of the mind

  Colonisation of the African mind defined

  Colonising of African land through the right of conquest

  Missioning (changing) of African culture and world view

  Western education

  Giving of aid and development by western missionaries

  Means of decolonisation of the African mind

  Conclusion

***Chapter Seven*: Towards Missional Ecclesiology for Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.**

Against the back-drop of the previous chapter, chapter seven begins to anticipate a relevant missiology. It begins by retracing the mission station approach and it then introduces missional movement as an alternative mission approach. It traces the history of the missional movement and proposes what a missional approach that addresses the challenges in Epworth should constitute.

- Introduction to the chapter
- Mission Station approach of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
- History of missional movement
- Background to the missional movement
- The work of Leslie Newbigin
- Theological underpinnings of a Missional ecclesiology

  Participation in the life of the Trinity

Joining in with the Spirit

Ecclesiology follows mission

Incarnational approach

Relational approach

The Kingdom of God

- Towards a Missional ecclesiology for Zimbabwe

  Critical Elements of an African missional ecclesiology

  Formulating a Missional Ecclesiology for the Methodist church in Zimbabwe

  Rooted in Christ and rooted in Africanness: the question of continuity

    Addressing the identity crisis

    Kairos consciousness

    Capacity building that inspires true autonomy

    A Paradigm shift

- Conclusion

***Chapter Eight*: Conclusions**

The chapter summarises the findings of the study and states the limitations thereof and then it makes recommendations based on the study findings.

CHAPTER 2: METHODIST CHURCH AND ITS MISSIONARIES ARRIVE IN ZIMBABWE

2.1. A historical note of the arrival of the Methodist Church missionaries in Zimbabwe

The Methodist missionaries in Zimbabwe arrived in September 1891 and this was not an isolated event. Mission enterprise in Zimbabwe dates back to the 16th century, with the arrival of a Portuguese Jesuit missionary Goncalo da Silveira at the Monomotapa capital in 1560. His work was cut short when he was murdered the following year in 1561 (Roufe 2015, Rea 1961). The Jesuits were replaced by the Dominicans who continued with missionary work among the Mutapas until 1751. Between the 16th century and the 18th century little activity is on record. The two hundred years passed on with little progress made until the mid-19th century. Fred Rea (1961) records a lament by David Livingstone when he passed through the Zambesi in June 1860 on the dismal failure of the Portuguese mission. ‘One can scarcely look without feelings of sadness on

the utter desolation of a place where men have met to worship the Supreme Being… He wondered why the failure had been so complete and whether it might not be because the missionaries had been associated with the slave trade' (Rea 1961). Methodists were preceded by a number of efforts by other mission agencies who made attempts to penetrate Zimbabwe as regards missionary work. The London Missionary Society (LMS) under the guidance of Robert Moffat founded Inyati Mission in 1859 and Hope Fountain in 1870. Their efforts were a dismal failure; they struggled to make significant inroads due to the social construction of the Ndebele state. Between 1859 and 1880 they made not a single convert, and between 1881 and 1883 they made just 12 converts (Murdoch 2015:11). The Catholics followed in 1879 when they landed in Bulawayo and established their first mission at Empandeni on the 20th January 1885 (Zvobgo 1991, Murdoch 2015:12). With the signing of the Rudd Concession in 1888, and coming of the pioneer column, more missionaries entered Zimbabwe. There was close relationship between the success of the colonial effort and increase of missionary activity. Due to the experience of the London Missionary Society and the Jesuits, Zvobgo notes that the missionaries were convinced that their enterprise in Zimbabwe had little chance of success until Ndebele power was broken, and that this could only be done by force. For this reason, missionaries welcomed the arrival of the British South Africa Companies forces in Mashonaland in 1890 (Zvobgo 1991:5). The Anglicans established St Augustine mission in Penhalonga and the Dutch were led by Rev A. A. Louw who founded their first Mission in Morgenster on 9 September 1891. More and more missionaries came and their work began to bear fruit after the crushing of the Ndebele resistance in 1893 and the Shona uprising of 1896.

Methodist missionaries arrived in Zimbabwe in September 1891. This, coincidentally; was just a hundred years after the death of the founder of Methodism; the Rev John Wesley who died in London at the age of 87 years. Methodist missionary enterprise had begun even before the death of John Wesley. As early as 1786, Thomas Coke (1747-1814) a Welsh priest and close assistant and confidant of John Wesley landed in Antigua in the West Indies. However, what could be termed Methodist missionary activities had begun there as early as the 1760s through the Gilbert family (Rack 2013:3). Before that, Thomas Coke had made several visits to America for purposes of initially reaching out to native Americans, but as Anglicans the focus ended up centring on white colonists resident there (Rack 2013). John Wesley ordained Thomas Coke Superintendent

of the work in the newly independent United States of America in 1784 (Anderson 1998). More missions were to be embarked on after John Wesley's death and Thomas Coke was instrumental in many of them.

Methodist missionary thrust emanates from John Wesley's own understanding and conviction about ecclesiology and the mission in the world. What has seemed to give special weight to a missionary identity of Methodism has been Wesley's often-quoted claim in 1739 where he said that 'the world is my parish', especially as it followed his own attempt to be a missionary in Georgia (Rack 2013:31). Contrary to Anglican orientation which seemed to focus on the parish, John Wesley was outgoing. He was concerned with the poor, the miners and those people on the margins. The World is my Parish, as David Scott looks at it, 'denotes a certain understanding of the church and its relationship to the world that I think is characteristic of Methodism. It denotes an understanding that the purpose of the church is not just to care for its own members but also to reach out beyond itself to engage with the world, to minister to the world, to be in mission to the world' (Scott 2011). Martin Schmidt quoted in Henry Rack argues that John Wesley's missionary zeal was quite significant and rare. He suggested that John Wesley possessed of the missionary idea in a sense rare in the whole history of the church, which gives him a right to a place in mission history, even though his own endeavours were but episodes (Rack 2013:32). From the onset, John Wesley was outward looking. A key indicator of John Wesley's mission mindedness was his sermon on 'the general spread of the gospel preached in 1783 (Heitzenrater 1995:282) in which he quoted from Isaiah 11:9, which says '…for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea'. In the opening introduction he made reference to the discovery of new lands and the need to reach out to them with the gospel:

> Let it be remembered, that since this computation was made, many new nations have been discovered; numberless islands, particularly in the South Sea, large and well inhabited: But by whom? By Heathens of the basest sort; many of them inferior to the beasts of the field. Whether they eat men or no, (which indeed I cannot find any sufficient ground to believe) they certainly kill all that fall into their hands. They are, therefore, more savage than lions; who kill no more creatures than are necessary to satisfy their present hunger. See the real dignity of human nature! Here it appears in its genuine purity, not polluted either by those "general corrupters, kings," or by the least tincture of religion! (Heitzenrater 1995:282)

It must be acknowledged that John Wesley did not immediately initiate the mission to Africa, preferring to address the immediate needs, which was mission at his home country.

Missionary societies were formed much later after the death of John Wesley. Thomas Coke had suggested their formation earlier, but was defeated by John Wesley who preferred a focus on immediate needs. The Methodist Missionary Society was established by Conference in 1818. However, many activities particularly of women auxiliaries were already visible as early as 1813. The Yorkshire Leeds Circuit initiative is worth mentioning. Woman played a critical role in the support and formation of the missionary societies. Bennett outlines the development of woman's involvement in missionary work (Bennett 1994:229) and shows the context and development of the woman auxiliary movement as fundraisers. Women's roles in England were limited to households and this enabled them to act as fundraisers and as spouses of missionaries. However, there is evidence of women later becoming missionaries on their own.

The Methodist Church had come to Africa much earlier than 1891. As Zvobgo suggests, this expansion of Methodism to Zimbabwe was not an isolated event; it was part of the larger expansion of Methodism, before and after John Wesley's death, to various parts of the world, to North America, Europe, Asia and Africa (Banana 1991:6). In Africa, the first Methodist missionaries to land were freed slaves who landed in Sierra Leone in 1791, just a few months after the death of John Wesley. They started class meetings and preaching in the surrounding areas. This work did not achieve much success. More meaningful work began later through George Warren who arrived in Sierra Leone on the 12th November 1811 (Banana 1991:6). The Mission enterprise that has direct links to Zimbabwe came through Cape Town, South Africa. The arrival of Rev Barnabas Shaw in Cape Town on the 14th April 1816 was the beginning of the steady work that would finally lead to the opening of mission in Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, Isaac Shimmin arrived on the 29th September 1891 together with Owen Watkins and Michael Bowen. Owen Watkins was at the time the man in charge of the Methodist mission in the Transvaal. He had long felt that the church had 'a solemn duty to those native tribes who are now being brought into contact with the white man' (Graaf 1988:15) referring to the territory in Zimbabwe which had recently been taken over by the British South African Company (BSAC) under Cecil John Rhodes. Unfortunately, resources from the Home Committee in London were strained, and a new mission was not possible. An opportunity arose when Isaac Shimmin a young

Minister placed in Klerksdorp met Cecil John Rhodes personally and received from him a distinct promise on behalf of the Chattered Company[3] of substantial practical help supposing one of our man is sent to the North (Graaf 1988:15). This support included a grant towards payment of stipend and promise of land for mission work.

2.2. Western Missionary Expansion after the Berlin Conference of 1884

Missionary expansion to Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular must be seen in the wider context of collaboration between, the colonialism, commerce and missionary activity, each supporting the other. Dr. Philip the Superintendent of the London Missionary Society had visualised this partnership much earlier in 1819, he had this to say:

> While the missionaries have been employed in locating the savages among whom they labour, teaching them industrious habits, creating a demand for British manufactures, and increasing their dependence on the colony, there is not a single instance of a tribe thus enjoying the labour of a missionary making war against the colonists, either to injure their persons, or to deprive them of their property. Missionary stations are the most efficient agents which can be employed to promote the internal strength of our colonies, and the cheapest military posts a government can employ (Wa Said 1971:507).

The occupation of the land and the upsurge of mission went hand in hand with each supporting the other. European governments were convinced that the church and the State could partner very well for similar ideals. This is best illustrated in Nosipho Majeke, of South Africa, who discussed the manner in which the missionary and the coloniser cooperated:

> At the outset, the missionary approaches the chief humbly, Bible in hand, and asks for a small piece of land to set up his mission station. At his heels hasten the trader, the purveyor of cheap goods. Thus, the Bible and the bales of Lancashire cotton became the twin of a revolutionary change. The peaceful penetration by the Missionary and the trader - sometimes the missionary turned trader is followed in due course by an "agreement" between the chief and the governor, whereby the British became "the friend and the protector of the chief . . . and it ends with a so-called "treaty" in which the chief "agrees" to the seizure of a large piece of land belonging to the tribe. In return he receives a magistrate as well as a missionary who is much less humble than he was when he first arrived to beg a land of the Chief (Wa Said 1971:507).

[3] The Chattered Company refers to the British South Africa Company (BSAC) a London based Company incorporated in 1889 and given the Royal Charter to exercise commercial and administrative rights in Southern Africa on behalf of the British Crown. The Charter was ganted for an initial 10 years and extended for a further 5 years until 1915

The missionaries and colonial governments were convinced of the fruitful collaboration hence this explains the missionary movement *en masse* soon after the Berlin conference of 1884.

In 1884/5 a conference was held in Berlin, Germany to discuss how European powers would divide Africa amongst themselves. It was at that conference that European powers, hell bent on getting a piece of the huge cake that was Africa, held talks to declare for themselves "spheres of influence" and authority and put some civility and "legitimacy" into the scramble for Africa (Njoku 2005:220).

What the Berlin Conference and the resultant colonial enterprise did was to provide form and order in the partitioning of Africa by the colonial powers by agreeing to some *modus operandi*. This order ensured that there was no conflict within the colonial forces themselves. This was critical in laying a foundation for the operation of missionaries. The signatories clearly affirmed that the colonial powers:

> ... shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and understandings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization (Goto 1994:14).

The conference also provided some form of stability on the continent, something which the missionaries needed in order to do their work. The availability of a power and force created a sense of security for the missionary. As Njoku argues, 'the underlying logic of this matching of the colonial powers to "fitting" missionary groups lay in the need for a stable framework for the work of the missionaries. The colonial framework, therefore, created a powerful sense of security and protection and a psychological sense of at-home-ness for the Christian missionaries' (Njoku 2005:247). Previous missionaries had encountered a great deal of resistance, frustrations and sometimes abuse from strong kings in Africa like the Ndebele. Kirkaldy notes that some kings were so powerful that it was not easy to reach out to their subjects without first converting them (Kirkaldy & Kriel: 113). The London Missionary Society is one such mission that found it difficult to the extent that they believed that for their mission to succeed, Ndebele power had to be broken (Zvobgo 1991:2). Further to issues of stability as Goto observes, there was another,

> '...an impetus to the colonial powers to develop roads, railways and water transport so as to occupy and to develop trade in the annexed areas. By 1919 there were railways in more than half the colonies in Africa. The building of railways had a great influence on the inland

> thrust of missions into Southern Africa as missionaries could now penetrate into the interior of the continent' (Goto 1994:14).

The dynamics of power, access and legitimacy were provided for by the Berlin conference, laying a solid foundation for the entrance of missionaries into Africa.

On the 12th of September 1890, the Union Jack was hoisted in Mashonaland, at a site that was to become Salisbury (present day Harare) a sign to those present at least, of the addition of Mashonaland to the realms of the British Queen. This brought to an end an adventurous journey which started off in Macloutsie in Bechuanaland. 200 pioneers and 500 police had cut a way for themselves and their wagons over a distance of 400 miles into the heart of a wholly new region (Graaf 1988:14). This was done after the signing of the Rudd Concession in October 1888 by Lobhengula. Thorpe calls it an "...untidy cross and thumb-mark... to the bottom of the document" (Thorpe 1951:32). Purportedly, the treaty was for the prospecting of gold, but Cecil John Rhodes, used it to occupy Zimbabwe and began to distribute land. With the hoisting of the British flag, missionary activity also blossomed.

2.3. Western Missionary Methods to Mission

2.3.1. Three self-formula

Western missionaries employed different methods to evangelise in Africa. At first these were impromptu and often guided by paternalistic attitudes, that sought to create a western oriented Christian and church in Africa similar to the one in their home countries. The three-self-formula (self-governance, self-support and self-propagation) (Dorn 1982, Nevius 2011), was developed by mission leaders Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson in the 19th century from the experience and challenges they encountered in the administration of mission work. David Bosch later added 'self theologising' (Rao 2014:170, Bosch 1991:462). The unsustainability of a foreign mission, due to limitations of resources both human and financial, drove the need to develop a means of mission that was both biblical indigenous and sustainable. The intention of the three self-formula was the establishment of an indigenous mature church, able to function on its own. Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson defined the indigenous church to mean that indigenous peoples become competent to lead the institution along European standards. The test of the indigenous church was that it became native to the country and grew there naturally, as part and parcel of the people among whom it was

planted (Dorn 1982:1). A self-governing church was that in which outsiders were not involved in the local administration of the mission but that locals eventually replace the missionaries (Dorn 1982:24, Rao:169). A self-supporting church was that which took charge of its own financial accountability through stewardship and tithing. They argued that churches which did not raise support from their members were not able to last. (Rao 2014:169, Dorn 1982:22). The churches were to self-propagate, taking responsibility for local witnessing, and reaching out to their community.

The goal of the formula was to speed up world evangelisation by moving missionaries into new places while the indigenous leaders of churches they had started would complete the mission (Reese 2007). This formula was ignored, much as it was attractive and proactive. The consequences of ignoring it became apparent with the advent of independence and the resultant stampede for indigenisation. As Lamin Sanneh correctly observes, during the colonial era missionaries chose to settle and build mission stations, which were little bits of Europe rolled up and transplanted to a foreign country. Their walls contained European civilisation, and outside them were heathen, unenlightened elements of culture (Sanneh 2008:220). Echoing this, Reese points out that missionaries preferred to linger in one place rather than move on. Not only was it easier to remain in charge of the churches they had planted, but they also began to doubt whether local leaders were ready to take over (Reese 2007).

The three self-formula was a relevant method, especially if its concern was to place confidence in the local people to carry out mission work on their own. Its limitations were visible where it was abruptly and conveniently employed. There was therefore, need of continued partnership without imposition of the Western world view. The post-independence use of the three self-formula was welcome, the tragedy however, was that it was implemented haphazardly due to the changes in political environment, and the rise of independence consciousness. Many churches were not properly transfered over, and some of the transitions were abrupt. With limited experience, churches given autonomy, struggled to survive. Rao makes note of these limitations of the three-self-formula in this regard (Rao 2014:170). Pointing out that when it was implemented, it required continued support, and that over emphasis on self leaves local churches to struggle to maintain structures left behind by missionaries such as schools, institutions.

As observed, missionaries, instead of moving on, created mission stations which became a fixed pattern for the greater part of the missionary enterprise and a legacy that it left for mission churches. Explication of this deviation from the pattern is what we turn to next.

2.3.2 Mission Stations

As soon as Methodist missionaries arrived in Zimbabwe, they employed a number of methods and strategies to evangelise the local people. Chief among these methods was itinerant preaching and the introduction of new ways of life, through education, provision of health services and the introduction of new agricultural methods. This was done through the establishment of a church and a school alongside, where children and those mature people who needed white education would come for instruction. Often adjacent to this was the farm where new converts were settled and taught land use and agriculture. This approach was not unique to Methodists as Hutchinson observed; on the whole, 'the missionary pursued his work in two ways: by itinerant preaching, and through permanently established mission stations'. (Hutchinson, 1959) as evidence to the same, observes that the Dutch did the same in Morgenster and other parts of Masvingo (Mazarire 2007), as did the Anglicans as well as Catholics (Zvobgo 1991). To a greater extent Methodist missionaries would rely more on the mission station, a composite approach, with the church at the centre, surrounded by institutions for example school, clinic all in a church acquired farm with residents on the periphery. The way of life, education, health facilities and the agriculture and skills were intended to introduce the new convert into a new and 'civilised' way of life. This way of ministry proved more successful than preaching and ironically enough, in the long run it was found that changes wrought by missionaries at a practical and economic level did more to further their spiritual cause than any amount of moralistic sermonising ever did from the pulpit (Frescura 2015).

The mission station method will receive much attention as a major focus of this study. To achieve their ends, Methodist missionaries were quick to get as much land as they could from the British South Africa Company. It was in this rush for land that in July 1892, Isaac Shimmin inspected a farm some eight miles from Salisbury which the Company had given to his church. He called the new mission farm 'Epworth' and registered it at the surveyor general's office shortly afterwards. Isaac Shimmin attached great importance to the acquisition of this farm and as earlier said, he is known to have said that 'the principal importance of the farm', he wrote to Hartley, 'lies in its

proximity to town. What Kilnerton is to Pretoria I expect Epworth will be to Salisbury'. The Epworth farm consisted of nearly 3000 acres (Zvobgo 1991:27). More land was sought and the following missions were established, Fort Salisbury in 1891, Hartleyton in 1891, Nenguwo in 1892 and Kwenda also in 1892. Work in Matebeleland only started in 1894 with the establishment of Bulawayo mission in 1894 after the fall of the Ndebele.

In his letter to Marshall Hartley, the Mission Secretary back in England, Isaac Shimmin details the outcome of the interview he had with the Surveyor general in February 1892:

> Instead of granting me three or even six farms, he said he will willingly give thirty or sixty if I wanted them. His idea is briefly this. Wherever we find native towns of villages of any importance we can therefore mark off a farm including those towns and such farms will be registered and handed over to us for missionary work. We are to put a native teacher there to have oversight of the place. The desire of the company is that our church and the Episcopal Church should cooperate with them in the development of the country. It is our part to look after the material and spiritual interests of the natives and instead of grudging us Mission stations as other governments have done, they allow us a free hand to select and occupy as many as we please (Zvobgo 1991:26).

In the farm new ways of farming, new ways of building houses were introduced. To convert was equated with encouraging your children to go to school, building a proper square house, and employing all white man's methods of farming in addition to sending away your extra wives, if you were a polygamist, refraining from consulting witch octors, and performing night binges (Zvobgo 1991:74). Mission station is defined by Gunther, as a village established during the missionary era, the residence of the missionary. It was the place where those converted to Christianity, and those desiring to associate with Christianity and the new way of life could live together, learn and practice their faith without the interference of the wider community.

The characteristics of a mission station included among other features; the missionary residence, church, farm, school, clinic, shop (Guenther 1977). Hovland (2013) has studied mission station in South Africa. She makes an important observation about the genesis of mission stations. The mission station as a phenomenon was not the original strategy and plan of mission boards and mission agencies in sending missionaries to Africa. The creation of mission stations was a default arrangement by those missionaries who were seconded by mission agencies to work in Africa. They came and began to build their residences away from the people; unfortunately, this became

the *defacto* strategy and norm among most missionaries working in Africa. The original strategy of mission boards was that missionaries would be itinerant; they would move around among the Africans evangelising and teaching. Ingie Hovland thus observes, 'the principal occupation of our missionaries is plainly to walk about with the message of salvation in Christ, baptize as many as let themselves be persuaded to believe, and then in every place install some of these who are found able as elders and pastors' (Hovland, 2013). However, things turned out differently as missionaries settled in Africa and began to enjoy the landscape, Hovland continues:

> Yet despite this avowed purpose, it soon became apparent that the missionaries established a pattern of building and settling on permanent mission stations, and the majority of them never undertook any longer itinerant preaching journeys at all (Hovland 2013).

The mission station was the creation of the missionary on the ground, not the original intent of mission boards back home. This was a major shift, from doing mission from a position of vulnerability to a position of power.

There is another reason why mission stations became a popular strategy of missionary work. The stiff resistance of the Africans to the new religion. The strength of the African chiefs and the manner in which their communities were constituted made it very difficult for missionaries to penetrate. One example is how the London Missionary Society had a torrid time trying to evangelise the Ndebele in Inyati Mission (Zvobgo 1976). As Gatsheni puts it, 'the opening of the first missionary settlement within the Ndebele state in 1859 posed a serious challenge not only to the Ndebele kingship but to the entire Ndebele traditional way of life and norms. An antibody was inscribed within the Ndebele worldview and body politic (Gatsheni 2009:21). The resistance to the new religion must be seen in the light of missionaries failure to appreciate the value of the Ndebele way of life, their culture and the depth of their religion in defining who they were and their total world view. This resistance was represented by the political and social structures. The Africans had deep respect for their leadership and religious structures. To find a way around this resistance, the missionaries created an alternative governance structure within the community which they called the mission. In this mission station all who believed would then be taken away from their natural habitation and put in a safe mission where they could practice their faith without disturbance. Agonga puts this succinctly when he says:

> As the missionaries realised they were not making any headway in the evangelization of the Africans, they came to the conclusion that there were Africans who had converted but

> who were reluctant to profess their faith in public due to the fear of being accused of witchcraft. They decided that such silent converts would require the protection of another form of government, which could be provided by the colonial elite (Agonga 2018:139).

In this manner of avoiding resistance and opposition, mission stations sprouted.

The failure by the missionary to dwell amongst the locals was based on pride and prejudice. It was based on an attitude of disdain and dislike of mixing with Africans; based upon a perception of cultural superiority of the missionary, according to Lamin Sanneh:

> The missionaries …. decided that it was impossible to dwell among the people and to share their life because it would have seemed like sharing the sinful life of unredeemed heathens even if it were physically feasible to do so. Europeans could not be nomads, wandering teachers, passing from village to village, pausing here a while, and there a while, to instruct any who cared to listen to them. Instead the missionaries settled permanently, acquired land, built houses, and established mission stations somewhat removed from the people. To these quarantined stations missionaries brought their wives and raised their families (Sanneh 2008: 220).

Missionaries found it abhorrent to dwell among the communities in which they operated, and mission stations were therefore their cultural *laaggers*, where they could live a European life in Africa.

Sanneh observes that creating a mission station institutionalised the entire process of mission work and disenfranchised the new convert. Now people had to come to the mission, instead of the mission going to where the people were. This approach had a tendency to divide the community into those who follow the missionary and those who stay at home. The mission station became the centre of mission activity; privileged and powerful. But it also became a space for western culture and western value system, another alternative community within in competition and often in conflict with the natural community (Guenther 1977). Sanneh argues that:

> The stations were imagined little bits of Europe rolled up and transplanted to a foreign country. Their walls contained European civilization, and outside them were heathen, un-enlightened elements of culture. Missions represented the boundary delineating one world from another, the age of civilization from the age of heathen customs (Sanneh 2008:220).

This approach divided people according to whether they believed or not, accepted the new way of life or were hesitant. The effect was to make it difficult for those who did, as society would tend to ostracise them. To be a Christian therefore meant to leave your own people with little chance of returning back to them as would later become clearer and clearer. To be a Christian meant to hate everything that was African and cultural. This Sanneh argues was as good as uprooting and

African. 'They were uprooted from their culture only to be cast on the fringes of the missionary community as adopted clients' (Sanneh 2008:221). The missionary never accepted new converts as they were but only on certain specific terms, the convert was never fully at home in the mission. The mission station in this manner broke the social ties of an African; it cut off the network of existence and by this also impoverished the new convert. An African thrives on their well-knit society and relationships.

2.3.3 The rules at the mission farm

Mission stations were based on control and domination. Similar to colonial administration, stations were governed by rules and regulations that made life difficult to the converts. Sanneh describes mission statations as acting like cultural mercenaries, they forced people to adopt a life style and a routine alien to them and people did not find this comfortable (Sanneh 2008:220). He points out that, missionaries taught converts standards of cleanliness and hygiene, imbued them with polite manners and mild sentiments, and put them in European clothes but instead of feeling honoured and appreciated they felt violated and mocked. After all, that was not their culture, and they could ill afford to claim it on any other ground (Sanneh 2008: 223). The mission station operated under strict rules. Missionaries instituted rules and regulations in their view to completely transform the lives of the tenants. Missions subordinated Christ to their social preconditions, conditions that favoured stationary centres (Sanneh 2008:228). It was the missionary view that a few people could be used as examples of the new life to attract others. According to Zvobgo, "The Wesleyans established a Christian village at Epworth in order to transform the lives of the converts completely" (Zvobgo 1996:129). The mission station was anchored on rules that governed the life at the mission station. Rules acted as guidelines and discipline for life in the mission. This was the new value system introduced in mission stations. On one side it created conflict within and without the family, on the other; it created a new kind of identity, although members struggled to maintain the system. The mission functioned on strict rules. Frescura observes that for example that the church at Nqumba, Natal had adopted the following rules among many others:

> No polygamist shall be allowed to become a member of this church.
> He who sells his daughter or sister treats her like a cow and cannot be received into this church.
> No member of this church shall be permitted to attend a wedding if beer is drunk there, although he may have been invited to it.

> No member of this church is allowed to go where there is slaughtering of animals for the departed spirits (Frescura 2015:65).

Other rules included no circumcision, no beer drinking and no African songs (Frescura 2015:65).

These rules were to be strictly observed by the tenants, failure to which resulted in expulsion from the mission station. These rules disenfranchised the African who was left without any option, once they joined the mission, they could not relate to their relatives who remained in the village, for fear of reprisals. The very fact that the tenant by joining the mission station became an outcast in their home community, made it difficult for them to go back from where they had come.

The missionary saw these rules as an excellent expression of Christianity; however, to the African they affected their natural existence and cohesion. Sanneh (2008:222) argues that Christianity dispossessed them (tenants of mission farms) of their natural ties without giving them a real stake in missionary culture. The concept of humanity expressed in '*ubuntu*' was affected. Ubuntu is an African philosophy which enshrines the thinking that people exist in community and without the community, that is, neighbours, relatives and the world around, then there is no life. The understanding is that you are because I am, and I am because you are. The mission was splitting society and undermining the very roots of African existence. As earlier observed, the missionaries taught them standards of cleanliness and hygiene, imbued them with polite manners and mild sentiments, and put them in European clothes but instead of feeling honoured and appreciated they felt violated and mocked (Sanneh 2008:223). These rules were drafted out of a moral judgment without full understanding of the manner in which African society was knit together. Theologically separating people from their natural habitat is a misunderstanding of mission, especially the aspect of incarnation.

2.3.4 Complexity of life in the Mission station

The life at the mission station could be far from genuine. People who joined the mission had little opportunity to understand and appreciate the reasons for conversion. They were hard pressed to conform, they either had to shape up or ship out. Yet the mission had fertile land, and other enticing benefits, which the subdued African could not ignore. Houle brings to attention the complexity of the constitution of the Mission station. Not all people who joined the mission station had similar convictions, namely the desire to assimilate new Christian religion. It is observable that joining

the mission station did not really mean people had become converted. Multiple; different kinds of interests compelled people to join the mission station, some of which are articulated by Houle as follows:

> … those who chose to reside next to the newly built churches appear as freaks, outcasts and sinners. Converts were young lovers seeking freedom for their illicit romances, the old who could no longer care for themselves and did not have the kinship networks to provide for their needs, babies who had the misfortune to be born as a twin in a society that viewed such an occasion as an omen of evil, individuals fleeing witchcraft accusations and therefore certain death, and, especially, young girls fleeing marriages to that favourite of missionary stories, the lecherous old polygamists. Those not fleeing hostile neighbours entered the church for economic reasons. The appeal of mission reserve land, the promise of a better way of life, these were the pull factors that counterbalanced those "pushed" onto the stations for their transgressions (Houle; 2001).

The mission station was a composite community with a wide range of interests; this is not to belittle those who came for genuine religious interests. The existence of the mission had its own attractions including secular ones. Hutchinson also shows that some people joined the mission because they had become social outcasts, or had some rare illnesses, which society did not accept (Hutchinson 1959). There were also economic attractions and advantages which included land. The issue of land as a motivation is echoed by Maluleke who suggests that the very fact that the missionary owned land, people were bound to join the mission in search of land (Maluleke 1995). African land had been taken over by the colonial government.

Hutchinson (1959) further notes that to achieve their objectives missionaries created space by:

> establishing colonies or stations in which they could accommodate their pupils in complete or partial isolation from their tribal environment. The mission stations were instrumental in removing the Christian convert from the continuous influence of his/her traditional beliefs and social controls, and likewise protected him from the consequences of the social disapproval which attended his defection from the tribe (Hutchinson 1959).

Missions became successful because they were places of refuge and provided real economic advantages in the form of land. By implication; the constitution of the mission station was largely diverse, and complicated. This was bound to create some contradictions within the mission in its earliest of years. Contradictions are recorded in which mission residents, would break mission rules and go back to their old ways, or some had double standards, in which case they would have a family in the mission and other wives outside the mission. Issues of contradiction related largely

to matters of brewing beer, ancestral worship, marriage, paying of lobola and issues around cultural dynamics.

Mission stations have been far from stable. Conflicts and contestations within and without have pervaded the entire missionary era. Conflicts between tenants and the church, and conflicts with neighbours and chiefs are visible around mission stations. There are therefore social and ecological effects on people and the environment. As research shows, these conflicts exist in all mission farms (Methodist Farms Commission 2018, Mujinga 2019:35). Much of the land that was allocated to missionaries was taken forcefully by the colonial administration. Missionaries bought land but it was not enough. Zvobgo (1991) and Thorpe (1951) state that the Methodist church for example was given large tracts of land by the BSA Company to build their mission stations. Some of this land for example in the Chiota area was contested land. The chiefs were not happy that it had been taken away from them, but because they had been defeated, they had no option (Zvobgo 1991). Gunther makes this observation in Botswana, where conflicts between the native teacher and the missionary were recorded. There are other similar occurrences in some missions like in Zululand. There were conflicts with the surrounding communities, ranging from contestation of land, or disputes over subjects accused of crimes in the community who would then evade justice and seek refuge in the mission. Hutchinson notes that the mission station had unintended consequences as it succeeded in individualising the African society, which was originally knit together. It caused the break down in the authority of the family and the distortion of community leadership.

2.3.5 Utilisation of local 'evangelists'

Kirkaldy (2005) makes an important observation about the story of the spread of mission in Africa. He observes that the most strident voices, demanding to be heard were those of the missionaries. Yet hidden behind this were the quietter voices of the local African rulers and their people (Kirkaldy 2005:11). He goes on to elucidate the fact that the spread of Christianity in Africa 'depended on local African initiative' (Kirkaldy 2005:37). This is also true to the development of mission at Epworth, where the agency of the local chief and the role of local evangelist is clear.

When Watkins and Shimmin set out to explore Mashonaland, they did not travel alone. The bigger contingent consisted of the African Evangelists who accompanied them from the Transvaal

(Mujinga 2017:117). Most probably, Owen Watkins took a lead from the experiences he had from Mahikeng where he had found a church of 1000 with 35 local preachers. This was the work of Molema, the brother to Montshiwa. Molema was the first member of the chiefly family to be converted at '*Thaba Nchu'* and had become a local preacher there. He pastored a church there alone with occasional visits from Methodist missionaries (Potter 2003, Commarof 1986). This church grew through the work of a local evangelist. Owen Watkins having been sent to the Montshiwa people; he must have emulated this in planning the mission to Zimbabwe.

The Evangelists who came alongside Watkins and Shimmin included Michael Bowen, Josiah Ramushu who became the first Methodist black minister, Basuto, Mutsualo, Modumedi Moleli, Samuel Tutani, Wellington Belesi, Mutyuali, Mulau, Fakosi, James Anta and Shuku. Modumedi Moleli and James Anta were killed during the Mashona Rebellion of 1896. The other five returned to South Africa but Ramushu, Belesi and Tutani stayed and made Southern Rhodesia their home (Thorpe 1951:58). Missionaries to a greater extent employed African Evangelists to assist them to do a number of tasks, which included teaching and evangelisation of the Africans. Shimmin wrote to Marshall Hartley soon after he arrived in Zimbabwe, expressing optimism that it was fruitful to employ black evangelists to reach out to their own folk:

> We could find; he wrote; immediate work for a dozen at least native teachers at important centres. I hold the view very strongly that the best way to reach the natives in by the natives themselves, of course under English superintendence, that the more native evangelists we shall have up here the next year the better it will be for our work (Graaf 1988:20).

This optimism saw a pattern develop and more and more local evangelists got recruited and stationed in new mission stations. As Zvobgo in Banana (1991:8) reports work at these stations was made possible by the use of African evangelists.

At Epworth, a school was established and it soon it showed signs of success. This proved that the use of local Evangelists to preach and to teach was the way to go. As reported in the first Synod 'Epworth was the most successful of all mission stations. On Sundays, the congregation numbered about 200; 40 children regularly attended school. During the year five adults were baptised and received into Christian fellowship' (Banana 1991:9). As Mujere notes, missionary work was not a purely European enterprise, Africans did a great deal of work which is often not recognised. For example, apart from working as evangelists and lay preachers, early African converts also worked

as translators, porters, guides, and aides among other jobs (Mujere 2013). Africans were always ready to assist their European counterparts, serving as guides and interpreters for missionaries, not to mention as advisers on African cultural protocol (Kgatla 2016:126). As time went on, more and more local skill was employed, the use of women organisations such as the women's Manyano began to reap fruit as Africans evangelised fellow Africans. Kgatla argues that the success of missionary work in the case of Venda as in other parts of the world was made possible by previously converted Christians, whom he calls 'unsung heroes'. Kgatla accounts for this state of affairs thus:

> ...the missionaries lacked the necessary linguistic, political and social skills to engage with the chiefs and their followers on all levels, these "already Christians" and "unsung heroes" did almost everything for the missionaries (Kgatla 2016:125).

Indeed, missionaries were less disposed of the culture and dynamics of the African people. Undoubtedly Africans found it easy to understand each other. The greater load of work lay on local evangelists. Modumedi Moleli is a typical example. Once Shimmin had settled Moleli at Nenguwo's village he never returned there himself (Graaf 1988:67). But under Moleli the mission at Nenguwo continued to grow (Thorpe 1951:66). Moleli died during the 1896 Shina uprisings, trying to save James white a missionary who owned a farm near Nenguwo station.

There is evidence also that often local evangelists succeeded where white missionaries struggled to make progress. A case in point is the work of William Wade Harris of Liberia, Ivory Coast and Ghana. Omulokoli argues that Harris succeeded where the local Catholic Church had failed. He baptised 10000 converts where missionaries had succeeded to baptise only a few hundred (Omulokoli 2002). This goes to show how significant the work of the local evangelists was in the process of the evangelisation of Africans, and how Africans were more amenable to their own. Local Evangelists often managed their work amidst hostility, as European missionaries and their colonialist counterparts were often suspicious of African freedom.

2.3.6 The role of women's and other African uniformed organisations

The use of women's and later, men's, youth and other African uniformed organisations was not an intentional method of missionaries, it however came by default and occupied a critical space at an

opportune time. As shall be seen, this method has proved very successful to date. It is clear that before the Matebele war of 1893 and the first *Chimurenga/Umvukela* of 1896, the work of missionaries had failed dismally, the London Missionary Society stationed at Inyathi, is but one example. From 1859 to 1890s they had managed to win only one convert. It was not until the victory of the British South African Company led force in 1893 and 1896 leading to the complete occupation of Mashonaland that missionaries made considerable progress in membership enrolment. In the year 1895, four years after the Methodist church set foot in Zimbabwe, the first Synod was held in Mashonaland, and in that Synod, it was reported that 3000 people attended church services regularly (Zvobgo in Banana 1991:9). During this time few people had been confirmed as full members of the church. In 1913 it is reported that there were 1,451 full members and close to 2000 on trial (Thorpe 1951:76). After this period membership declined. In the early 1920s it became increasingly clear among the missionaries that penetrating and winning more Africans to Christianity required the active involvement of the Africans themselves in the evangelisation of their fellow Africans. Zvobgo makes this observation, 'the missionaries realized *ab initio* that they should place great emphasis on the importance of Africans witnessing to fellow Africans if their work was to succeed (Zvobgo 1991:96). The coming in of women and other groups was at the opportune time. Mission work was enhanced by the role played by these women's organisations in Zimbabwe.

This phenomenon of women's groups was not unique to the Methodist Church alone, it occurred in other churches as well, the Mothers' Union in the Anglican church, the *Rukwadzano* in the United Methodist Church and the *Ruwadzano/Manyano* in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (Moss 2002:110). In the Methodist church and its mission stations in particular the *Ruwadzano/Manyano* were instrumental in the growth of the church among the African communities. They gathered women together in prayer meetings often led by the Wives of the African Ministers and Evangelists. As Barbara Moss notes, the Manyano/Ruwadzano women remained within the missionary fold, outwardly accepting the titular leadership of white female missionaries while actually retaining considerable autonomy within their local branches (Moss 1991).

Origins of women's organisations particularly the *Ruwadzano/ Manyano* in Zimbabwe can be traced to South Africa (Mkhwananzi and Kgatla 2015, Holness 2009, Preston 2007, Moss 1991). There is however conflicting narratives as to when exactly the organisation started and by whom. Anne Preston suggests that Manyano was started by the wife of Rev Amos Burnett who was the Chairman of the Transvaal District and that it was but Mrs Gqosho, whose husband a minister in Potchefstroom, should be credited with the actual beginning of the women's Manyano group in 1907 (Preston 20017:35). There are others like Mkhwananzi who date it to 7th December 1907 at the place called Verdriet at Dundee, the nucleus circuits being Dundee, Driefontein, Newcastle and Nyanyadu. They identify the leadership as Revds. J. G. H. Xaba, S. Msimang and E Msimang. (Mkhwananzi 2002, Mkhwananzi and Kgatla 2015).

There is however some consensus that the organisation began as a prayer network for women. This concept of encouraging women and girls to pray can be dated further back to as early as 1891 (Moss 1999) in mission stations where missionaries would teach and encourage prayer in South Africa. Since there was an informal movement between South Africa and Zimbabwe then and considering that the evangelists who taught in the mission stations were from South Africa, it is not surprising that the movement quickly caught fire and spread to Zimbabwe. It is believed that it was actually in 1918 that the first meeting of women was held at Waddilove mission and it was hosted by Rev John White and his wife. During this meeting a decision was taken to establish a Women's Prayer Union, *Ruwadzano/Manyano* in the circuits. According to Huff although Mrs White was the host, the rest of the participants were African women (Huff 1996:222). This emphatically shows the African nature of the movement. And as Moss reports the movement attracted nearly one hundred women every week at Epworth mission station alone by 1921 (Moss 1999:116).

The gathering of *Ruwadzano/Manyano* provided a place where women could express themselves, engage in various topical issues and thereby find a source of self-empowerment, in the context of waning space as a result of new colonial laws which weakened the role and place of African woman. As Preston observes in a colonial society dominated by men, women needed space where they could discuss issues affecting them and concerns in a conducive environment (Preston 2007). This is echoed by Carol Summerz, who acknowledges that mission run church was centred around

men and male leadership (Summers 1999:79). Further, Barbara Moss concurs and suggests that African women viewed religion as a resource; their cultural expectations reinforced missionary promises and facilitated Christian conversion (Moss 1999:109). This space soon attracted many women and the group grew exponentially. While there was much emphasis on prayer and visiting of the sick, women found a place where they could share other practical skills such as home craft, nursing and laundry. This forum provided an important platform for women emerging from a male dominated society to group counsel each other. Huff further testifies that the women of the *Ruwadzano/Manyano* can claim much responsibility for increasing the Methodist Church membership in Zimbabwe, because as the leaders of the women's movement reached out to other women, they not only brought them into their fellowship; but into the church (Huff 1996:224). The other key attraction was the coveted red, white and black uniform which was couched in the spirit medium format, but interpreted in the Christian way. According to Moss this had implications of power. Since spirit mediums who wore such clothes were believed to have power, so were women (Moss 1999:118). However, these uniforms had Christian meanings as well.

The success of the women's organisation inspired the start of men's and young people's organisations as well. The Men's Christian Union (MCU) recorded 549 members from 47 branches in 1947 and since then the numbers continued to grow. This group evangelism became a hallmark of Methodism over the years to date. Conventions were opportunities for *imvuselelo*/*vhuserere* (revival), where on a given day of the convention groups would go out into the neighbouring villages singing and dancing, using such instruments as the kudu horn (*bhosvo* in Shona) attracting crowds in the process. They would then stop at certain points to preach to on-lookers. With uniforms and good music accompanied by drums this method attracted attention of communities, and as a result many would follow and seek to be members. Discipleship then followed in the context of the group similar to the traditional kraal system, where men would discuss their issues outside the interference of woman and boys would be given skills pertaining to matters of manhood.

2.4. Motivation for Mission

Kgatla observes that Christianity, by its very nature of being a missionary religion, is tied to notions of social development by the self-conviction of societal transformation through helping the less

privileged by giving aids for example by building hospitals, schools, infrastructure, and other institutions that enhance the Western philosophy of being human (Kgatla 2019:1). This kind of goodness falls under what is called altruism. Missionary work involved a lot of sacrifice and investment in the form of human and financial resources towards the social development of people and infrastructure in areas far and unknown to the missionaries. This has called into question the motivation of the missionaries in doing this considering that in some instances, their work was closely related to the colonisation agenda of the colonising powers. Altruism is defined as doing something for the other and for the other's sake, rather than as a means to self-promotion or internal well-being (Mattis *et al* 2009:72), or according to Kraut when it is motivated by a desire to benefit someone other than oneself for that person's sake (Kraut 2016). Although there are variations to views as to whether people can do something for the sake of others, or whether altruism exists at all, altruism is goodness to the other and not self for the purposes of self. However, altruism has come under scrutiny in recent days. For example, Mattis and others observe that helping behaviours, although often altruistic, cannot be assumed to be intrinsically altruistic because they are not always intended to enhance the welfare of others (Mattis *et al* 2009:73). They note that some people may be motivated by a quest for fame or need for excitement, or according to kraut that people may regard helping others as a mere means to their own good (Kraut 2016). Kraut argues therefore that altruism must be admired only in circumstances in which it is appropriate to act for another's sakeand only when what one aims to do for another really does benefit that individual, and it must be appreciated when it is done with a proper understanding of what wellbeing consists of (Kraut 2016). Missionary societies worked hard to raise resources and motivate both men and women to go to faraway lands, with so much potential risk from diseases and other dangers. It is crucial to look deeper and examine the driving force behind their sacrifices.

The nineteenth century Missionary Movement has received much criticism mainly from African and black theological circles, for being complicit with colonisation, ill treatment and control of the people of colour in Africa and America. They have been viewed as cultural imperialists who worked to soften the hearts of Africans. Wa Said uses a popular Pan Africanist saying to highlight how missionaries work was perceived by many Africans,

> when the whites came to our country we had the land, and they had the Bible, they said to us, let us pray, we closed our eyes, and when we said 'Amen' at the end of that unusually

> long spoken prayer, we found the Bible in our hands, and our land in the hands of missionaries, and their white colonists (Wa Said 1971:56).

They argue that the missionary acts of altruism were a means of psychological colonisation and subjugation of the African.

Brendell and Prill on the other hand, argue that criticism of missionaries is often too harsh, and negative. They argue that while some missionaries may have made mistakes by excessive paternalism and instances where their work was associated with imperialist and racist agendas of white colonialism, however there are some and many who were really compassionate for people who needed to hear and accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Brendell and Prill 2019:1).

Ott and Strauss (2010) research shows that those who formed missionary societies, missionary boards and those who went into the mission field had a number of possible motivations, some of which are the subject of this discussion. Ott and Straus argue that motivation influences the spirit and the commitment with which missionary work is conducted (Ott and Strauss 2010:165). They further argue that motivation for mission has historically been influenced by everything from current events to popular piety. Indeed, mission in the 17th to the 19th centuries arose in a context of a number of factors and philosophies. Industrialisation gave to the west prosperity and improved tools with which to manipulate the world. Improved transport systems meant that travel could be made easier across the seas. Commerce and trade also reached new levels. The search for raw materials as well as new markets for finished products added to the desire to explore new distant lands. Success of Western voyages of discovery widened the horizons of the reachable world and a whole lot of interest and ignited the desire for adventure.

The Enlightenment and advent of science and arts ignited a new human confidence, aspiration and capacity to achieve on the other and a strong desire to a search for more knowledge and influence. Paradoxically, with the coming of the Enlightenment, a new wave of revival of religion was witnessed. An optimistic attitude towards humanity prevailed all over Europe, this was done due to the Enlightenment which began to be perceived as a new socio-cultural phenomenon (Catalano 2014:2). The great awakening and revival movement of the 18th century and the spirituality it inspired, provided a critical impetus to the church leading to a new desire to reach out to the new

world. John Wesley and his revival was instrumental in this regard. It is not enough though to end with John Wesley. John Wesley was influenced by Moravian spirituality, whose influence came through the likes of Jakob Spener (1635-1705), August Hermann Francke (1663-1677), Nicolaus Von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) (Bullon 2014:2). It is this spirituality that gave birth to a new wave and desire to go out into the rest of the world with the gospel. Ott and Struass observe that motives for mission usually do not occur in isolation (Ott and Strauss 2010:165), and according to Verkuyl throughout the history of the Christian mission pure and impure motives have been as mixed through each other as the clean and unclean animals of Noah's ark" (Verkuyl 1978:163). A number of factors and influences converged together in stimulating actions and activities of missionaries. Ott and Strauss identify 13 motives, of these a few will be considered and reflected upon in line with other motivations. We begin by focusing on the impure motives. It must however be observed that these can be easily mixed, many of these motives would not have been considered questionable by earlier generations, and indeed when seen in their historical context they can become understandable (Ott and Strauss 2010:166). These motivations therefore must be looked at in context.

2.4.1. Missionary impure motives for mission

2.4.1.1 Civilisation, colonisation, cultural superiority and its enforcement

There was an undoubtedly close relationship between Christianity and civilization, and to these we must add a third and a fourth to be discussed later, commerce and colonisation. Makuvaza (1996:65) argued that indeed missionaries were colonisers whose mission was to facilitate the interests of the womb from which they came, that is the respective colonial powers. David Livingstone believed strongly in a close collaboration of Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation for the betterment of African society (Nkomazana 1998:45). Pawliková-Vilhanová widens the scope to include what virtually became the fourth C which is colonialism. The opening up of Africa to forces of change by the four Cs, mentioned here was seen by most Christian missionaries as the only remedy to success (Pawliková-Vilhanová 2007:252). Nineteenth century Europe was so convinced that it was the chosen people to rule over the nations (Bullón 2014:2). The task of civilisation was often considered to be Europe's moral obligation, to elevate "savages" to a higher standard of living, allowing them to share in the fruits of Western culture (Ott and Strauss 2010:167). This confidence spilled over into the church. In William Carey's arguments to

convince the British public to support mission, the key argument was that Europe had a duty to share its gifts of science and arts. 'Can we hear that they are without the gospel, without government, without laws, without arts and sciences and not exert ourselves to introduce among them the sentiments of man and of Christians' (Sales 1972, Catalano 2014). Carey was convinced that colonisation, commerce and Christianity were part of God's plan to enlighten the dark continent by the light of Western civilisation (Bullón 2014:4). This led Makuvaza, for example to argue that, the purpose of missionary education was not intended to train for independence but for subservience and dependence (Makuvaza 1996:61). So, from the onset, missionary thinking was intertwined with a mindset that suggested that Christianity had a duty to lead in the civilisation of the world. The establishment of schools, hospitals, the improvement of agricultural methods in mission farms was meant not only to improve the welfare of the Africans, but also showcase the life of a civilised community. The West was developed and the rest of the world was heathen and backward. Missionaries needed to ride on the commercial and political ship sailing to the new world.

Missionaries' proximity to colonial power and their commercial interest is undoubted. This gave rise to the perception that missionaries were complicit in the subjugation of the local populations. This was so because, sustenance of the industrial revolution in Europe depended largely on the acquisition of raw materials and the sale of European goods in the interior of Africa (Ndile 2018:52). The relationship and the mindset of colonial administrators and their missionary counterparts can best be illustrated by the letter of King Leopold 11 of Belgium to the Catholic missionaries in the Congo:

> Dear Reverends, Fathers and Dear Compatriots: The task that is given to you to fulfil is very delicate and requires much tact. You will go certainly to evangelize, but your evangelization must inspire above all our European interests. Your principal objective in our mission in Africa is never to teach the niggers to know God, this they know already…. Have courage to admit it; …. Your essential role is to facilitate the task of administrators and industrials, which means you will go to interpret the gospel in the way it will be the best to protect your interests in that part of the world (Ndille 2018:53).

In his expression of interest in the Congo, the king had said he was interested in Congo strictly for the purpose of helping rid the area of backwardness, and he believed that Catholic missionaries could help him with his mission of civilizing the Congolese people (Gyesie 2010:29).

It is important to note that at first commercial companies were not comfortable working alongside missionaries, as they perceived this link to be a threat to their interests (Catalano 2014). Further to this relationship are coincidences, for example the arrival of the Pioneer column in Zimbabwe soon after the signing of the Rudd Concession (a concession signed by King Lobhengula giving the BSAC extensive exploration rights in Matebeleland) and the raising of the Union Jack at Fort Salisbury, witnessed an influx of missionaries into Zimbabwe in 1891, among whom were Methodists who arrived in September 1891, riding on the promise of land and a yearly stipend from Rhodes. This empire and the church worked along argues Madhiba (Madhiba 2010:104). While the fruits of western progress in the form of the arts and sciences, improvement in medicine were indeed a noble motivation and a moral duty for Christians to share across the world, it was their attachment which made them awkward bedmates in colonisation. Methodists also took advantage of the opportunities. Roy concurs in the following statement,

> externally, causes that favoured the missionary enterprise of Methodism were spreading empire... For example, the Crown encouraged missionaries to 'Christianise and civilise' inhabitants of those countries into which the empire had expanded as exampled by an instruction given to Governor Hutt of the Swan River colony. There was, therefore, a role for the Christian church in the expansion of empire. Evangelicals like the Methodists saw this as a providential opportunity to 'preach the gospel to all creatures' (Matthew 28:18–20) (Roy 2006:46).

There was a simmering complicity to grow the empire under the excuse and banner of missionary work, even of the Methodists.

Connected to the civilising act was conversionism. Theodore Romig bemoans a cultural arrogance within the missionary drive. He points out that the cultural arrogance tended to lead toward a religious arrogance in which the missionary saw himself as the conveyor of a "better" religion which would inevitably produce "the superior culture" of the West (Romig 1952:56). While the very idea of Christian witness is neutral, the orientation and motivation were based on wrong understanding of the target people, their culture and therefore their religious world view. This is evidenced by David Livingstone who when he came through the Zambezi in 1860 claimed this, 'and remember that the natives of this part know nothing of His religion, not even His name' (Rea 1961:46). One such collective motive was conversionism, which is defined by Okon as, 'theory held that the best way to wipe away darkness, heathenism and collective ignorance from Africa

was to impose European culture, religion and philosophy on Africa by force' (Okon 2014:203). While this motivation is not negative as such, it is the attitude that pits it negatively.

The view that Africans must be compelled to abandon their religion and culture, adopt western values. This theme was marketed broadly as civilisation. As they were reaching out to young Africans, missionaries had a complex relationship with settler administrators. They generally shared the assumption of the superiority of Western culture and the need to 'civilise' Africans. However, as Frescura (2015:65) notes, their moral self-righteousness led them to make hasty judgments on indigenous morals, norms and values they were scarcely equipped to understand. Their approach and methods were as a result of their skewed motives. Frescura cites this as the reason for the failure in their involvement in local agriculture, irrigation and technology. Much of missionary good methods received a small measure of acceptance and therefore success.

2.4.1.2 Ecclesial power and denominationalism

The missionary work was founded on ecclesial and denominational power, authority and pride. Each denomination took full advantage of its colonial parent. By the time of the missionary movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the church had become a powerful institution, but divided along territorial lines. Churches at home aligned to their parent countries and competed in the mission fields for dominance alongside their territorial governments. Catholics were aligned to the Spanish, the Anglicans to the British, with the Reformed to the Dutch and Lutherans to Germany (Ott and Staruss 2010:170). These allegiances were critical as the missionaries would require support in terms of land and other forms of technical and security support in the mission field. The Methodists found it easier to work with the British authorities in Zimbabwe due to the British South Africa Company and Rhodes and were granted not only land but also financial support in addition.

Three forms of authority existed. These were colonial authority, which included infrastructure to contain dissent such as the police force, the grants for establishment of institutions like hospitals, for example, the coming of the first missionary was underwritten by Rhodes who offered a grant of land for mission work and a stipend of 100 pounds per year. Kwenda hospital was funded by the colonial government grant, and the doctor was also to be paid by the government. The home mission boards regulated the movement of missionaries and provided funding for new mission

stations and the new value system made up of rules with which to enforce the new way of life. The missionaries had a strange and compromised relationship with colonial governments in that they were complicit in their dispossession of African land and the subjugation of local chiefs. The governing authority of the day gave land to churches and mission agencies because they believed mission agencies had authority to control Africans. John Philip, Superintendent of the London Missionary Society at the Cape of Good Hope from 1819 to 1828 quoted by David Bosch, once wrote that 'missionary stations are the most efficient agents which can be employed to promote the internal strength of our colonies, and the cheapest and best military posts that a wise government can employ to defend its frontier against the predatory incursions of savage tribes' (Bosch 1991: 305). The colonial governments were therefore disposed to support the establishment of mission stations for this cause. They also argued that missionaries lived among the local people, knew their languages, and understood their customs. Who was better equipped than these missionaries to persuade the 'unwilling natives' to submit to the *pax Britanica* or the *pax Teutonica?* (Bosch 1991:303). Maintaining order and enforcing mission station rules and regulations was made easy through the help of the governing authority. Mission stations therefore became 'successful' in the initial stages, because of the support of the colonial matrix.

Mission was defined in the context of the church, and in this case the Western church. The church was viewed as an institution to be reproduced across the world. It was the aim, vision and end of mission to establish churches in the south, similar to the ones in their home countries. The result was to identify the church in purely institutional terms as both the agent of mission and the end of it. Shenk protests in this context that it is wrong to use the church as criterion for mission, 'how can the church thus be the criterion by which Christian's life and action are gauged? The church can neither be the criterion nor the goal of mission' (Shenk 1996:5). Identifying mission in the context of the church and in this context the European church tended to limit both the missionary and the intended thrust of God's mission ideals. The missionaries could see beyond their historical and religious background, the target's capacity was undermined, since all they knew had to be understood in the context of the one who knew little about the African history, religion and spirituality.

2.4.1.3 Condescending pity

The motivation for mission in the nineteenth century was a Macedonian call, which was of an urgent call to help as in Acts 16:9 (Bosch 1991:289). However, pity and compassion were conflated. Take for example in trying to convince the British people to support mission enterprise, Carey said, 'very often those who are not Christians are cannibals and sacrifice human beings in their worship…' They appear to be as capable of knowledge as we are' and there were reasons for their barbarous customs (Sales 1972). Such a statement appeals to the sympathies of those being convinced, the response is guided by pity. As Jane Sales continues, such sympathies aroused people to contribute towards missionary societies as well as to agitate for Parliamentary action. Missionary societies therefore flourished on condescending sympathies. While genuine compassion as motivation is important, African stories were often exaggerated for fundraising purposes. To use the words of Bosch, the pagans' pitiable state became the dominant motive for mission, not the conviction that they were objects of the love of Christ (Bosch 1991:289). It is this pity that is questionable as a mission motive.

2.4.1.4. Asceticism

Valantasis (1995:793) defines asceticism as a voluntary, sustained, and at least partially systematic programme of self-discipline and self-denial in which immediate, sensual, or profane gratifications are renounced in order to attain a higher spiritual state or a more thorough absorption in the sacred. In its out look, asceticism was world negating. Valantasis however argues that asceticism was undertaken as a strategy for self-empowerment and gratification. He sees asceticism as a strategy in social power matrix, where one denies themselves certain privileges to gain ascendency to social power. This world negating, self-denial gave birth to a fervent religious awakening which manifested itself in a desire to fullfill the gospel demands of taking the gospel to the ends of the world.

Ascetic tendencies were rife in Europe. Philip (1996:517) shows how from the seventh century 'from hundreds of monasteries all over Persia and central and eastern Asia there came a constant stream of ascetics who went forth, in obedience to the Lord's command, seeking to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth'. Monasticism was instrumental in inspiring mission spirituality in Europe (Bosch 1991:232). Spiritualities such as the Celtic were exemplary in life style and inspired a way of life and sacrifice that laid the ground for missionary existence. It was the monasteries that gave

life to ascetic communities and provided a resilience and accumulation of resources in a manner that was ripe for missionary ideals. Catalano argues that the missionary movement was premised on 'a strong ascetic dimension' (Catalano 2014). Ascetic attitudes inspired the impetus and sacrifice. Under this inspiration, missionaries were prepared to go to lands unknown. They went all their way to faraway lands as a desire to save their souls. Ott and Strauss argue that the ascetic motivation for mission is present when missionary service is sought for as a means to come nearer to God along the road of self-denial, penance and sacrifice (Ott and Strauss 2010:171). The motivation of ascetics was therefore personal, although this outflowed in missionary zeal.

2.5. Authentic Motivations for mission

The coming of missionaries to Africa, no doubt had strong motivation, to the effect that so many people, so much skill, sacrifice and investment was made. Nurses, doctors, teachers were prepared to come and serve. There was a general feeling of obligation in the church and Christians in general to which the Church was called to bear witness (Long 1950:409). This feeling was grounded in a new biblical self-understanding of the church. The revival of the Christian faith in Europe under the likes of Wesley seemed to re-ignite the great commission of the church to go into the world (Ott and Strauss 2010:180). Alongside the revival was a reengagement with the Biblical interpretation. The language of Paul, of 'indebtedness' and obligation was now the undercurrent of Missionary inspiration (Romig 1952:61). Mission was in this sense obedience to Christ's calling upon the entire church.

Methodism was inherently a missionary spirituality. From the time of the Oxford holy club, Wesley and his friends had dedicated their time to bible study and to a life of holiness and charity. They reached out to the prisons twice a week, and visited the sick (Heitzenrater 1995:38). Wesley and his brother Charles' going to Georgia was for the purposes of saving their souls, and if possible, by that be used by God to save the souls of gentiles. Answering John Burton in his letters, Wesley argued that his chief motive in going to Georgia was the hope of saving his soul. He went on to say 'I am assured myself if I be once fully converted myself, He (God) will then use me both to strengthen my brethren and to preach His name to the gentiles, that the ends of the earth may see the salvation of God' (Heitzenrater 1995:58). The desire to be saved and also to save souls was in the depth of Methodism from the early days. Roy puts it clearer, when he notes that:

> The saving of souls was of extreme importance to Methodists as indicated by founder John Wesley's (1703–1791) admonition to his adherents, 'You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work.' To Wesleyans, all people were created in God's image but had been separated from God because of sin. All humankind, therefore, needed to be reconciled to God through conversion (Roy 2006:38).

Soul saving was deeply ingrained in Methodism and it motivated their missionary work.

2.5.1 Doxological motivation

The word doxology comes from a Greek word *doxologos* which means to utter praise. A simple dictionary definition shows that Doxology refers to action towards the praise of God. Doxological motivations refer to those motivations that arose from the deep desire to see God being praised in the whole world. The "ultimate purpose for mission is to bring glory to God, so that a multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language might declare the praise and honour and glory and power of God for all eternity (Little 2008:65). Methodists as seen earlier were also motivated by this desire to ensure the ends of the earth see the salvation of God (Heitzenrater 1995:58). Missionaries were motivated by that desire to see all people please God, and to give glory to God. The purpose of mission and therefore of the church is to the glory of God and not man. Missionaries were therefore motivated by that desire to see all people please God, and to give glory to God.

2.5.2 Love for justice, liberation and inclusion of the marginalised people of the world

A common accusation oagainst missionaries has often been that they colluded with imperialists to subjugate the natives, using their religion (Chitando 2005, Banana 1991). While it is true that colonialism and mission came at the same time, it can also not be ignored that missionaries at times differed with their colonial counterparts.

This has prompted scholars like Dana Robert to challenge the imperialist paradigm. 'Rather than assuming that missionaries in all times and places supported colonialism, it is more accurate to speak in ambiguous terms of missionary efforts to 'convert' it. Forced to operate within a political framework of European expansionism that lay outside their power to control, missionaries and early converts variously attempted to co-opt aspects of colonialism deemed compatible with missionary goals, and to change what seemed prejudicial to gospel values. In some cases,

missionaries directly challenged the political and economic systems that sustained colonialism' (Robert 2008:4). Kalu in Okon (2014) reinforces this argument:

> Missionary ideology was full of paradoxes: while sharing the racist theories of the age, and supporting the official programme to transform the political and economic structure of the colonies, it realized higher values in the biblical conception of the dignity of man... the missionaries colluded with the colonial government when it suited their interests and yet would also at times unleash virulent attacks on certain styles and purpose of government. Missionaries condemned the harsh sanctions of government labour proclamations and criticized merchants for their intemperance, religiosity and brutality (Okon 2014:8).

Missionaries had a genuine desire in coming to Africa to serve humanity although this was often confused by certain coincidences. There is evidence of significant contribution that missionary work made to education, health care and general upliftment of the standard of living of the general African, especially those who became members of their churches and missions. Missionary zeal was based on an overarching love for justice, liberation and inclusion of the marginalised people of the world. Indeed, their efforts had a significant impact on those societies who got into contact with missionaries. A significant percentage of the current political and commerce leadership in Zimbabwe is the product of mission or had some mission influence in one way or another. Although it is often argued that missionary education was meant to further entrench blacks as servants, Chitando notes that colonialists often clashed over the question of the type of education that Africans were to receive. To this effect, before the 1930s the state left the entire task of educating Africans to the missionaries (Chitando 2005:187). There is however no doubt that mission contributed significantly to the education of the African.

2.6. The Missionary vocation

Mission work succeeded generally because it rode on the benevolence of the mission societies who provided the resources to build institutions, the schools, the health facilities and the churches. These missionary societies also provided the skilled personnel, such as teachers, doctors and agricultural experts to work on mission stations. Much of the resources raised to build infrastructure came from the sending churches and the mission societies. For example; Waddilove Institute was established through the centenary fund from Britain and a generous donation from Mr Josiah Waddilove after whom the school was later named (Mosley 2007). Little effort was generated locally. The local converts were mainly recipients of missionary benevolence. This rare

benevolence was inspired by a kind of rare commitment from missionaries. The revival in the 18th and 19th centuries gave birth to a strong spirit of missionary zeal (Roy 2006:47). This ferment gave birth to missionary societies. Human, financial and material resources were raised in response to the call to go out to far and wide lands with the gospel. There is evidence that the participation of many in mission was motivated by a deep desire to serve peoples in faraway lands from a variety of ills, these included ignorance and heathenism. Lydia Hoyle shows for example how many women felt 'called' to be missionaries (Hoyle 1996, Bennett 1994). Hoyle contextualises the impetus on many women who at that time saw mission as a way of them being useful, because they had not much to do, but shows that there was so much feeling of being called for duty by God among many of them who applied to join missionary societies.

The Methodist Missionary Society was founded on similar terms, the self-sacrifice of ordinary women in circuits around Yorkshire, who took it upon themselves to fundraise for mission work. There was a strong voluntary spirit to support missions abroad, and much of this began as individual initiatives (Bennett 1994). Missionaries saw themselves as duty bound to participate in the mission of God, (*missio Dei*) (Wagner 1985:63) and indeed they did so and did it with passion. Mission stations acted as strategies of evangelisation and the model which gave birth to a kind of Christianity which was sustainable due to the availability of a colonial system, strong missionary society benevolence and the new identity which it gave to the new converts.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we observed how the Methodist missionary work was instituted in Zimbabwe and that it was not an isolated event, but occurred in a wider context of Missionary activity influenced by the general expansion of Europe and the philosophies that were inspired by European civilisation and prosperity. We observed that Missionary expansion coincided with the colonial occupation, particularly subsequent to the Berlin Congress of 1884, and the partitioning of Africa. We noted the different motivations underlying the mission work which were both pure and impure, however that there was a general ferment of vocation and calling cannot be doubted. The centrality of mission station and the use of local evangelists cannot be over emphasised. The mission was strongly backed by colonial government support. The land that Methodists used, part of the stipend availed to the missionaries and the doctor sent to Kwenda Hospital was provided for by the British

South Africa Company are examples of the colonial support (Zvobgo 1991). It is clear that Mission survived on a paternalistic model, and members of the new church community were thoroughly dependent on the missionary for everything. There was no opportunity for the tenants on farms to make a choice, as they needed land, and the European services in the form of education and health, which put them under pressure to conform with little choice. The quest and advent of independence eroded a number of these pillars on which the mission station stood. The Methodist like any other missionary initiated churches, is a product of that legacy. The church still owns mission stations and many of its members grew up in these mission stations, or were educated in mission schools. There is likelihood that part of members' identity and self understanding in the church still derive from that mission station legacy. The limitations and resultant effects of the mission station model of mission which gave birth to a kind of church has not been fully investigated. The mission station had good intentions but was ill conceived.

CHAPTER 3: MISSION IN SHIFTING PARADIGMS

3.1. Mission in Shifting Paradigms

In the previous chapter we explored how missionaries both Methodist and other missionaries entered Zimbabwe. We noted that this phenomenon was not an isolated incident; but a whole integrated enterprise of many mission societies after the Berlin Congress of 1884, the enrtry of the Pioneer Column and the subsequent occupation of Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The patterns of the establishment of missions and mission stations seemed to be uniform among many of the missionaries. We considered the various methods and motivations of mission in the 19th century as well. We also traced Methodist mission orientation dating back to John Wesley himself.

In this chapter we focus on the understanding of mission in shifting paradigms. We take advantage of David Bosch's (1991) critical contribution through his seminal work. We will seek to ground our mission thinking in both Old and New Testament, particularly focussing on Jesus' approach.

3.2. Mission in the 19th Century

We observed in the previous chapter that Mission in the nineteenth century was an overflow of the European Christianity, culture and civilisation. Mission emerged in the glorious Christendom,

where the church occupied the centre of the community and commanded authority and respect. We observed that missionaries were products of Enlightenment and that civilisation was viewed as the best fruit of Christianity and that preaching of the gospel was the best means of conveying these fruits to the transformation of Africans who were regarded as the people living in the Dark Continent. In the words of Carey when persuading British citizens to support mission work abroad, he said:

> Can we hear that they are without the gospel, without government, without laws, without arts and sciences and not exert ourselves to introduce among them the sentiments of man and of Christians? Would not the spread of the gospel be the most effectual means of their civilization? Would that not make them useful members of society? (Sales 1972:24).

Christianity had not only become the religion of Europe, it had become the culture and fabric of society and its consciousness. The distinction between the church and the world had disappeared. That boundary no longer existed. Europe's religion and culture had become one. However, because of Enlightenment and resultant secularization, European Christianity had evolved. Mission was viewed as the export and sharing of the best which Europe had and had become, with its culture represented by its nice churches, its civilisation, sciences and arts. David Smith notes that:

> 'tragically, few Christians at the time seemed to realise that the driving force in Western culture was less and less to be found in beliefs based upon the Bible, but was provided by philosophers and writers who understood their task in Promethean terms as being one of measuring and transforming the world on the basis of human reason' (Smith 2003: 21).

Mission was understood more on cultural, scientific and rational terms. According to Pobee; 'Mission came to Africa dressed in European garb' ((Pobee 1979:58).

Mission was viewed as the establishment of churches. The church was at the centre of European society, in the same breath it was at the centre of mission thinking. The end of mission was the establishment of similar churches in the mission areas. This church was a western church. While mission agencies were instrumental in the nineteenth century mission movement, their aim was to establish churches. Wilbert Shenk posits that, the modern mission movement was shaped by the Christendom model of church which saw the church more as an institution (Shenk 1996:33). As a result, mission was viewed as the replication of western churches in the south. The young churches "planted" on the "mission fields" were replicas of the churches on mission agency's "home front" blessed with all paraphernalia of those churches, "everything from harmoniums to archdeacons"

(Bosch 1991: 4). Douglas John Hall quoted in David Smith; characterised the 19th century missionary movement as 'fatally flawed' (Smith 2003: 8). Indeed, the missionary thinking, motivation and practice of the time had a number of weaknesses. A few of such flaws require attention, and below is an analysis of them.

Conflating Western culture and civilisation with mission has given rise to criticism by non-Western cultures that see Christianity as a front for cultural imperialism. Michael Kilgore points this out arguing that many outside the West, view missionaries as socio-political instruments of Western governments, who seek to make non-Westerners defect via proselytisation across civilizational fault lines (Kilgore 2018:70). This confusion of Western culture with Christianity has had long term unintended consequences, leading particularly to the rejection of Christianity in other parts of the world as an alternative culture. In China for example, an idea took root and quickly spread that to become a Christian involved submission to foreign domination. That belief had a powerful effect in deterring people from approaching the missionary or from receiving missionary teaching with open minds and moral conviction (Sanneh 2008:223). Christianity and mission began to be viewed as means of subjugation and the colonisation of nations. Robert sees a distortion and negative stereotype of mission and argues that it should not be viewed as such:

> 'The stereotyped popular view of missions is at odds with their rich variety and fascinating realities. The word "mission" is often quickly reduced to western colonialism, rather than analysed as a complex, multi-cultural historical process stretching across two millennia. The term "missionary" is caricatured as representing a white Anglo-Saxon man in a pith helmet, preaching to unwilling "natives" in a steamy jungle. Yet over the 2,000 years of Christianity, the "missionary" is likely to have been a Korean couple working among university students in China, or an Indian medical doctor tending to refugees, or a Tongan family living peaceably in a Fijian village, or a Nestorian trader making his living along the Silk Road' (Robert 2009:12).

Further, as Sanneh observes, western preconditions tended to throttle the initial intentions of the mission. Sanneh concurs:

> 'Missions (mission stations in this case) subordinated Christ to their social preconditions, conditions that favoured stationary centres built under European direction. Those conditions became the preoccupation of missions; they crowded out the gospel… When missionaries assumed that enlightenment and improvement would issue in acceptance of faith in Christ, they made it reasonable to conclude that faith in Christ was not the foundation but the coping stone of social and moral progress. They put the cart before the horse' (Sanneh 2008:228).

The emphasis on western ways of life was pushed at the expense of the preaching-of the gospel.

A further flaw was the belief that Africans did not have a religion or God at all, that they were ignorant, heathen and depraved. If they had a religion at all it was evil and bad. To quote Schreuder (1817-1882), the first ordained missionary whom the Norwegian Missionary Society sent to work in South Africa among the Zulus, he says this about Zulu religion, 'Their entire concept of anything supernatural is united with their belief in or, more correctly, fear of witch-doctors and witches' (Hale 2015:47). This view represents the deeply negative perceptions missionaries had about African religious world view, and this had a serious effect on their work in terms of how people responded to it. Missionaries' poor appreciation of African spirituality and world view was to the effect that to become Christian, Africans had to completely abandon everything in their cultures, religion and world view, since their religion was seen to be evil (Nkomazana & Setume 2016:29). Banana also concurs in the case of Zimbabwe, that early Christians and evangelists were convinced that they had to be "culturally circumcised" to become good Christians (Banana 1991:1). The effects were deep, to the core of society cohesion. By undermining everything in the traditional religion and culture, missionaries left a vacuum in the African social existence, such that where no substitutes have been provided, the society is left with individualistic and materialistic philosophy, regulated only by the possibility of legal punishment (Bascom 1953:493). This attitude was rooted in the belief that Africans were heathen, and had no God at all; their religion was inferior to that of westerners. However, John Mbiti has argued that Africans already had a firm belief in one God.

The missionaries who introduced the gospel to Africa in the past 200 years did not bring God to our continent. Instead, God brought them (Mbiti 1980). The Methodist missionary to Zimbabwe, Gray, wrote in 1917, 'the bantu people have a religion that profoundly affects the whole of their lives… we say God is everywhere; God knoweth all, seeth all, but what proportion of our race lives that belief? All natives in their natural state live this belief' (Zvobgo 1991:7). Contrary to missionaries' perceptions, Africans had an abiding worldview and a sustainable view of God, of good and evil, which was solid. Missionaries would have done well to take advantage of the worldview and build upon it.

Finally, that mission was exclusive. It involved the removal of people from their natural environment to create a new community called the church. Sanneh observes that people were uprooted from their culture only to be cast on the fringes of the missionary community as adopted clients (Sanneh 2008:221). This community was centred in a mission station, a place where these 'clients' were to be turned into proper Christians. The mission was a space surrounded by a concentration of civilisation products, the school, the clinic or hospital. The missionary who was white lived on this mission. Outposts of the church derived their life from the mission. The mission modelled the kind of life converts were supposed to live as an alternative community within the wider community.

Sanneh argues that missionaries 'acquired land, built houses, and established mission stations somewhat removed from the people' (Sanneh 2008:220). From these stations he further complains that these stations were imagined little bits of Europe rolled up and transplanted to a foreign country (Sanneh 2008:220). The kind of education offered was also segregatory and exclusive. Sanneh further comments, that the missionaries selected a few intelligent young people who would be later siphoned off, trained, and equipped as faithful clones. Such young talent would become the most assured channel for the mediation of Western civilisation, and the weapon with which to undermine the authority structure of the village elders long considered impediments to civilisation (Sanneh 2008:222). The entire process was selective and exclusive. A few people met the grade, a few children benefitted from the education, and a few people who desired to become Christians had to meet certain preconditions to find a place in the new community. In essence, mission was exclusive. These perceptions and resultant approaches clouded the missionary understanding of mission, it affected the way they engaged with people who they had come to evangelise and created a legacy. Part of this orientation manifested itself in the mission station, the model community meant to be the space where Christians had to be nurtured, taught and modelled, and a space where the new alternative life would be lived.

The mission station kind of Christianity suited very well the worldview and social construction of Christendom where missionaries had been oriented. In Christendom, the church is at the centre of the community and the church is an institution that commands both ecclesiastic and political power. Salvation can only be found in the church. So the people must come to the church and not

the church going to them. Africa however, was a different context altogether, while Europe was changing. The approach to mission in Africa required some adjustment or revision in both understanding of what mission is, and what methods needed to be employed.

3.3. Towards a working definition of Mission

Definitions are subject to time and context and always vary from time to time. Mission understanding in particular is at best context driven. It is for this reason that a working definition will be employed. For the purposes of this research a working definition of mission is necessary. It is not an easy task to put together all aspects of what mission is, but some different facets can help to build a whole.

McCoy defined mission as the creating, reconciling and transforming action of God which flows from the community of love found in the Trinity, made known to all humanity in the person of Jesus. It is entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and the instrument of the reign of God (McCoy 2003:36). From these, three thoughts are critical to a definition of mission. The first is that mission originates with God and belongs to him. It is *missio Dei*. Mission is not a project of a church, a denomination or a mission agency (Shenk 1996:10). Mission is not a geographical exercise, or the church's activity overseas, (Kirk 1999:24) but it is God at work eternally everywhere, creating and reconciling all creation to himself. The church is the product of God's mission on earth. It is the missionary God who has a church in the world, not vice versa. God can work independently of the church because he is sovereign.

Mission is incarnational; it flows from the community of love in the trinity, made known, manifest in the person of Jesus Christ. Mission is not an exclusive, elitist enterprise, but it is what Christian community is sent out to be and to do, beginning where it is located, (Kirk 1999:24) into the world. It emerges from the Trinity and it is mediated through the church, who is a faithful community entrusted with the good news. The best representation of mission is what Jesus did:

> 'The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son, who came from the father, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14 NIV). Jesus was in the very nature of God, yet he did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage, rather he made himself nothing by taking the

> very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness … he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death and death on the cross (Ephesians 2:6-8NIV).

Jesus' ministry was motivated by self-giving love, servant oriented, humble and vulnerable. Jesus' ministry can be best described as *martyria* (Dyer 2017:42). His kind of mission was witness unto death, because of the love he had for the world. Mission, though not exclusive it is mediated through a community of the faithful. It is entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and the instrument of the reign of God (McCoy 2003:37). This puts the church at the centre of what God is doing, and this relationship will be explored later.

From the preceeding discussion it can be deduced therefore that mission praxis must be incarnational, transformational and holistic. It must be immersion into the people and their culture with a view to improve and make better. Mission must not uproot people or create a secluded community, but as Jesus did must transform lives where they are. Mission in biblical worldview is always creative, it is God's continued improvement of what he has created. In each phase he perceived his work to be good. Jesus says I have come that they may have abundant life (John10:10). Mission must seek to improve the entire world order to that which God intended it to be. Mission must involve the care for the world, reconciliation of relationships, people to God and people to each other, issues of social justice, the dealing with structures of society that are oppressive. Ultimately mission must make the world better in light of the Kingdom of God. History has shown that in each era, each culture will present new and different challenges and opportunities for the realisation of the Kingdom, in that sense mission must be able to respond contextually.

3.4. David Bosch's view of mission

One of the greatest thinking of the century is the contribution of David Bosch to Mission thinking and mission practice. David Jacobus Bosch (1929-1992) was a South African missiologist who was born into an Afrikaner family and grew up in the Dutch Reformed Church. Bosch was born into a tradition that was aligned to the apartheid system but he grew up to fight against it. Yates describes the Dutch Reformed Church then like it represented the 'Nationalist Party in Prayer', (Yates 2009). The Nationalist Party was the political consciousness of the Afrikaner people and their religion was the Dutch Reformed Church. The party under Malan and later Hendrik Verwoerd

achieved political power in the 1940s and from 1948 enacted legislation that enshrined the apartheid system in South Africa (Yates 2009). Bosch worked in the Dutch Reformed Church as a missionary and church planter, and in addition he lectured at the University of South Africa, Pretoria and other Institutions in South Africa. Through interaction with different people he began to be critical of his church and the apartheid system as a whole. Bosch participated in many mission conferences including the World Council of Churches. His ideas on Mission and ecumenism developed in that context. Bosch's major contribution to mission is his seminal work *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* published after his death in a car accident in 1991. In this work he put out his analysis of mission practice in the past and suggestions on how mission should proceed. Key to his contribution is the idea that mission must be understood in the context of shifting paradigms.

David Bosch argued that mission must be understood in paradigms. He defines mission as 'the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, but always related to a specific context of evil, despair, and lostness. It 'embraces all activities that serve to liberate man from his slavery in the presence of the coming God, slavery which extends from economic necessity to God forsakenness' (Bosch 1991:412). In this explication, Bosch highlights that mission must be understood contextually. Each period in history has always been missionally understood and addressed differently. No method or model is eternal as mission enters new historical paradigms in which it redefines itself in that context.

3.4.1What is a Paradigm?

The *Open Education Sociology Dictionary* defines aparadigm as a framework, model, or pattern used to formulate generalisations and theories based on shared assumptions, concepts, questions, methods, practices, and values that structure inquiry. Heyl defines a paradigm as 'the world view, the matrix of theories, models and exemplary achievements through which a scientific community perceives the universe relevant to its particular discipline' (Heyl 1975:61). A paradigm is therefore a worldview, a framework of imagining reality; it is the basis through which the generality of community perceives the world around them and how they respond to it. The concept of paradigm shifts was popularised by the American scientist Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn named an epistemological paradigm shift as a scientific revolution. A scientific revolution occurs, according to Kuhn, when scientists encounter anomalies that cannot be explained by the universally accepted paradigm

within which scientific progress has thereto been made. The paradigm, in Kuhn's view, is not simply the current theory, but the entire worldview in which it exists, and all of the implications which come with it (Orman 2016:50). For a theological discourse, McCoy prefers to use the phrase from Hans Kung, a 'model of interpretation, explanation or understanding' (McCoy 2003:38). A paradigm shift is therefore the fundamental change in the basis for which the worldviews, frameworks and models have been based. A paradigm shift is significant change in the models of interpretation and people's understanding. Bosch however is quick to point out the fact that paradigm shift in natural sciences differs from paradigm shift in social sciences. For example,

> in the natural sciences, the new paradigm replaces the old, definitely and irreversibly. In theology old paradigms can live on. Sometimes one may even have a revival of s former, almost forgotten paradigm, this is evidenced, *inter alia*, in the rediscovery of Paul's letter to the Romans by Augustine in the fourth century, Martin Luther in the sixteenth and Karl Barth in the twentieth (Bosch 1991:186).

Shifts are prompted by crises, when old models become inadequate to deal with new changes. Thomas Kuhn argues that changes of this significance occur in revolutions. New innovations lead to new discoveries and developments which affect the way people understand their world and this may also create a crisis that may lead to a change in basic understandings of the world. Peter Bernstein argues that paradigm shifts are unpredictable, but are always inevitable (Bernstein 1996:7). Any organization must always be ready to adjust and adapt and in the context of mission this stands to reason that the way mission is carried out must also change.

3.4.2 David Bosch's understanding of Mission in Shifting Paradigms

David Bosch argues that a proper understanding of mission must be guided by both time and context. He notes from a historical perspective that mission had 'responded imaginatively' to paradigm changes, the current church is challenged to do the same in time and current context (Bosch 1991:4). Mission had in the past been exercised creatively in response to different situations obtaining at that time. Bosch begins his work by observing that current mission is in crisis, he ably characterizes this crisis by asserting that the church and mission are in crisis and this crisis is rooted in the foundation, motives, aim and the nature of mission (Bosch 1991: 4). The crisis is rooted in the failure of the church to discern the worldview, times and context of mission both in the West as well as in the South where mission work was being carried out. Bosch observed that mission and church were now in crisis because while the foundations of the church have

changed (decline in Europe, end of colonialism in the South), the church's approach has largely not (Sheridan and Hendriks 2013:2). This is particularly true to western missionary practice in Africa. He went on to outline several changes that have a bearing on the current paradigm. The following are the six factors which have a bearing on mission understanding and practice, which are as follows, the advance in technology, and resultant secularization, the dechristianization of the West, the pluralisation of the world, leading to the world ceasing to divided between Christian and non-Christian, the western guilt arising from complicity in the subjugation of the natives in mission areas, the growth of the gap between the rich and poor, and lastly the buoyancy of the younger churches in the South beginning to self-assert (Bosch 1991:3). He is however optimistic arguing from a Japanese understanding of crisis as a window of opportunity. The church is in crisis because it is not responding appropriately to the challenges imposed by the changing context, but it is at a strategic position where it can transform for better if it adapts. The success and failure of the church in history has always hinged on the church's inability to respond and adapt to changing context. Bosch observes that in each historical epoch of the past two millennia the missionary idea has been profoundly influenced by the overall context in which Christians lived and worked (:349). Yet the church continues to use approaches that yielded results in the past, when the same approaches are no longer yielding results in the current context. He argues that the church must reorient itself and respond appropriately and informedly to the shifting worldviews.

Following Hans Kung's historical and theological contours, David Bosch identifies six divisions of mission history which are the primitive, Hellenistic and Patristic, Medieval and Catholic, the reformation/ Protestant, the modern enlightenment and the emerging ecumenical paradigm. 'In each of these eras Christians, from within their own contexts, wrestled with the question of what the Christian faith and, by implication, the Christian mission meant for them. Needless to say, all of them believed and argued that their understanding of the faith and of the church's mission was faithful to God's intent (Bosch 1991:182).

Bosch underlines the need to redefine mission in light of the new challenges and issues. He argues that 'an inadequate foundation for mission and ambiguous missionary motives and aims are bound to lead to an unsatisfactory missionary practice' (Bosch 1991:4). Bosch suggests that as a way forward 'we require a new vision to break out of the present stalemate toward a different kind of

missionary involvement- which need not mean jettisoning everything generations of Christians have done before us or haughty condemnations of all their blunders' Bosch 199:7). Bosch makes important suggestions here, the first one, is a call for a break from the past. The past has had a number of failures attributed by Max Warren to a 'terrible failure of nerve' (Bosch 1999:7). Mission requires a new and fresh imagining and definition which must address the mistakes and gaps of the past. Secondly; a new definition of mission does not mean to 'throw out baby with water', certain things were not bad, but were done badly, with serious repercussion on the entire mission enterprise. Yet further the motivation of a new understanding of mission is prompted by the changing context.

Bosch suggests a number of submissions towards a definition of mission, he raises thirteen issues that need to be included in a search for a definition of mission. He underscores first that Christian faith is intrinsically missionary and, admits that it is not neutral; it has a bias towards Christian commitment. He argues that mission must never be arrogated to the church; mission must remain open, while making our approximations, because mission is an expression of a dynamic relationship between God and his world mediated through Christ. The entire Christian existence is missionary existence and so is the church. Mission is not to be compartmentalized, limited to a region, it is the response of the whole church, carrying the whole gospel to the whole world (Bosch 1999:10). Bosch delineates mission to the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, but always related to a specific context of evil, despair and lostness. Mission embraces all activities that serve to liberate humans from his slavery in the presence of the coming God, slavery which extends from economic necessity to God forsakenness. Mission is the church sent out into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal and to liberate (412). Bosch's view of paradigm shifts has its roots in this part of his definition, especially where he talks about the fact that we should never arrogate mission to the church, mission must always derive its vision, its processes from God. The church's role is to continuously make approximations based upon faith in God. To use his words, the church's involvement in mission remains an act of faith without earthly guarantees. Further Bosch argues that God communicates himself through human beings and events, God is not abstract, but incarnates human affairs (Bosch 1991:181). The implications of this understanding implies that each season and period, each culture and context will need to

experience and respond to God's mission in a unique way. Mission according to Bosch must be understood contextually.

3.4.4 Mission as *missio Dei*

As alluded to earlier, Bosch grounds a proper contextual understanding of mission in the *missio Dei*. Mission originates with God, and mission belongs to God. Bosch couches mission in the following words, 'Mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God. It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in theworld; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church' (Bosch 1991:390). It is God who conceives, initiates, masterminds and strategises and sends (Gen. 1, and John 1). The church is simply the messenger. The concept of God being the creator and God being the logos permeates through the Bible. This is in contrast to the focus on the church as the centre and sender. God is the origin and sender of the church. Wilbert Shenk shares a similar view, that mission is *missio Dei* (Shenk 1996: 10).

Understanding of mission as *missio Dei* must be understood in perspective. The missionary enterprise until the first world war, was viewed as the work of man and the responsibility of the church (Macllvaine III 2010). Mission was some administrative work of sending missionaries and expanding church in other cultures (Youn 2018:226). Such an understanding must be seen in the context of Christendom where Christianity and enlightenment principles converged to create one force inspiring missionary enterprise (Macllvaine III 2010:94). Enlightenment inspired a view that God was not so much involved in mission, but that it was the work of man. Missionary work became closely connected with imperialism and colonialism as a result, with western imperial forces preoccuipied with conquering continents and missionaries subsequently civilising them (Youn 2018:226). The end of the first world war witnessed the emergency of critics of Enlightenment and Christendom models of mission which viewed the work of mission outside God's realm. It was during this period that saw the rise of scholars like Karl Barth, who nudged some compromise between liberals and fundamentalists on the concept of mission. Karl Barth argued that Mission originated in God and used the phrase *actio Dei* at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference of 1932 (Macllvaine III 2010:94, Sonea 2017:72). The first person to coin the phrase *missio Dei* was a German missiologist Karl Hartenstein in 1933, and the idea was further

developed and crystalised at the Willingen Conference of 1952 (Macllvaine III 2010:94) and later conferences were viewed as a departure from a concentration on the church as both agent and source of mission, in *missio ecclesiae* to God as the source of mission. The Willingen Conference noted that, mission should not be subordinated to the church nor the church to mission; both should, rather, be taken up into the *missio Dei,* which now became the overarching concept (Bosch 1991:370). David Bosch has been credited with the clarification of the *missio Dei* concept, to the extent he argues that 'mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God, *because* God is a missionary God' (Bosch 1991:389). Mission therefore has to do with God and his kingdom mediated through Jesus and the active community of people who congregate around him and begin to model the kingdom in the world.

Missio Dei suggests that the triune God from the past has been involved in the process of and continues to send. The Father sent his son, who in turn sent the church in the power of his Spirit. In this concept, mission is not primarily the activity of the church but of God.The emphasis is not that Jesus gave the church a mission. Rather, the emphasis is that Jesus invited the church into God's pre-existing mission (Macllvaine III 2010:96). The church is part and participant in God's mission which seeks the full realization of God's reign. The reign of God being the peaceful world where the loving and just rule of God is fully accomplished (Youn 2018:226). The Kingdom is God intervening and destroying all forms of evil in the world today, while the church is the agent God uses to inspire 'justice to roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream' (Amos 5:24). The church in the world is the product and messenger together with Christ. It exists to serve this God, in the words of Sonea, which means the main purpose of the *missio ecclesiae* cannot be the planting of churches but to be service to the *missio Dei,* (Sonea 2017:73).

Missio Dei emphasizes the fact that God is active even in places where Christians have not gone, the Sovereign God is active outside the church. God cannot be confined; he is always God who is active as he chooses. The church is there to service that God who is already at work.

3.4.5 Mission as Salvation

Bosch observes that just as there have been paradigm shifts in respect of the understanding of the between church and mission, there should also be shifts in the understanding of the nature of the

salvation the church has to mediate in its mission (Bosch 1991:393). He notes the different changes in understanding of salvation in the church history, particularly the era of Christendom to the Enlightenment which depended heavily on a comprehensive, transcendent activity of God as the sole explanation for everything that happened in the world, to a heavily secularized and liberationist centric views (Bosch 1991:394). These secularist definitions of sin and salvation had challenges of their own. Salvation was viewed as not coming through change in individuals but through the termination of perverted and unjust structures. Sin was now defined preeminently as *ignorance.* People only had to be *informed* about what was in their own interest. The Western mission was the great educator, which would mediate salvation to the unenlightened (:396). These secularist and liberationist views were over optimistic about scientific innovation to the extent they put salvation within human reach. They glorified human capacity. But as Bosch observes, the modern story of success tends toward becoming a story of catastrophe, and some people even try to withdraw into an illusory pre-technological world. Meanwhile the dreams about the "paradise of the future" are disappearing in the smoke of interminable wars and, much worse, in the radioactive winds of nuclear explosions which threaten to destroy all life on earth (Bosch 1991:398).

The God of mission is concerned with the total salvation of humanity which is both liberative and spiritual (Luke 4:18,19NIV) from the power of sin and all evil, both in the past, the present and in the future. Sin must be viewed vertically as against God, but also horizontally as against the neighbour. Sin must be both personal and corporate. There is therefore an individual as well as a corporate aspect to mission, especially as exemplified in Jesus Christ. He came to seek and save the lost, (Luke 19:10 NIV). God desires people to come to a personal relationship of faith with him, in as much as he is concerned with reconciliation of all creation. Mission therefore means being involved in the ongoing dialogue between God, who offers his salvation, and the world, which enmeshed in all kinds of evil craves that salvation (Bosch 1991:399). It is the process by which the message about the victory of Christ over evil and death is proclaimed. That Christ lives and is available to transform all life to all his people and his creation is something which is central his mission. This historical process has anthropological, economic, psychological, religious and sociological dimensions (Shenk 1996: 10). A proper understanding of mission as must be drawn from Jesus; it is not a simple message, but an active, transformative, incarnating presence of God

through his agents. It is not only by foreign agents, it begins where people are and moves in circles as in the book of Acts, from Jerusalem and all Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The world stands in need of an interpretation of salvation which operates within a comprehensive Christological framework, which makes the *totus Christus* his incarnation, earthly life, death, resurrection, and *Parousia* indispensable for church and theology (Bosch 1991:399).

Salvation must not be limited to spiritual and personal, but must extend to temporal, holistic and communal, noting that the effect of sin is beyond personal and spiritual. The ills that hold people and communities in bondage are deeper and need a comprehensive understanding of what salvation is. In an African context, individuals do not exist, people co-exist. The current sources of bondage in the same sense are multiple and multi-faceted. They range from economic, to political, in as much as these are also spiritual as they represent the manifestation of deep estrangement between God and man. Salvation must therefore take into account the institutional forms of sin, that bind people to perennial poverty and powerlessness in the hands of political and economic institutions. Mission must wrestle with powers and principalities that are national as well as global (Ephesians 6:12). Jesus' ministry was emancipatory to a cross section of social categories, to the poor, to the vulnerable of society, to women and children. It was a ministry that sought to bring back confidence to the downtrodden, neglected and trampled upon.

3.4.6 Mission as justice and fight against inequalities and inhumane squalid conditions

Mission must include a search for justice in all its forms; social, economic, political including religious as well. In Africa injustice finds its manifestation due to high levels of inequality, which has given rise to corruption. The poor have little chance of seeing their lives escape the cycle of poverty. Bosch posits that that social justice was at the very heart of the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament (Bosch 1991:401). He argues further using Reinhold Niebuhr's example of the rational ethic and, religious ethic that mission must be inspired by an ethic of love to pursue justice as opposed to purely political motivations which arise from a rational ethic. He however cautions that within the religious ethic there is a mystic dimension which tends towards withdrawal. In this sense emphasis must be drawn to the prophetic dimension of the religious ethic, which inspires a prophetic presence of the church. He notes that a religious ethic motivated by love must overcome

the problem of seeking the best motive. As the institution of slavery has shown, sincere Christians, motivated by love, might not move vigorously against the social injustices in the larger society, which they know to be in conflict with their religious and moral ideals (Bosch 1991:403).

Both the Old Testament and New Testament highlight the issue of justice as central to the missionary God. The church must appreciate its double mandate, which is to proclaim and act responsibly in the community. As Bosch has articulated that the church has two mandates, the first refers to the commission to announce the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ while the second calls upon Christians to responsible participation in human society, including working for human well-being and justice (Bosch 1991:403). The 19th century missionary movement crisis arose partly because in its zeal to preach and to convert, it tended to focus its work primarily on the spiritual at the exclusion of issues of social justice. As a result, missionaries have been accused of being complicit in the subjugation of native communities (Zvobgo 1991:5). This relates to the issues of land distribution and tenure, colonial oppression, and the treatment of natives to which the missionaries tended to turn a blind eye. Mission and justice cannot be separated. A relevant mission thrust must take seriously the issues of social, political and economic justice. It must address issues of gender and inclusion as a departure from entrenching privilege of a certain few. It must incorporate the poor as much as it does the rich, women and children as much as it does the male members of society, it must equally address issues affecting the disabled.

Focus on social justice must never in any way be viewed as substituting Evangelism and the preaching aspect of the church's calling. Mission as justice and mission as search for social justice are part and parcel. John Stott quoted in Bosch concluded this debate in the following words:

> I now see more clearly that not only the consequences of the commission but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus (Bosch 1991:405).

Debate on which must be the focus of the church is not new, however there is agreement today among the evangelicals and Ecumenicals that social action and evangelism go together.

3.4.7 Mission as evangelism

Bosch distinguishes between evangelism and evangelisation. He defines evangelism as, the activities involved in spreading the gospel or theological reflection on these activities and

"evangelization" to refer to the process of spreading the gospel, or the extent to which it has been spread (Bosch 1991:409). Bosch traces the usage of the term evangelism in history. He observes that the word evangelism has a long history as compared to mission, but fell into disuse in the Middle Ages, when evangelism became overtaken by conquest. The word came up again in the 19th century, with the rise of missionary activity. The latest upsurge in the use of the term is associated with Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiendi* in 1975 and the World Council of Churches publication in 1982, the *Mission and Evangelism—An Ecumenical Affirmation* (Bosch 1991:409). Jesus compared the kingdom of God to leaven, which has a transformative effect (Matt 13:33). Evangelism is defined by William Abraham as those set of intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time (Abraham 1989:95). These activities include the literal proclamation and announcement of the kingdom of God which has partially come represented by Jesus Christ and inviting people to faith in him. Jamieson ably clarifies evangelism:

> 'What is envisaged is a real encounter with the cultural and social structure and situation of the world, in give, but certainly also in take, evolving in this encounter a new idiom for expressing the Christian faith, a prophetic witness of the biblical interpretation of history, of the meaning of human life, and of the Church as community. . .. The aim has to be more to win men for the 'obedience in the world' than to win them for the Church. The Church has to enter in such a way in the life of the world that it becomes incarnated in it' (Jamieson 2010).

The focus is on the transforming kingdom and not church and this emphasis must never be lost. Evangelism properly understood must not uproot people, but must empower people to live a positively alternative life in the world, a life which on its own is transformative as well. People must continue to be initiated into the Kingdom. Mission has to do with the wider and broader issues of God's activity in the world; Evangelism has to do with the announcement of the good news, the announcement that invites a response from the people.

3.4.8 Mission as liberation

Bosch's other critical contribution is understanding of mission as liberation. Mission as liberation comes within the context of contextualisation, he argues, an affirmation that God has turned towards the world, and that through Jesus he has immersed himself into the altogether real circumstances of the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed (Bosch 1991:426). As Bosch observes, theologies of liberation evolved as a response to failure. It was a protest against the

inability in Western church and missionary circles to grapple with the problems of systemic injustice (Bosch 1991:432). The missionaries, because of their blindness to local realities and proximity to power, was obsessed with doing their mission work and saving souls while neglecting the gross injustices within and without church circles. The approach of mission was paternalistic and condescending. It blamed the poor for their condition, arguing that poverty was because of ignorance and laziness and offered its sympathetic response to which the poor needed to be grateful. Yet such view ignored the global dynamics of poverty in terms of why the poor get poorer and the few rich continue to get richer. The poor needed the missionary mercy to survive and this they did by providing schools and health services but without engagement of the poor themselves as to how this provision could be best done. Mission as Liberation means reversal of that kind of model, beginning with a redefinition of poverty itself. Buffel argues that mission as liberation begins by a recognition that poverty is not just lack of income, nor a result of ignorance, lack of skills, or moral and cultural factors, but rather that it had to do with global structural relationships (Buffel 2013:242). Mission as liberation has to do with putting the poor not only involving the poor at praxis level, but at the centre of missiological reflection itself (Buffel 2013:240). Mission as liberation broadens understanding of the debate on poverty, to a global political and economic matrix.

Buffel in support of Bosch views poverty as structural. He concurs, that while there is no doubt that poverty is structural, it is also anthropological, political and theological. He suggests that missiological-theological reflection must be geared towards making a contribution to the transformation of society. Causes of poverty extend to issues like climate change, political instability, conflicts (Buffel 2013:244). Addressing poverty must begin at the global power relations level, the structures that dominate and control economies and wealth.

Criticism of the liberationist argument has also been that those who work for independence often perpetuate injustices to their citizens. Sands (2018:5) is one of them. He challenges this liberationist missionary approach. He argues that countries in the South that attain independence have been worse off than their colonial predecessors, often maintaining the similar colonial power structures and continuing to exploit natural resources in a similar manner. A new elite emerges which perpetuates the colonial model, the poor remain worse off. This criticism is helpful in

checking how independent and developing states make use of their new found freedom, yet it does not displace the fact that globalisation plays an important part in maintaining structures that continue to perpetuate poverty. Addressing poverty must therefore remain at the centre of mission thinking and action. It must be global and local. As Bosch concludes, 'we need a vision to direct our action within history, indifference to this vision is a denial of the God who links his presence to the elimination of all exploitation, pain and poverty' (Bosch 1991:447). Mission should see itself as addressing these inequalities and all attendant issues at every level.

3.5. Church and Mission

An important dimension that requires a shift is the church's self-understanding in relation to mission. The relationship between the church and mission is crucial, because the visible church embodies the missionary mandate as God's instrument though not an exclusive one. Its unity becomes particularly critical, if that embodiment must be meaningful. Leslie Newbigin's confession of his encounter with other religions is an important challenge to the church. He was challenged with these words:

> You claim that Jesus is not just the Lord of the Christians, but the Head of the whole human race. You claim that he is so supreme and all-sufficient that all the vast variety of human culture, experience and temperament can be made one in him. And yet you yourselves have clearly not found this to be true in your own experience. You have not found the confession of Jesus to be enough to provide you with a common identity and the basis for a common life together. You insist on identifying yourselves by other names (Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Baptists, etc.) and you do not live in one fellowship. You are yourselves a most impressive demonstration of the falsity of your confession (Newbigin 1980:158).

This outside view brings the question of common witness into a proper perspective, particularly in the context of current mission challenges. The church cannot call the world to come together in Christ when it still cannot work ecumenically. Bosch's call for mission as a common witness, is a critical step in the church's understanding and the call placed upon it. This unity as Newbigin points out is in Christ, who calls the church to bring witness through the spirit. God is sovereign, he is at work in and through his church which is the body of Christ, but is also at work outside and ahead of the church. The role of the church is to continually search for where God is directing and join him in the world. The church is not an end in itself, it is sent community to the world. The church has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to the life of communities in Africa and the world over. However, for a helpful understanding of its missionary mandate it is not enough

to celebrate its successes, it is important to take note of the issues that emerge. Christianity definitely had an impact, both positive and negative, on the socio-political life of the people of sub-Saharan Africa (Manala 2013). Properly understood, the church has potential to do more.

There are four major missional issues that the church needs to deal with for its missional thrust to be effective. To do this relevantly and effectively, the church must be united in its purpose and vision. A lack of unity, according to Mayer is detrimental to the witness and mission of the church (Mayer 2012:106). The first is its ability to transformatively incarnate and inculturate. While it is an undisputed fact that the church in Africa is growing fast, leading Adrian Hastings in Jenkins to exclaim that black Africa today is inconceivable apart from the presence of Christianity (Jenkins 2007: 64), it is also true that the church has not effectively inculturated, it still remains a mile wide and an inch deep. Much of the church growth in Africa is predominantly in the African initiated churches and Pentecostals while mission churches growth has become slowed (Jenkins 2007:10).

Growth has also not translated to better society in terms of justice and peace, and reconciliation. This is evidenced by the height of corruption, wars, disease and inequality. Cardinal Pengo remarked,

> there is a concern that in spite of this phenomenal growth, the Church in Africa faces the challenges of justice, peace, unity, and reconciliation as seen in the numerous conflicts that bedevil the continent for instance, it is a well-documented fact that as the First Assembly on Africa of the Synod of Bishops was sitting in Rome, in 1994, a genocide was unfolding in a predominantly Catholic country – Rwanda (Pengo 2011).

The church has done well in bringing schools, hospitals and learning institutions to the poorest regions as much as to the affluent. Its effect has yet not filtered to the culture and lifestyle of the population. Most of the politicians in office in Africa are products of mission schools, they were educated by missionaries yet their Christianity has remained largely on the surface. A Zambian Catholic Bishop once made a comment which resonates with experiences of many missionary churches in Africa. He said:

> ‘it is becoming a worrying trend to see that when many Africans want good education and healthcare they go to Catholic schools and hospitals, but when they want spiritual care they go to the new Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. The Bishops concluded that it was perhaps a perception that “we” (Catholics) are now seen as good social workers and less as accomplished witnesses to the spiritual aspects of our faith’ (Pengo 2017).

The church has largely remained more of a social institution than a spiritual one associated with an inability to address the spiritual needs of an African.

Second, the church still struggles to influence society. The image of the church being the salt of the earth has implications of a church that preserves the social mores. This is despite so much expectation from society for the church to be a conflict resolver, arbiter for peace, and social amenities improver (Da Silva 2017, Pernia 2013). This is partly because the missionary church did not penetrate into the fabric of the African society, instead it remained peripheral, and the church's effect has also remained the same. A recent study showed that the sub-Saharan Africa has higher incidence of HIV/AIDS as compared to the Islamic North Africa (Henry 2012:21, UNAIDS Data 2018:22). The same can be said of rampant corruption that has destroyed African economies. This is despite the high growth rate of Christianity in the South. There is seemingly no relationship between the expansion of the church and sustainable and true social transformation.

Third, the church in Africa has not been able to completely exorcise the institutional ghost of the 19th century church, and fully adapt to the current contextual environment. The ability of the church to redress colonial imbalances, with regards to land and the economy has been found wanting. The church has remained with farms and people living under unjust colonial rules of tenure (Chitando 2005:191). This has kept many faithful people in mission farms poor with limited access to resources. Not much adaptation has been done in changing colonial policies as regards to land and the economy. The church has largely remained Western in dress, polity, liturgy and theology. This is also true of Methodists in Zimbabwe. This has made it difficult to put its message across especially to the young, who feel that the churches are not sensitive enough to their spiritual, political and economic plight.

Fourth, the question of sustainability of church work in the post-missionary era. Most mission churches still rely on mission partners for the sustenance of their existing work not to talk about expansion. Churches who inherited institutions, schools, farms and hospitals either struggle to maintain them or have run them down, and they are now struggling without the missionary funding, or not much new developments have been made in a very long time.

Church understood properly is a community of God's people, one, holy, catholic and apostolic and not just an institution. The Church is the *ekklesia,* God's called out and pilgrim community. A community of people gathered for a purpose. Bosch characterises the church as a pilgrim people, people of God on a journey. The church is '*ek-klesia*, called out of the world and sent back into the world. Foreignness is an element of its constitution' (Bosch 1991:374). Charles Van Engen notes that the biblical images of the church are metaphors of the church in mission, not still photographs but rather moving pictures, dynamic videos of the church living out its witness in the world (Engen 2000:193). The church's identity is bound up in its task of a living organism, moving towards the world. Its identity is closely tied to its function. Bosch argues that it is not possible to imagine a church without mission, or a mission without a church. To talk about church without mission or mission without church is actually a contradiction. Since God is a missionary God, so must his community, his people must be a mission people. The life of the church is intertwined with its purpose and calling to wander along with God, having been called by him, for his purpose and work. Andrew Kirk has pointedly amplified this connection, 'the church is by its very nature missionary to the extent that if it ceases to be missionary it has not just failed in one of its tasks, it has ceased being church (Kirk 1999:30). Emil Brunner argued that the church exists by mission as the fire exists by burning (Brunner 1931:108). Charles Van Engen sums up this missionary identity of the church in these terms:

> The four credal marks of the church have tended to be understood as static adjectives modifying the church. As such they have fostered institutionalisation, maintenance and decline in the church. These however should be viewed as adverbs modifying the missionary action of the church; as such they call the church to be unifying, sanctifying, reconciling, and proclaiming presence of Jesus Christ in the world, challenging local congregations to a transformed, purpose driven life of mission in the world, locally and globally (Engen 2000:193).

Thus, the church is by its very nurture a called-out community, for the sake of reconciling and unifying the world to God and each other. It forever remains faithful to the proclamative presence of Jesus in the world.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter we explored the definition of mission in the context of shifting paradigms. We began by defining mission and providing a working definition mission. It argued that a paradigm is a worldview and a framework through which generalisations are formulated. It demonstrated

that shifts occur when previous explanations and perspectives become insufficient to deal with new realities on the ground. This chapter went on to show from the work of David Bosch that mission approaches in a similar way require constant interrogation in the light of new developments, new changes in society, and new context. Mission is better understood from the perspective of God as *missio Dei*, originating in God, by God to the world. In that sense mission must be incarnational, transformative, creative and holistic. The church, in as much as it is the sent community, is not the centre of mission because the goal is the Kingdom of God. The church in carrying out mission must not be stagnant, maintenance, but must also be able to adapt to the new changes, guided by its obedience to God who is the master sender. As it does mission it is guided by the spirit of God.

CHAPTER 4: EPWORTH MISSION IN CRISIS IN POST COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

4.1. A Brief description of Epworth

Epworth is a town situated about 12 kilometres to the South East of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe (Msindo *et al* 2013:172). It currently has an estimated population of about 167,462. According to Butcher, Epworth is Harare's largest recognised informal settlement (Butcher 1986). In terms of population density; Epworth comes 5th after Mutare, Chitungwiza, Bulawayo and Harare (Zimstats 2019). Epworth is naturally scenic, housing the famous balancing rocks, a popular tourist attraction (Vumbunu and Manyanhaire 2010:244). Geographically, Epworth is a combination of three plots which were acquired by the Methodist Church between 1891 and 1908. These plots include Epworth, Glenwood and Adelaide. Epworth is a grant measuring 2520 acres which was given by Rhodes to Rev Owen Watkins and Isaac Shimmin on their arrival from South Africa for the purposes of their mission work (Thorpe 1951:44). Glenwood farm is a piece of land adjacent to Epworth measuring 2360 acres, originally granted to Joseph Matthews by the British South Africa Company in 1894. The farm came on the market in 1904. Rev John White the Minister then in charge of Epworth mission area, wrote to Rev Brown at the Mission House in London, seeking permission to acquire the piece of land. The reason being the fact the mission work at Epworth was growing and people were multiplying such that Epworth alone was no longer enough to offer space for more people. He had paid 400 pounds and he was proposing that the rest

of the resources would come from contributions from tenants who were to pay one pound per male adult per year for four years. Brown objected to giving natives the right to land on account of them having paid rent and encouraged Rev White to make it clear to the natives that they had no right to land to which John White agreed. Glenwood was thus bought by the Methodist church through a loan paid off by rentals of tenants. Adelaide was originally granted to Charles Cornish McArthur by the British South Africa Company in 1904. The property measuring 3760 acres came on the market in 1908. Rev John White reasoned with the new Mission Secretary Marshall Hartley of the urgent need to purchase the farm so that another three hundred people could be added into the mission, to which Marshall Hartley agreed and the farm was bought for 500 pounds.

From these three plots two major villages were created over the years, Chiremba (Which consists of Muguta and Makomo families) and Chizungu (Consisting of Chinamano and Zinyengere families) (Chitekwe *et al* 2012: 132). Due to expansion, Epworth is now made up of nine villages, which are Chiremba, Chinamano Extension, Zinyengere Extension, Chizungu, Jacha, Overspill, Magada, Makomo and Domboramwari. These altogether constitute 7 administrative wards. There are now seven (7) Primary Schools, two (2) Secondary Schools all of which are run by the community and the local board. There are only three (3) clinics serving the entire population, one of which still falls under the Methodist Administration.

The entire establishment now falls under Epworth local board, which was established in 1986 to oversee the development of Epworth (Chirisa 2010:42). The extent and complexity of problems at Epworth had become insurmountable after the liberation war of the 1970s and the church's capacity to deal with them was tested. The Methodist church in 1981 handed over much of Epworth land to the government and remained with a small piece of land called Lot 2. The Lot houses the church, the Minister's residence, a clinic, a Woman's centre, a children's home and a theological college. The primary school is in the hands of the community, while much of the land close to the United Theological College, the Matthew Rusike Children's home has been invaded by squatters. The church has been struggling to evict them for a long time, and instead of abating the problem is infact increasing, with much of the land now fully occupied. Recently the Methodist Annual Conference has commissioned a team to look into the future prospects of Mission land in the

context of these issues, part of their findings and recommendations will be discussed at a later stage.

Epworth mission station like other mission stations was created to be an 'active centre, from which would radiate' (Carpenter 1960:192, Gondongwe 2010:53, Kollman & Smedley 2018:34), the light of Christian teaching to the surrounding area and there by model the new way of life, brought about by the church. In the words of Sitshebo, 'mission stations were supposed to be beacons of light in the midst of darkness. Everything done on them, especially by the Africans, was to be "Christian", so that the distinction between them and the villages was clearly apparent' (Sitshebo 2000:90). These stations were created to bring about change by providing model communities. However, the current mission farm and station situation is far from close to that ideal; instead the mission farm has become a place of conflict. Banana has made the following statement about Epworth, 'there was one farm, however that remained a great problem, that of Epworth near Harare' (Banana 1991:144). Epworth is one of the challenging settlements to both the church and the state; it has the highest crime levels, high prostitution, and poverty levels. Recent headlines have been particularly telling about the state of Epworth, 'Epworth: The forgotten 'suburb' (*Herald* 05 April 2014), The *Daily News* ran a story which read 'Life on the margins in Epworth' (*Daily News* 14 May 2017), in this story the writer opened by highlighting the state of poverty in Epworth, citing collapsing toilets, and poor water and sanitation situation in the suburb. *The Standard* ran a story, 'Epworth: Where filth, crime is a way of life', (*The Standard*, 21 May 2017). There are also positive stories, for example *Daily News* ran a story that read, 'Epworth: A shanty town that produces greats', (*Daily News* 30 December 2018).

The problems at Epworth are complex and wide ranging. They range from land disputes to land contestation and ownership, overcrowding and unregulated settlements, to poor infrastructure, poor service delivery and lack of social facilities. The extent of poverty has given rise to other social ills such as crime and commercial sex work which is exposing younger children to early exposure to sexual behaviour. Chirisa has described Epworth as 'a complex humanitarian crisis driven by institutionalised poor governance, corruption and politics' (Chirisa 2010:1). This he said in reference to the degree of poverty in the area which is exhibited by overcrowding, unplanned settlements, poor housing and infrastructure, poor service delivery, water and sanitation issues.

The social life is characterised by a high rate of crime and prostitution. In essence, what was started as a model society, in terms of missionary vision has now become a multi-faceted crisis of alarming proportions. Many scholars have been drawn to this settlement for different reasons, ranging from geographical to sociological and religious reasons. All these point to a town that is in crisis.

This is confirmed by Butcher who earlier identified four major critical characteristics of Epworth, land speculation, sub-regional pollution threat, lack of services and community amenities, and site unsuitable for proper housing (Butcher 1986:12). According to a research by Tawodzera and Chigumira, Epworth is considered one of the poorest urban areas in Zimbabwe,

> about 70% of its residents live in informal conditions, where access to key city-provided services such as energy, water and sanitation are limited or absent, and housing structures range from self-built brick structures to shacks, where poverty is endemic. Approximately 78% of the households and 82% of individuals in the area live below the poverty datum line (Tawodzera and Chigumira 2019:2).

Epworth was one of the settlements defined as squatter settlement by the Zimbabwean government in 2005 resulting in it being targeted by the notorious operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Restore Order) (Msindo *et al* 2013:177). This operation was meant to clear squatters from around and within Harare. It is an exercise which affected many families and livelihoods, and was heavily criticised by the United Nations. Epworth, contrary to its original mandate, is now identified as a haven of criminals characterised by a rise in immoral behaviour such as commercial sex work, which bring young children to early exposure to sex and alcohol abuse. 'Criminal activities appear to be a cancer in Epworth squatter settlements' (Msindo *et al*, 178). The famous *paBooster* documentary brought the issues of child sex and criminality of Epworth to full public view.

4.2. A short history of the establishment of Epworth mission

Epworth was established as a mission station by the Methodist missionaries in 1892. The land on which it was established was acquired in 1891. The mission was established at the confluence of a number of territories, the *Chinamora, Seke*, *Chihota* and *Rusike*. Epworth fell under the Seke territory where the *vaHarava* people lived (Peaden 1981). To the north was the *Chinamora* territory where the vaShawasha lived. By the time Epworth was surveyed and pegged, the area to the South had already been turned into European land. A few miles to the north some African villages existed and these were the *Chirimba* who fell under *Chinamora* chieftainship. The other

villages; the *Besa* and the Chiremba, Mashonganyika and Chinamano fell under *Chihota, Seke* chieftainships. These people were the original inhabitants of the land. It was Chiremba who welcomed the missionaries (Gundani 2007:134). Chiremba was a traditional healer who came from *Chihota* area, a brother to Furamera and was going about his work of healing. During the time of the coming of missionaries he was the guest of *Chirimba* who arcoding to Gundani wanted a skilled Witch doctor of his stature to attend to him. Chiremba had five wives and his family had grown to include many people. He settled with his relatives close to the balancing rocks. Chiremba's welcoming of missionaries and support led to the establishment of the Epworth Mission.

Isaac Shimmin was the first missionary to be entrusted with the mission in Mashonaland. Soon after Isaac Shimmin landed in Salisbury, he held an interview with Cecil John Rhodes and requested farms for mission work. As earlier observed Cecil John Rhodes was supportive of the missionaries and had earlier on made a promise to give land and financial support to the Methodist missionary initiative. According to Bhebe (in Madhiba 2010:104), Rhodes desired to use the Christian message to pacify Africans. So, Isaac Shimmin obtained Epworth as a grant from Cecil Rhodes on the 20th October 1891. The deed was signed a year later on the 26th August 1892. By the time Epworth took root, two missions had been established earlier, Fort Salisbury and Hartleyton in 1891. Epworth, Nengubo and Kwenda then followed in 1892. However; it was Epworth that immediately proved to be promising (Banana 1991:8). It is said that Isaac Shimmin marvelled at the strategic position of Epworth and exclaimed that Epworth was what Kilnerton is to Pretoria. 'In July (1892) Isaac Shimmin inspected a farm some eight miles from Salisbury which the company had given to his church. He called the new mission farm 'Epworth' and registered it at the surveyor general's office shortly afterwards. He considered the acquisition of this farm of great importance. 'The principal importance of the farm', he wrote to Hartley, 'lies in its proximity to town. What Kilnerton is to Pretoria I expect Epworth will be to Salisbury' (Zvobgo 1991:27). From the perspectives of the missionary, Kilnerton gives a clue of the missionary vision and motivation in establishing Epworth. Kilnerton was founded by Owen Watkins, Isaac Shimmin's mentor in 1880 and named after the Rev. John Kilner, who was the then secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Kilnerton was a 'trial mission' in one sense.

Kilnerton mission sought to train and employ local people in the process of evangelisation. Owen Watkins had been inspired by the local people who had welcomed him in Transvaal, and these

people were already involved in mission work such as Samuel Mathabathe, Hans Appie and Klaas Ndlovu in Pretoria. Owen Watkins wanted to train more local people to carry out mission with him. On the other hand, it sought to train locals in skills so that they would fill the labour force vacancies in the emerging city. 'The basic approach to education was first to develop literacy and literary education, followed by industrial education' (Duncan 2018:2). Duncan further argues that this process was meant to civilise, and pacify the African population. Kilnerton was also the hub, a possible centre from which other mission initiatives would spring. To an extent, Kilnerton became a significant influence to the mission work of the Methodist Church in Southern Africa, until it was frustrated by the Apartheid regime and closed in 1962 as the area was declared white. It produced some of the prominent and influential figures in South African history including Rev Sefako Makgatho, the founder of the Transvaal Teachers Association, past President of the African National Congress, Rev Dr Stanley M Mogoba, the Past President of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, winner of the Methodist Peace prize and past President of the Pan-African Congress and Judge Dikgang Moseneke, the Deputy President of the Constitutional Court of South Africa (Millard 2019). Epworth was promising to be a strategic mission station for the growth of the work in Zimbabwe as well.

The acquisition of Epworth and its development did not happen in isolation, as Murdoch observes,

> after the BSAC set up fort Salisbury in September 1890, several protestant missions arrived in Mashonaland in swift succession. South Africa's Dutch Reformed Church (September 9, 1891) set up a station at Morgenster. Two groups of Wesleyan origin, the British Methodists (September 29, 1891) and the London-based Salvation Army (November 18, 1891) followed the Union Jack into fort Salisbury (Murdoch 2015:11).

In order, he goes on to show how other missionaries followed, which included four American missions that also came between in 1893 and 1895, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which opened stations at Mount Selinda and Chikore. The Seventh Day Adventists which founded Solusi mission in 1894. The American Methodist Episcopal Church, led by Bishop Hartzell, opened the old Umtali mission in 1898. In the same year, the Brethren in Christ Church also founded its Matopo Mission. The onslaught continued with other missions from various nations that joined the scramble for Rhodesia in the late 1890s. These included the South African General Mission that opened a station at Rusitu in 1897, near the Mozambique border in 1898 the Church of Christ (U.S.A), the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, the Free Church of

Scotland, the Church of Sweden, the Swedish Free Church mission, the free Methodist Church (U.S.), and the South African Baptist missionary society set up mission stations (Murdoch 2015:11, 12, Zvobgo 1991:2–4).

Two further plots Glenwood and Adelaide were purchased later. Glenwood was the first to be purchased from Mrs Alice Maud Matthews on 11th June 1904. Records in the Methodist Archives show that the farm was originally given to Charles Joseph Matthews by the British South Africa Company, on 16th June 1894. Mr Matthews transferred it to his wife in 1896, and later the farm appeared on the market in 1904. Epworth was constituted by people who inhabited the area before the occupation; these were mainly Chiremba's people, and others who came as drivers of wagons, and some from Binga. Records show that Epworth began to form its unique identity as these people were converted especially after the first Chimurenga/Umvukela war of 1896. There is a degree to which their loyalty was influenced by the protection they recieved from the white settlers during the war.

It was in Epworth that the work of the Methodists began to grow exponentially. In 1892 a school was opened under the leadership of a South African Sotho Evangelist Josiah Ramushu. Zvobgo records that at the September 1895 inaugural synod in Mashonaland; Epworth was reported to be the most successful of all mission stations. He further observes that on Sundays, the congregation numbered about 200; 40 children regularly attended school. During the year, five adults were baptised and received into Christian fellowship (Banana 1991:9). Epworth developed well as a mission, particularly after the 1896 war, when the uprising had been suppressed. This was generally true also for other missions elsewhere. The defeat of the Ndebele and the Shona, marked a significant change of attitude among the local people.

Methodist farms were generally created for mission work as the Synod minutes show, in 1922 the Wesleyan Methodist Synod adopted a resolution on the objectives and rules for mission farms. There were six objectives set out as follows:

1. To see the mission farms populated by Christians Natives whose manner of living will be a wholesome example to the heathen people of neighbouring reserves.
2. To organise the Christians of our Farms into a powerful agency for evangelization.

3. (a) To teach our tenants how to build good houses in planned villages. (b) How to make the best possible use of the land allotted to them, by green manuring & rotation of crops. (c) How to order their communal life by Native Councils.
4. To introduce afforestation schemes under the guidance of the Government experts.
5. To perform some small amount of agricultural farming work on behalf of the Mission so that costs of Mission Transport, animal and Native Gatherings, such as Quarterly Meetings may be minimised.
6. In order to secure these objects, the Synod directs that the following rules be enforced (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24) Rules on mission farms, 11 January, 1922).

Evidence shows that issues of security of tenancy, arising from government policies changes were a perennial problem. Banana argues that the insecurity stemmed from the interference of the settler government with Epworth. He argues that in the colonial mind, economic interest superseded human needs. Purportedly, in 1971 the government wanted to move the population and develop Epworth into a lucrative tourist resort centre, and this move led to protests from residents leading to the shelving of the plans (Banana 1991:145). The Land Apportionment act 1930 and the Land Tenure Act of 1969 are among the statutory instruments that had far reaching effects on the tenure of residents at Epworth. Families and their children stay on mission land was not guaranteed, as there were constant threats of moving them. The world view regarding land tenure to an African and to a European were in conflict right from the start. To an African land belonged to ancestors and clan, therefore it was heritage for all, it could not be parcelled out. Land belonged to the past, the present and the future as a resource of all life. A second issue was the fact that families stayed on the land together, and as families grew, they settled close to each other, connected by the ancestry and common lineage. Graves had to be protected, as they connected the present with those who had been there before.

Epworth did not have a squatter problem until the beginning of the liberation war, particularly at its height between 1976-1978, with disturbances starting thereafter. Between 1966 and 1979 during the war of liberation, many people escaping from the raging war in the reserves settled in Epworth, which at that time was not as regulated as an urban settlement. Due to its proximity to

Harare, it became a good refuge for those running away from war (Msindo *et al* 2013:172). Besides, it was the only area where blacks were allowed to live. The church placed no restrictions on movements of people. Refugees were welcomed in the true Christian spirit of hospitality, especially at the height of the war. People initially settled among their relatives, who later gave them places to build their own houses. Such construction was not planned, according to laws governing settlements in a suburb, there were no provisions for water and adequate sanitation (Msindo *et al* 2013:172). By the time of independence Epworth had become one of the squatter towns near Harare. This is confirmed by Msindo who wrote as follows, 'at independence in 1980, and with the abolition of influx control regulations, the in-migration continued. With increased rural urban migration post-independence, more people preferred to settle in Epworth due to the fact that economically Epworth was less expensive and rental conditions were relaxed compared to the suburbs like Highfield, and yet Epworth remained close to the city (Msindo *et al* 2013:175). The Methodist Church resolved in 1983 to transfer the settled land to central government for administration purposes. With the ballooning population, the church had become ill-equipped to administer the town and provide amenities. The church felt unable at this point to contain the growth of Epworth' (Chitekwe *et al* 2012: 133). The Methodist church retained 181 hectares of Epworth which is now Lot 2. However, as Tawodzera and Chigumira observe, despite the presence of a local board, and the oversight of the Ministry of Local Government, Epworth has hardly developed beyond its 1986 status and it still has only two tarred main roads (Tawodzera and Chigumira 2019:2).

In its initial state Epworth consisted of a church, a school, and later a theological College which was established in 1956, a children's home established in 1960 and a clinic (Matikiti 2009:155). Now with the growth of population, many more schools have been built both Secondary and primary schools which were established by government after independence. Epworth looked promising as a centre for mission work, but however it deteriorated during and after the war in various respects.

Banana identifies three major reasons why Epworth failed (Banana 1991:145). First, he suggests that there was inadequate financing of the management of agricultural programs at Epworth. An agricultural missionary who was funded by the church did not have enough capacity to manage all

farms and initiate conservation and crop rotation initiatives. Second, the church lacked the capacity to run farms with so many people. The church was not a government and policing was not easy. Banana actually concedes that the church had taken more land than it could deal with in terms of managing the regulatory matrix of both land and people. With the pressure of the war, people continued to flock to Epworth as internally displaced refugees. Third, the policy on farms and mission was at cross purposes with the people's social, religious and political orientation. Considering that the war of liberation was fought on the grievance of land, the church was at the receiving end and it could therefore not withstand the tide. With the war coming to an end, church policy stood little chance in the face of a population of victorious indigenous people who had felt prejudiced for years.

4.3. Socio-religious and socio-cultural orientation of the people

Before the colonisation of Zimbabwe and the advent of missionary work, two major groups of people inhabited what is now Zimbabwe. These were the Ndebele (Matebele under King Mzilikazi and the MaShona, or Makaranga a cluster of clans made up of the Makaranga, Zezuru, Manyika) (Muzondidya, & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007: 277, Hansungule 2000, 308, Thorpe 1951: 29). While the Ndebele people[4] were a unitary state under a king, the Shona groups were not so organised. Clans existed independently of each other, although certain relationships, religion, customs and cultural practices permeated throughout these clans, building a semblance of commonality. Such relationships were usually bound by marriage, lineage and common practices, such as religious and/or rain making ceremonies. People for example would come from all over to *Muti usina zita* in Marondera for rain ceremonies, or alternatively as far as Matopo near Bulawayo. David Beach's history of the Shona speaking peoples concurs clearly that before 1890 there were two historical realities. One was that all speakers of Shona possessed not only a common language but also many other cultural traits in common (Ranger 1989:120). The numerous groups were not and never had been clustered together in self-conscious ethnicities such as are today implied by the terms Manyika, Zezuru and the rest (Ranger 1989:120).

[4] Ndebele people are located to the West of Zimbabwe. They are an off shoot of the Nguni people from South Africa who escaped Shaka's brutality led by Mziklikazi and settled around Bulawayo in the 1840s. They are a grouping of the Nguni, (the Zansi) the tribes who joined Mzilikazi on his way to the north who included the Sotho and the Venda (abeNhla)and the local inhabitants whom they found around Bulawayo.

Both the Shona and the Ndebele who had come from Zululand had a common belief in the agency of the ancestors and a high god. As Goto aptly defines this religion,

> the Shona people believed in family spirit guardians, which is "the memory of, and respect for, deceased members of society expressed in a highly developed ancestor sprit cult." Believed also in spirit medium ship, the practice where the takes possession of and speaks through human host. Spirit mediums can appear in various guises, family spirits, tribe or clan; these often serve to unite groups and link with their dead. The Shona believe that when a person dies, the spirit departs, leaves the body, but continues to influence the living family members and community (Goto 2006:72).

This religion needed no conversion and was all inclusive. Every family member was born into it, and practiced it from birth. The religion was fervent and it permeated all aspect of life, from birth to death, from raising children to marriage, from farming to war. People appealed to their ancestors on virtually every aspect of their life. The respect they both rendered to their ancestors, brought families together. Land belonged to everyone as an inheritance because it belonged to their ancestors as much as it belonged to the future generations, and therefore it could not be subdivided, disposed or sold.

Related to their religious connectedness, is the social order. As Bourdillon argues, perhaps the preservation of the social order is merely one aspect of a general tendency of traditional religion to preserve what has been handed down from the past by the ancestors (Dachs 1973:23). The Shona people were more of a collective rather than individualised community. They lived in villages around common relationships. Their appeal to common ancestorship joined them together through leadership, chieftaincy, marriage customs, religious and cultural practices. Goto appropriately asserts that (African) communities thrived on collectivism in which the good of the group came before the good of the individual (Goto 2006:70). These aspects of Shona existence meant that Shona people lived as a community, closely knit by these webs of multi-layered relationships. It was difficult to convert or change a practice without changing the entire village. This position is further strengthened by Bourdillon, when he argues that traditional religion also bolstered the traditional social structure and underlined the fact that each person has a place in the community. Before the arrival of European missionaries, there were no possibilities of religious dissension. A person could not dissociate himself from a particular ritual on account of a quarrel within the

community. A person's position in the traditional religious system is normally based on his/her position in the community rather than on his/her particular beliefs or views (Dachs 1973: 22).

The position is further crystallised in the experience among the Ndebeles, as chronicled by Zvobgo. He observes that one of the factors which made the Ndebele reluctant to embrace Christianity was the missionaries' insistence on monogamy as a condition of admission into the church. In this respect, what applied to Matabeleland, applied *mutatis mutandis* to Mashonaland. The missionaries, unaware of the social importance of polygamy, condemned the practice outright. This was clearly brought out by the Rev Stanlake during the course of a visit to villages near the Tegwani mission in 1898 (Zvobgo 1976:47). This is one aspect of missionary failure. They were blind to the social and religious worldview of the people they had come to evangelise. They were so Western that all the Ndebele and the Shona culture was perceived negatively.

Dr. Joshua Nkomo in his preface to a Methodist centennial publication indicted the missionary approach, especially its negative perception and the resultant attitude of missionary approach to the local people which resulted in a church that failed to contextualise its doctrinal underpinnings. He said, "Failure to relate African thought to Christian faith resulted in the establishment of a "foreign" church in a foreign soil. The early evangelists believed they had to be "culturally circumcised" before becoming Christians" (Banana 1991:1). This view is representative of the African perspective; Frantz Fanon once argued, 'the Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few are chosen' (Wa Said 1971:510). The mission station and the church it gave birth to, grew to become an alien institution where those converted could not relate well with their surrounding context and neighbours.

The missionaries created an elitist kind of alternative existence which had little contact with neighbouring context. The condemnation of all lifestyle, culture and religion of Africans did little to completely uproot the African from their culture. The roots of the African were resilient as Zvobgo shows. The problem here, however, was how to persuade the people to abandon the old life. This was graphically stated by the Rev. J. W. Stanlake in 1909.

> "The daily tribunal of the missionary brings home the fact to him, at least, that the old order will not pass away without a struggle. The wonder to me is, not that these people fail to realise, and to enter into full privileges of, the Christian life, but that they show the least desire for these things. There is not even the incentive of the loaves and fishes. The people have everything to lose. Polygamy must go. Witchcraft must go. The orgies of beer-drinking must go. These things have deep roots". Such was the response of the chiefs and their people to Christianity in Mashonaland' (Zvobgo 1976: 44).

What the Africans resisted was not Christianity *per se*, but an intrusion into their natural environment, an intrusion that did not give them an opportunity to choose, but that which clandestinely destroyed all their heritage without a clear guarantee of a stake in the new form of religion and culture. Further the kind of Christianity which was coming was dressed in a culture that did not guarantee future social cohesion, a virtue the Africans had relied on for time immemorial. In effect this was akin to threat on their very existence.

To the Shona, as it was to the general African worldview, religion, society and its culture, politics are all interconnected. These bring the collective society into existence and binds it together, with its past, present and future, its land and its resources. There is no individual existence; people exist together, joined together by some complex relationships that are not easy to break. The missionaries would have done well to appreciate the web of connectedness and use it as a springboard for the gospel. Instead, they handpicked people with a criterion of their own.

4.4. The effect of colonisation and Methodist missionary work on the life of the Shona community in Epworth

The coming in of white colonial settlers and the onset of missionary work had both intended and unintended effects on the life of the community. While the introduction of new ways of life was intended to bring about a better and improved life in the mission, there were unintended effects on family, and social wellbeing of the community. Sitshebo underscores the root of the effects of missionary activity. He argues that the negative perceptions on Africanness did well to injure all that is African. He goes further to argue that the Church made it plain that everything African was heathen and superstitious barbarism. Conversion to Christianity meant rejecting traditional forms of dress, authority and social organisation, culture, marriage and medicine (Sitshebo 2000:91). The missionary era displaced people physically, religiously and socially. People were either moved to create space for colonial settlement, or they moved in protest as they could not stand the rules and

regulations of the missionaries. Religiously, those who converted migrated to the new faith and severed relations with their relatives and kinsman. Socially, the culture and fabric of the African existence was adversely affected, when those who had multiple wives were asked to reject them, it was a serious social displacement of an African person. Further Sitshebo posits that, Missionaries were condemning and destroying the Shona traditional community only to replace it with one built around themselves at the mission station. This did not go down well with the Shona people, who understood community in terms of its wider clan setting (Sitshebo 2000:93). Many kinship relations which made it possible for an African society to exist were affected. Madhiba has summarised the colonial effects on five aspects of community life which are as follows, family, marriage and relationships, burial of the deceased, transmission of knowledge from one generation to the other and the religious dimension (Madhiba 2010:62). An analysis will be made on the aspects of African life and how it was adversely affected.

4.4.1. Family and community life

The advent of mission had an effect on the family unit in a number of ways. Before the colonisation of Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, people lived alongside each other as an extended family working and living on the land. Madhiba observes that the African family was patrilineal and this had an effect on issues of social cohesion. A patrilineal family system observes a system where one belongs to the clan and family of his or her father and young men inherit land and cattle from him. In a matrilineal system a person belongs to the clan and family of his or her mother and young men inherit land and cattle from their mothers' brothers (Madhiba 2010:62). Lineage and totem bind them together through their ancestry and their inheritance. In traditional society it was not possible to exist individually. The system of the new government required people to register as families and pay taxes. The marriage of one man to one wife gave rise to creation of a nuclear family. The missionaries reduced the significance of both marriage and family, by emphasising individuality, individual commitment to faith and individual move to the mission. Converts had no option but to forsake their heathen relations and cease to participate in family functions, especially those that involved the brewing of beer such as for ancestral worship. This reorganisation of social and religious practices had far reaching effects on the existence of the Shona.

Related to this change was the Western understanding of marriage. Marriage in the African traditional sense was the starting point of the family. It connected the two people getting married with the wider networks of the two families and the ancestors who had since passed on. The payment of *lobola/roora* was done to complete and strengthen this union. Mwandayi has written on the understanding of the Shona traditional marriage and argues that what made traditional marriages a respected and sacral union was that a legitimately contracted marriage was not just a union of the two who had entered the contractual obligation but it involved everyone, both the living and the dead of both families of the couple (Mwandayi 2017:9). Children were raised up in this corporate network of relationships. The missionaries' insistence on proper registered marriage and with missionary emphasis on what was called Christian marriage, without a proper understanding of the African worldview, impoverished the idea totally. Polygamous men were asked to let go their other wives and marry only one of them. Traditionally this was not possible. In African culture one cannot simply divorce his wife once customarily married. Further to that the insistence that payment of *lobola* was not Christian had a significant effect in alienating those who chose the new religion and new way of life.

4.4.2. Burial of the deceased

Wilson Sitshebo (2000) has carried out a critical research on the interface between the views of the Shona and missionaries with regards to death and burial. He observes that the effect of the missionary work at best worked to destroy innocent Shona practices without comprehensively offering alternatives. Death and burial rituals are but some of the Shona practices that suffered at the hands of missionaries. He argues that 'African customs from cradle to grave were banned because missionaries usually over-reacted to African village life and values because they had failed to penetrate and understand them, and some held the misconception that British civilisation and Christianity were almost identical' (Sitshebo 2000:98). In that ignorant spirit burial rites were also not spared. The issue of burial of the dead and location of graves divided people. This was in terms of dealing with grief and ways of taking part in the closing period of their loved ones' lives. According to the Shona, the dead and the living live alongside one another, and the siting of the grave site has a cultural significance in uniting the living and the dead. Sitshebo concludes that not only did this new religious practice deprive the Shona people of participation in the burial of their loved ones, it also deprived them of an opportunity to wrestle with their bereavement in a realistic

manner within the church structures (Sitshebo 2000:99). According to Sitshebo people had to find their own ways to mourn their relatives privately for fear of offending the missionaries and their new norms. With the new tenancy laws, graves had to be cited away from homesteads and, for the Shona this was problematic.

4.4.3. Transmission of knowledge

Transmission of knowledge was a preserve of the elders in an African society, and it was passed on from generation to generation. With the advent of mission station this passing on of knowledge changed from the traditional leadership to the missionary. Madhiba notes that with the introduction of formal education which was centred in the mission, the traditional knowledge systems, which included the value systems, were surplanted (Madhiba 2010:64). This had an effect on the content of what was taught. The school and the church took the centre stage at the expense of the *dare/idale* and the traditional passing on of knowledge from the older to the younger. Sitshebo's concern is however that both message and content assumed the superiority of the European teacher and emphasised the inferiority of the African (Sitshebo 2000:94) Further to that he observes that the African was viewed as a blank slate, ignorant and waiting to be filled, and to a greater extent that the education was religious aimed at eradicating the African religion, and replacing it with the western culture and religion (civilising) (Sitshebo 2000:95). This kind of approach had an effect of reducing the worth of an African and completely disorienting them culturally. The effect of these contradictions led to what Sitshebo defines as a phenomenon where the Shona adopted Christianity as a public religion, while maintaining traditional religion as a private but real religion (Sitshebo 2000:94).

4.4.4. Religious Dynamics of Community

On the religious front, the advent of the colonial rule and missionary work changed the religious dynamics of the society. In an African society there is no dichotomy between religion and other spheres of life such as politics, social life and economic life (Kaoma 2016:60). The religious aspect permeates all spheres of an African life. In the traditional society, the chiefs and mediums provided guidance on religious, social and political matters. They guided people on preparation for rains, for farming and provided direction on social issues, such as marriage and social cohesion. With the new system coming into play, centres changed, and new leaders emerged. The church became the new religious centre, the ministers and teachers became new leaders, providing guidance and

education. Considering that African society does not separate the religious from the secular, this had a serious effect on society, as the traditional leader's role was negatively affected. The assumption that indigenous people did not know God and had no religion, added to the confusion and the manner in which local people were engaged at Epworth. When Watkins and Shimmin arrived in Mashonaland, they were optimistic about the future of Methodism in Epworth, although they had negative and wrong perceptions about its people right from the outset. As Shimmin put it:

> The more I see the natives the more do I rejoice at the possibilities before us. They are in most deplorable ignorance of all true religion, but judging from their present attitude, they are most willing to learn and judging from appearances, they are likely to make sound and intelligent Christian believers (Zvobgo 1991:24).

The rules of the mission station were designed to completely remove the African from their natural environment, because it was believed that they were uncivilised and ignorant. The rules of tenancy, issues of marriage, payment of lobola and expectations were unsettling for the people in the mission. The premise on which the missionaries executed their work was poorly imagined and had adverse effect on the converts who joined the mission. They lost their relatives, and some had to see their wives off, things that were culturally and socially unimaginable. Lamin Sanneh argues that this concentration on missionary life as the model Christian life required converts to be dislodged from their cultural system and to be cast on the goodwill of missionaries. Converts suffered double jeopardy. They were uprooted from their culture but only to be cast on the fringes of the missionary community as adopted clients. Suddenly and unexpectedly, converts found themselves bogged down in an untenable contradiction, for the very attributes missionaries fashioned for them denied their roots in the societies of their birth. It was as if a stranger entered your home and declared you an alien there (Sanneh 2008:221). In effect a convert to Christianity lost their culture, their land and their people for what was not Christianity but Western individualistic culture, in the name of civilisation.

Converts also lost their religion. Despite the fact that they did not understand their faith in the western manor, Africans had a firm belief in God. It was a religion that permeated all aspects of their life, and not only a segmented one. This confession was made a Methodist missionary to Zimbabwe, the Rev S. D. Gray quoted in Zvobgo, wrote in 1917:

> It is customary to speak of the bantu as a heathen people but it perhaps well to qualify the term so used. If by heathen we signify those who do not believe in the true god, or whose knowledge of him is most elementary or confused, then the bantu may be included in the term, but they are not heathen in the sense of their having neither 'the fear nor the knowledge of god'. They undoubtedly have a religion and moreover they believe in it more intensely and live out its implications more regularly, than do many so-called Christians the tenets of their faith. In this part of Africa there are no temples; no idols form part of the household equipment, and even fetishes such as are found in the West Africa are not to be seen among the people. They have been able to maintain their religion without these aids. It was this absence of temples and idols and the outward signs of worship that led some of the early settlers to imagine that the people of Rhodesia had little or no religion (Zvobgo 1991:7).

This religion was not only strong but it was their life, economy and everything. The colonial administration and the missionary worked together to effectively weaken and destroy this religion, and replace it with experimental religion (Sanneh 2008:221). The missionaries taught them standards of cleanliness and hygiene, imbued them with polite manners and mild sentiments, and put them in European clothes but instead of feeling honoured and appreciated they felt violated and mocked. After all, that was not their culture, and they could ill afford to claim it on any other ground (Sanneh 2008:223).

In effect the onset of colonial era and missionary enterprise destroyed the co-existence of people among themselves and with their land and history. It destroyed the religious orientation that bound indigenous people together as a closely knit society. Through their religion they could articulate right or wrong, good and evil. They were in touch with nature, with each other and their ancestors as well as their still unborn children. In summary, colonialism and missionary entrance affected the religious fabric that held society together and created identity confusion for a long time.

Epworth is a project that was founded with excitement and hope. Much as it was expected to become a beacon of transformation, however the carrying out of the project had unintended effects and disappointing consequences which continue to haunt the Methodists to date. To add on to that was the colonial government's craftiness and insincere relationship with its missionary colleagues. The laws and regulations that were imposed on settlements, including the constant threats worked to frustrate the vision of Epworth.

The systems that were introduced and the land tenure instruments of the colonial system brought with it insecurity and uncertainty among the local population who for a long time enjoyed unrestricted access to land as a means of production and livelihood. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, for example sought to overtake traditional African tenure on land by introducing a system that put the colonial administration at an advantage. As Maposa has observed 'the colonial government wanted to end the traditional land tenure system so as to introduce the individual ownership system. The later white farming system was anchored on the ethic and spirit of western capitalism' (Maposa *et al* 2010:195). This approach was alien to the African and to the Shona in particular, who looked at land as their ancestral heritage and therefore communal. It had an effect on family life as it affected inheritance issues. Children born on plots especially on mission farms had no right to inherit their parents' plots, yet they were not assured of getting their own plots either even though they were Christian. They had to apply for land when they reached a certain age.

The new system created poverty which that hitherto did not exist among the Shona. The Land Tenure Act of 1969 ensured that each ethnic community had its own separate area. The new act created racial segregation on land, as more and much of the good land was reserved for a few white settlers while the majority of the indigenous people were gang pressed and abandoned in poor reserves. Maposa and others argue that the Land Acts and resultant dispossession was an artificial creation of poverty among Africans so that they would look for employment on the farms and in firms. The creation of Tribal Trust Lands alongside white farms was meant to create labour reserves for white settlers (Maposa *et al* 2010:195). Poor people had no option but to register for jobs as cheap laboureres. The levels of poverty increased under the new system, as all men were expected to either join industry, mines or farms as labourers, while women remained as subsistence farmers. Considering that livestock had to be trimmed, blacks were left poorer divested of their primary source of livelihood. As Madhiba argues:

> Even though churches in later years were at pains to explain to the nationalists and anti-colonial critics that the land they held was not being used for commercial profit but for the social advancement of Africans, missionaries imposed economic and social regulations on their properties, which clashed with the customs and traditions and restricted the economic advancement of their tenants so that the latter were forced to abandon their traditional homes and to fling themselves on the reserves which were invariably groaning under the weight of overpopulation and overstocking (Madhiba 2010:104).

Those families who did not agree with missionaries, ended up in reserves which often had poor soils. There was dislocation of families. The rules that governed land tenure, created uncertainty and anxiety among the people, who before used to live freely on the land. There were constant battles between the locals and the colonial administration with regards to tenure and land rights. As Sanneh argues, the mission dispossessed the African people of their natural ties without giving them a real stake in missionary culture (Sanneh 2008:223).

4.5. The War of liberation and mission work

4.5.1 Grievances

Three wars of resistance and liberation have been fought in Zimbabwe since the onset of colonialism. These wars have had similar or cumulative grievances leading up, or connected to them. The first liberation struggle, *Chimurenga* (Shona) *Umvukela* (Ndebele), occurred between 1896 and 1897. Prior to this, there had been an earlier war between the Ndebele and the settlers in 1893. This was caused by massive land expropriation, forced labour (Zvobgo 1980:20).

The second liberation struggle *Chimurenga/Umvukela* occurred between 1966-1979. There is current debate on the third *Chimurenga/Umvukela* of 2000, the fast-track land reform programme which saw land being taken over from white minority and redistributed to largely landless blacks (Sibanda and Maposa 2014). The first *Chimurenga*/*Umvukela* according to Tendi (2020), was not a collective, organised nationalist resistance to uniform European entry, but a multi-faceted series of separate fights staged by Africans against unjustified European taxes, cattle and land seizures and forced labour among other localised grievances (Tendi 2020:12). While the end of the first war saw the defeat of the Ndebele and Shona people and an upsurge in missionary work.

The second liberation war saw the defeat of white minority rule and brought about it a reversal of most colonial structures and systems with an effect on the missionary model of mission work. It challenged the *status quo* which leaned heavily on a minority regime. Banana characterises the crisis of the church as follows,

> many missionaries in the Methodist church, particularly the older ones, had a paternalistic attitude to their African flock and accepted without question the right of European settlers to govern for the foreseeable future. The only concern of the missionary was that the African be governed with charity, he asks, but how could a minority bent on entrenching

> its illegitimate control over the black majority be expected to display the face of charity? (Banana 1991:131).

The war of liberation saw a push for the reversal of dominance of the privileged minority and accommodation of the majority in political, social and economic space. It is in this context that mission farms and mission establishments have had to battle with issues of land occupation by people claiming that the land belonged to them and was wrongfully taken away by white settlers. The government has been resolute that church land must not be touched (Chitando 2005), but the reality on the ground is that many of the mission farms have been affected and including Epworth where land has been invaded (Methodist Farms Commission Report 2018:26).

The war of liberation was fought for a number of grievances by African which range from deep seated social, political, religious and economic injustices which were created and maintained by colonialism. The grievances included among others, land deprivation, limits on the number of cattle and maize that could be grown, inequalities in provision of education and health services and the general working and living conditions. These grievances will be considered in the ensuing discussion. At the core of the grievances leading to both wars were the questions of the land deprivation. From the onset of colonisation in 1890 land was taken away from the blacks and given to the European settlers. Subsequent legal instruments which will be discussed in fuller detail later, were enacted to effect intentional land deprivation of Africans in Zimbabwe. As Rev Canaan Banana has pointedly put it, to tamper with an African's land is to tamper with the heart of his faith, his culture and his livelihood (Banana 1991:143). By the 1969 as Banana has observed, land belonging to the white minority amounted to 181,424 square kilometres, while 182,099 square kilometres was allocated to blacks. This is despite the fact that whites were a tiny minority of about 271,000, while blacks were about 5 million. Racial segregation ensured that the white 5% of the population had half of the land, and the black 95% had the other half (Christopher 1971:143, Banana 1996: 122). As Kaome further observes, in traditional Africa, no individual claimed total ownership of the land. Besides, the African dimension', that is, 'worldview assumptions, attitudes to nature and society, and most especially their interrelationships was land centred. This cosmological dimension led to critical collective consciousness in colonial Africa, as Africans questioned the legitimacy of the colonial social order vis-a-vis their ancestral lands (Kaome

2016:68). This continued disregard for justice in the distribution of land incensed the African population such that they ultimately resorted to taking up arms.

The second grievance related to what Africans could do with the little land they were allocated. Africans had limited freedom in the manner they used land due to legal instruments and rules and regulations on the farm, what they used it for, the crops they were supposed to grow, the cattle they were supposed to keep even how much of that could be sold and for how much. This is not to mention the fact that an African had no security of tenure even on that piece of land in which they had been granted settlement. The same situation prevailed at the mission farms. Those who settled on mission farms could be removed at any time on while at the same time, they could not pass the piece of land to their sons as inheritance. Compounding the unfair land distribution was the fact that land allocated to the black population was unproductive, arid, with poor rainfall patterns. In some instances, it was tsetse fly infested. Further to that, legislation like the Maize Control Act of 1934 and the Land Husbandry Act of 1951 (Noble 2016:77, Zvobgo 1980, Duggan 1980) regulated what activities could be undertaken in the land. The Act enabled the state to govern blacks' cultivation patterns, it restricted cattle grazing to stipulated regions and it applied mandatory labour on jobless rural blacks amongst other racist measures (Tendi 2020:17). These measures included the number of livestock a family could keep, the amount of maize that could be produced or sold. The rest of the produce had to be sold to the settlers at prices determined by them.

This treatment of Africans disadvantaged them over their colonial counterparts who enjoyed government protection, besides the fact that their land lay in good rainfall regions and which were more productive. Certain taxes had to be paid to the new government, and these were to be paid in currency owned and managed by the settlers. This meant that the blacks had to look for employment on farms and mines in order to earn a living. The dispossession of land implied other adverse effects on the life of landless blacks. It meant that men had to seek employment from their white settler rulers while women had to do farming at home. Obviously, this division of labour had negative effects on crop yields. Reserves, which are the places where blacks were settled, were created alongside farms for easy access of labour force. The legislation that was enacted especially the Land Apportionment Act 1930 and the Land Tenure Act 1969, was instrumental in racially alienating the blacks over against the white settler community.

In addition to grievances earlier noted, there also was the discrimination regarding access to social services such as education and health. Rungano Zvobgo has written extensively on the colonial policy on education (Zvobgo 1980). He observes that for the ninety years of colonial rule, African education was provided by mission schools with a shoe-string budget while European Education enjoyed full support of the colonial government (Zvobgo 1980:71). For example, Chengetai Zvobgo (1981) records that European schools received government grants to cover half the salaries of the principal and other teachers and half the cost of equipment; African schools received no such assistance (Zvobgo 1981:13). The disparity is further exposed in the 1971 government expenditure on education. Zvobgo further observes that for example, in 1971, the government allocated $21,400,000 for African education and $20,299,000 for non-African education. With an African population of 4,817,950 and a non-African population of 252,414, the average expenditure was $5 for each African child and $80 for each non- African child. Between 1972 and 1977, state expenditure per pupil increased by $16 for Blacks and by $113 for white pupils (Zvobgo 1981:14). Besides this, government interfered with the curriculum of the African education, preferring industrial training instead of academic subjects. Government was intent on ensuring that blacks were less educated compared to their white counterparts. As Zvobgo argues, government was afraid that a wholly academic education would facilitate the growth of a class of Africans who would not only gravitate towards the professions but also engage in political activity. This was vindicated by the rise and role of some notable educated Africans in the political sphere, like Joshua Nkomo, Stanlake Samkange and Enock Dumbutshena among others (Zvobgo 1980:71). This disparity in provision of education saw missionaries and the government in constant conflict, since missionaries provided education in the rural areas. It was Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front government that finally took away missionary involvement in education in the period between 1963 and 1967 (Zvobgo 1980:249). Missionaries and churches had become a formidable threat to Smith's racial segregationist agenda. This requires some explanation.

The decade of the 1960s saw a significant shift in the politics of Southern Rhodesia, the rise of the rise of the nationalist spirit and the hardening of the colonial administration. These shifts had adverse effects on the work of mission. The end of federation (the coming together of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi) which begun in

1953 and ended in 1963 had seen a rise in a decolonisation drive in Southern African nations especially those under the Federation. Malawi became independent in 1963 and Zambia in 1964. This was not good news to Southern Rhodesia which had a more racist inclination compared to that of apartheid South Africa. In the 1962 General Election, an extreme right-wing Rhodesia Front Party led by Winston Field, who had led the Dominion Party at the 1959 General Election, decisively defeated Whitehead (Zvobgo 242). David Whitehead and his predecessor Garfield Todd had sought to reform the country's policies especially towards a more multi-racial stance with regards to education and employment which was the vision of the federation. His position was viewed as too liberal by the opposition and for that reason he lost the 1962 election. The coming of the Rhodesian Front led by Winston Field saw an aggressive implementation of racial segregation laws. These included limiting what missionaries and churches could do in schools. The entrance of the Rhodesia Front led to dramatic changes in government and missionary policies on the administration and organisation of secondary education (Zvobgo 1980:243). From 1963 the party began to reorganise its systems to suite its vision and political ideology which sought to foster separate development. As pertaining schools, the government issued four critical directives:

i. the complete transference of the responsibility for the development and administration of primary education from the churches to African local councils, with the objective of making people in each rural district develop their own education in terms of their priorities for development,

ii. Those churches which were unwilling to hand over their rural primary schools to local councils were allowed to maintain and operate them but only on behalf of the community. However, in such cases, government grants or any other form of assistance provided for the schools would no longer be given directly to the missionaries but would instead be channelled through the local councils which would determine how missionaries could use them (Zvobgo 1980:253).

iii. After 1967 no church could be allowed to open new primary schools in rural areas: only local councils could do so. However, the independence of local councils in determining primary educational development was restricted in one important area - they could not determine curricula (Zvobgo 1980:253).

iv. The decision on what was to be taught and how it was to be taught was entirely in the hands of the Central Ministry of Education (Zvobgo 1980:254).

The churches were under serious pressure to decide on the recommendations they had never been consulted on. In 1969 the Smith government announced it would cut primary school grants by five percent and the gap was to be paid by parents. This slap in the face of the churches was against the backdrop of missionaries complaining that the grants were not enough. As Peaden (1979) reports: under protest, preparations were made for handing over primary schools to African councils and local boards of parents. On 31 December 1970, most major denominations, apart from the Dutch Reformed Church, the Salvation Army, and the Mashonaland diocese of the Anglican Church, ceased to be the responsible authorities for primary education (Peaden 1979:207). Effectively, by 1970 all primary schools held by missionaries and churches were effectively transferred to councils. This included Methodist schools like Epworth. This abruptly ended a period of over seventy years of the church's service to the community. What it effectively meant was the churches could not disturb government on the quality of education or its content. The questions of racial parity were silenced once and for all. The churches made attempts to persuade the government but to no avail. Teachers tried to mobilise parents to reject the changes but this was not successful. What Smith and his government achieved was to give local councils false hope that they were now in charge of their own development, yet in essence he had succeeded in removing churches which had on several occasions managed to advocate for better education for Africans. The councils were not adequately funded and had no other sources of income. In effect that achieved a goal of less resourced African education versus a well-funded European education.

The disparity in working and living conditions of Africans was a further concern leading to the war. Mothibe records that from the beginning 1940s there was an upsurge in strikes and mass actions by workers across the country, and particularly in 1951 during which 104 disputes were recorded involving over 6000 workers. He further argues that the causes of these disputes were no longer confined to low wages alone, but they encompassed general living conditions as well (Mothibe 1993:232). Africans were discriminated against in terms of the kind of jobs they could aspire to enter, and the salaries they earned. As Zvobgo observes under the country's wage structure, whites were guaranteed high salaries irrespective of either their qualifications or the nature of the job they performed (Zvobgo1980:179). Most of the Africans worked in emerging industries, farms and mines.

The working conditions on farms and mines were poor, and the treatment of black workers was highly unfair. The symptoms of these poor working conditions included the shortage of reasonable accommodation, poor diet, inadequate hospital facilities, very high accident and morbidity rates, non-payment of wages, brutalisation and wanton abuse (Makambe 1994:81). Sibanda and Maposa describe how life on farms was dehumanising, when they aver thus, 'if any of them (workers) ran away, one was tracked, recaptured and thoroughly beaten with a *sjambok*, the hippo-hide whip. This demonstrated the ways of the entire colonial system, in short, it was brutal and de-humanising to African people' (Sibanda and Maposa 2014: 57). This racially skewed treatment of black people was among many of the grievances that brought about conflict and war. The same period saw the rise of militant labour movements, protesting for the rights of workers.

The other grievance leading to the war was the franchise system through which voting was conducted. From its inception the colonial government consisted of a few settlers ruling over the majority of the African native population. Godfrey Huggins expressed the depth of disdain over Africans by suggesting that the only form of partnership that could exist between blacks and whites was the kind of relationship existing between "a horse and a rider" (Zvobgo 1980:170). In essence the thinking was that Africans were not qualified and ready to participate in issues of governance. They were only supposed to be told what to do. For the white community black people could not vote because they did not understand issues of democracy.

A two-tier voters' roll existed, the A and B Rolls. To qualify for the A roll for example one needed to earn 720 pounds per year income and own immovable property valued at 1,500 pounds plus basic literacy to enable the applicant to complete the application form in English and without assistance. To qualify for the B roll, one needed 150 pounds per year in income plus immovable property valued at 500 pounds plus basic literacy; or, 120pounds per year income, no property required but a two-year secondary education (Zvobgo 1980:181). Zvobgo records that in 1953 only 441 Southern Rhodesian Africans, out of a total black population of two 2,75million were able to vote, compared to 48,870 whites with franchise out of a total white population of 219,0003 (Zvobgo 1980:183). These disparities show clearly how the system favoured a few white people over the black. The effect of this franchise was that Africans; inspite of their population density

had little or no influence over the policies of their governance. A few white people decided for the majority black people. This disparity among other issues gave rise to nationalism in Zimbabwe.

4.5.2 Missionary Role

Missionaries have often been accused of collaboration with the colonialists in the subjugation of the African population and cultural intrusion (Robert 2009:87). It must be clarified that the advent of colonialism was intrusive by its very nature to the indigenous population and missionaries benefited to a certain degree in the process by acquiring land and other support services for the mission work. The Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893 and first *Chimurenga/Umvukela* of 1896/7 were fought as a resistance to the cultural, political and economic dominance of the colonial government, and although the indigenous people lost the war, their anger and bitterness was not quenched. Mission work suffered from being conflated with the power dynamics of the colonial system. It was the view of the indigenous people that the white religion was as evil as the white government which was oppressive and segregative. To worsen this perception, when missionaries established their stations, they maintained similar racially segregative structures, in which the white missionary lived in a separate well-built house away from the natives, usually up hill, in a brick and zinc house. Evangelists and black co-workers dwelt in lower houses usually of mud and thatch, the rest of mission dwellers lived in the village, distant from the missionary. The mission had similar rules of tenure, which included rent, and a number of dos and don'ts, be kept if one wanted to retain their permission to stay. When they had fellowship, the white missionary would have a cup of tea on a proper cup, sitting on a table, while his black counterparts sat down, and drank tea from tins. Plumtree circuit in one of its resolutions in response to Rev Jesse Lawrence's call for more young people to commit to ministry lamented low wages, which they saw as inadequate. They further pointed out that European ministers were supplied with vehicles whereas African ministers were supplied with bicycles. Worse off were evangelists who were expected to find their own transport (Gondongwe 2011:9). Missionaries were as segregative as their counterparts in the treatment of Africans.

In essence, the advent of colonialism and coincidental arrival of missionaries divided the local people, with others joining the missionaries, while others felt that the missionaries were as enemies just as their kith and kin in government. In Epworth, Chiremba people became divided in the same

way. Some wanted to fight the missionaries together with their colonial friends, while Chiremba himself helped to protect the missionaries and as a result he had to flee to the laager for protection during the 1896/7 war. Modumedi Moleli in another Methodist Mission in Nenguwo, was martyred in similar circumstances trying to save a white farmer, Mr James White (Graaff 1988:113). Unfortunately, local people felt he was a sellout and they killed him as well.

Deep divisions were a result of perceptions and missionaries seen as being no different from the colonial settler. This perception fuelled the African claim that missionaries were the spiritual wing of colonialism, to use Gundani's words (Gundani 2002: 156). The same perception has had a long-lasting negative impact on mission work until today. It is true that colonialists and missionaries were friends, but it must be accepted that they were 'strange bed fellows' (Gondongwe 2011). It is therefore important to view the contribution of the missionaries and church holistically. Missionaries and the church as we shall now turn to, contributed significantly to the well-being of the African population and sometimes even standing as advocates of their rights.

4.5.3 The Methodist church and its involvement in the liberation struggle

The church and missionaries' reaction to colonial injustices and ill treatment of blacks was mixed. The prospects of war brought about a divided response from the church as evidenced by its reaction. This is not without reason. The missionaries were involved in both the dispossession of land as they needed the support of the colonial government to access land for their development. Viewed from the other side, from the early periods, it is evident that the church was involved in contesting unfair land distribution and challenged racial prejudice (Madhiba 2010:3, Chitando 2005:188). The issue is one of the degree to which they sided with indigenous people and how vigorously the church fought for black emancipation. There is evidence also of missionary involvement in attempts to redress these colonial imbalances. As early as 1920s, we see the active involvement of the church and African Christians as they sought to resist further colonial domination and segregative agenda. John White, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary and Arthur Shearly Cripps, an Anglican poet and visionary, offered resolute opposition to racial segregation which was being introduced (Gundani 2019:1, Madhiba 2010:3, Chitando 2005:188). In the same vein it was in the church that the earliest political activists emerged, as evidenced by the likes of

Joshua Nkomo a Methodist preacher and Ndabaningi Sithole a United Church of Christ cleric. These became prominent nationalists and resistance voices against the system of government that segregated against the blacks.

The period between the 1950 to the 1960s saw an increased consciousness among blacks as well as their desire to self-govern. This development coincided with other African countries gaining independence. This consciousness was also simmering within the churches and it was dominating debates in Synods. As usual, the church was always cautious in its approach, largely because the white counterparts were still dominating the church leadership. Younger white missionaries brought a new radical dimension which had far reaching consequences. For example, Rev Whitfield Foy spoke strongly for racial justice and this resulted in his circuit campaigning for his transfer and in 1960 he was transferred. The British parent conference reading the signs of the times, appointed the first African Rev Andrew Ndhlela to head the District in Zimbabwe. This attracted negative response from predominantly white friends who felt that enough consultation had not been made. For them, that is the white members of the church, black people were not able to lead (Banana 1991:130). Rev Andrew Ndhlela's assumption of the leadership brought with it hope that change was imminent, however as Banana argues, Andrew Ndhlela was pre-occupied with church unity at the expense of a resolute stand against racism and white minority rule. A quote from Rev Andrew Ndhlela which appeared in the *Rhodesia Herald* of November 5th 1970 makes this position firm, in his comment on the Programme to Combat Racism, he said:

> If the World Council of Churches has spare funds to help overseas people, the money should be used for church projects. The World Council of Churches action did not accord with the Christian teaching of peace and harmony among nations. Racism is an evil which has to be overcome, but the advocacy of physical force will only further mistrust between the races and misery among the people (Banana 1991:140).

Clearly the head of the church was in an unenviable position to unite a church, where unity and peace meant maintaining the status quo. What Rev Andrew Ndhlela achieved was to hold the church together during a difficult time and provide the confidence for other black people to continue with the struggle.

As political tension escalated in the 1960s, the church became more and more involved in the fight for racial justice and this happened as white settlers in power shifted from an outward posture of

paternalism toward the African majority to that of overt racialism (Thomas 1985:114). This tension was not without negative effects on its mission efforts. With the victory of Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front in 1962, political dynamics changed. A major instigator of the war was the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Ian Smith's Government on the 11th of November 1965 (Zvobgo 2005). This declaration came in the context of the collapse of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963, leading to the independence of Zambia and Malawi. It also came in the context of the failed negotiations between Rhodesia Front (Ian Smith's Party) and the British Labour government. Labour being sensitive to the developments in Southern Africa in particular and Africa in general, was shy of giving independence to a minority white party when other African countries were gaining independence. Smith, according to Zvobgo, was keen to save Rhodesia. Since Zambia and Malawi had already gained their independence it was clear the tide was rising and Southern Rhodesia would soon follow (Zvobgo 2005:382, Hungwe 1994). In essence the white minority in Rhodesia was in complete denial mode regarding the trends and the independence wave in Africa. This is evidenced by what Huggins had said in response to a motion which called on the Federal government to legislate for the equality of all races in public places. Huggins, who was the federal president described the motion as "mischievous", he argued 'you cannot expect the Europeans to form up in a queue with dirty people.' He proposed that instead 'let us recognise at once that there is going to be inequality, and there is going to be differentiation' (Hungwe 1994:18). This entrenched and deep-seated racism was the catalyst to the demise of the federation, and the rise of the nationalist spirit.

With Ian Smith declaring the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, the church, alongside other ecumenical players like the Rhodesia Council of Churches (CCR), led the churches in opposition to this move. The Council sought to strike a balance between being radical and supporting the liberation struggle outright and being pacifist. In its statement on the 26th November 1965 the council declared: 'We call men in Rhodesia and beyond its borders to abstain from violence and bloodshed, and we call our own people to pursue their daily duty peacefully and share fully whatever privations and difficulties may come to us' (Thomas 1985:123). This opposition was not without its challenges. UDI brought a lot of division and tension in Southern Rhodesia and churches were caught in the confusion. Bishop Cecil Alderson rejected UDI, but he acknowledged that the Anglican Church was divided over UDI. In October 1967 he stated:

> It is a mistake to suppose the Church as a whole is opposed to UDI and that goes for the clergy too. The greater part of the white communicant population probably supports the present de facto government, whatever they may have thought of the original act. Churchmen are found both strongly for and against. The African Christians say very little. But everything they say indicates very little sympathy with the Government's policies (Zvobgo 2005:384).

The Methodist response shared a similar stance because of the strong white element within it. It supported the government, while many stood with the ecumenical sentiment and formation against the UDI. This led to a resolution which sought to strike balance between criticism and neutrality, and Banana called this "politics of compromise". Synod 1966 had the following resolution:

> The conscience of the church in Rhodesia was deeply disturbed by the unlawful declaration of independence towards the end of 1965. We are all called to prayer to seek God's mind in guiding the minds of the British and Rhodesian Christians. Our glory is in the Lord and the expressions of love towards one another (Banana 1991:133).

The church's resistance to the Unilateral Declaration of Independence was not without consequences. It led to the church losing most of its grip on education. The government reacted by taking away most of the primary schools (Madhiba 2010:4). In 1969, Ian Smith's Rhodesian government, uneasy with the church's criticism of the illegal and Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 and angered by missionary support for the guerrilla movement, reduced the grant made for teachers' salaries in mission schools. By 1970, with three minor exceptions, denominational education in the country had largely ceased to exist (MaCkenzie 1993:50).

One of the programmes that highlighted the division within the church's response was the World Council of Churches programme to Combat Racism (Mufamadi 2011, Banana 1991). In October 1969, the World Council of Churches convened a special consultation on Zimbabwe in Notting Hill, England. To this meeting, they invited former Prime Minister of Rhodesia and a Church of Christ Missionary Garfield Todd, an exiled Zimbabwean and a Professor of History at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, and a Methodist, Nathan Shamuyarira, and Rev Canaan Banana who was a Methodist Minister, and the then Chairman of Bulawayo Council of Churches and Chairman of the Southern Africa contact group on Urban and Rural Mission (Banana 1991:138). Unfortunately Rev Banana was denied the opportunity to attend by the regime. It was after this consultation that the World Council of Churches decided to contribute in its way to the fight for

racial justice. This was the so-called Programme to Combat Racism (PCR). The programme provided financial resources to various International civil rights organisations including Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) which were the two major political formations fighting for liberation in Zimbabwe. The funds were intended to be used for the humanitarian programmes such as education, shelter and medical supplies. To the majority of mainly white Methodists, this represented a support of violence, and the programme was a litmus test for the church's resolve to deal with racial injustices. The following resolution of Synod, represents such an attitude: The Synod of the Methodist church in Rhodesia believes that Christians ought not to support violence in any form. Whilst acknowledging that racism is an evil to be overcome, we believe that application of physical force will not bring this about (Banana 1991:139). There however were voices that sought to challenge such impartiality, Rev Stephen Manguni, Canaan Banana and Dr Hebert Ushewokunze reacted in the following words:

> 'the silence of many church leaders on the issue of injustice in Rhodesia makes nonsense of their current outbursts against the Christian Council of Rhodesia (CCR) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).... When did the good gentleman (White church leaders) use their pulpits to condemn oppression, injustice and even the violence inherent in our society? Their silence on these issues makes nonsense of their current outbursts and one can only assume that maintaining the status quo is more important to them than fighting for justice and peace' (Banana 1991:141).

Rev Banana later resigned his ministerial role in protest against the lack of resolute action and partiality within the church.

Related to the Program to Combat Racism was the decision whether to provide chaplaincy to the armed forces or guerrillas. In a similar vein this position divided the church with mostly white colleagues advocating for the church to offer chaplaincy as a pastoral responsibility. They urged the church to separate religion and politics, on the other hand voices like Banana differed, arguing that if the church condemned UDI it followed that the Smith regime had ceased to be legitimate. The church was torn in between; however, it was clear where the lines could be drawn. There were sympathetic views of the *status quo*, and unfortunately these sought to overshadow the cries for liberation among the black majority who were suffering under a small privileged minority.

The liberation war had other practical effects on missions and particularly Epworth. Despite the Land Tenure Act of 1969, Epworth remained a place where blacks could reside in an area

otherwise designated for white people. As mentioned earlier, Epworth was not as regulated as other settlements around Harare. The effect of war in the rural areas meant that people had to find shelter in urban areas, where the threat was limited. Epworth welcomed people fleeing from the war, many who were their relatives. The church was flexible out of sympathy and allowed residents to welcome their relatives into their homes. This meant that more and more people came to stay at Epworth, at first for a short time, but as the war continued, people ended up settling, and that meant taking up residential stands.

The church's role in the liberation was unquestionable. However, what may be argued is the degree of involvement. Synods from time to time, raised critical resolutions on issues of racial segregation and oppression of the people. There was a significant number of active players within the church during the liberation struggle such as the likes of Joshua Nkomo, Rev Canaan Banana, Rev Stephen Manguni, Josiah Chinamano and Nathan Shamuyarira. There were those opposed in explicit involvement, especially in support of the militant struggle. In terms of orientation the church was unanimous in opposing a minority, racially prejudiced government. It differed on the degree of involvement.

4.5.4 Legal Instruments used during the Colonial Era

Issues regarding the land and missionary history in Zimbabwe are closely related (Robert 2009:107). This is equally so at Epworth where the advent of missionary work was closely related with the colonisation process and the resultant dispossession of land, with a significant effect on the social, religious, economic and political life of the people who used to make the land their home. Legal instruments were used conveniently to justify the illegal dispossession land and treatment of the indigenous people. As evidence will show all the instruments were biased against the blacks. It will therefore be in that spirit to trace the legal instruments that empowered the colonial government to expropriate, allocate and administer land in Zimbabwe. Land tenure and use had an effect in the life of mission in Zimbabwe in general and at Epworth in particular, both positively and negatively. Positively in the sense that the colonial administration had the power to grant land for mission work. Missionaries were granted land to carry out their missionary activities by the colonial government and Epworth is one such grant. Negatively, in that in expropriating land from blacks, residents lost ownership and title to their land. In essence, they awkwardly

became tenants in their homeland and beneficiaries of the missionary benevolence. That had the consequence of disempowering and disorienting the indigenous people, who before enjoyed unfettered access to land and to development. In African understanding, land belonged to the community, to the ancestors and to the future lineage, it embodied both spiritual aspects of the community. In some areas like Epworth, changes in the laws paused threats to their life and livelihood. Considering that Epworth lay on what was now the European lands, residents had to live under constant fear of being ejected.

At the core of the problems associated with land tenure, use and title was the worldview. The Europeans and their missionary counterparts had a different worldview to the use of land vis-à-vis that of an African. The African saw land tenure and use from a significantly different angle, as communally owned, belonging to ancestors and indivisible, while a Western view, saw land as individual property. This was the root cause of conflict for a long time. It is for these reasons that both the wars of liberation, the Anglo-Ndebele of 1893 the *Chimurenga* in Shona and *Umvukela* in Ndebele wars were fought. The first (1896-7) the second (1960s to 1979) and the third (2000 - 2009). Cheater quoting Moyana makes this critical observation:

> In African cosmology such an important natural endowment as land does not have a marketable value. Prior to the advent of colonial rule in the country now known as Zimbabwe, the prevailing African land tenure system vested land rights in a corporate group which had overriding rights over those of the individual. The king or chief served as the Trustee who allocated land to new comers and ensured that its use was in harmony with the traditional land tenure formula. The traditional land tenure system also accepted that land rights were inalienable. Land belonged to the living and to the unborn as well as to the dead. No member of a group could sell or transfer land to an outsider as land was considered a natural endowment in the same category as rain, sunlight and the air we breathe. In this economy there could be no commodity more valuable than land and no circumstances in which it could be profitable to dispose of it. In short, land had no exchange value. ... The belief that to dispose of land was sacrilege was widely held. Individual ownership was inconceivable as every man was and still is entitled to the natural endowment mentioned above (Cheater 1990:189).

The current challenges at Epworth relate to this, people still claim that even if the land was bought by missionaries, it still belongs to their ancestors, because it was improperly acquired.

A number of instruments were used to dispossess, redistribute and govern land use and settlement from 1891 to the time of independence in 1980. Eight legal instruments will be briefly considered

as they had a significant effect on mission work and the life of people in Zimbabwe and Epworth in particular.

4.5.4.1 The Royal Charter of 1889

The Royal Charter was granted to the British South Africa Company by the British government in 1889 after the signing of the Rudd Concession of 1888 between the company and Chief Lobhengula. Scholars (Chitando 2005, Maenzanise 2008, Murdoch 2015) have observed that missionaries played a critical part in the process of the signing of this treaty. Rev Charles Daniel Helm of the London Missionary Society not only appended his signature as witness, but also endorsed the treaty, he is said to have made the following endorsement:

> I hereby certify that the accompanying document has been fully interpreted and explained by me to the Chief Lobhengula and his full Council of Indunas and that all the Constitutional usages of the Matabele Nation had been complied with prior to his executing same (Maenzanise 2008:77)

The British were wary of the Portuguese in the east and the Germans who were competitors in the scramble for a land in Matebeleland and Mashonaland which promised to have significant deposits of gold, dubbed the second Rand after the one that had been discovered in Transvaal. However, for the British, finances for executing the project were depleted and they were not ready to go up and annex the territory. They found in Rhodes someone who had the men, the money and the burning ambition to push the sphere of British influence north of the Limpopo (Palmer 1971:44). When Rhodes applied for permission to go up the Limpopo in the name of the Crown, that permission was granted in the form of the Royal Charter. The Royal Charter of 1889 became the first piece of legislation that authorised the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to occupy the territory between the Limpopo and the Zambezi rivers and to exercise governmental authority over it. The Charter authorized the BSAC to take and divide the land and make grants to white settlers (Chigora and Guzura 2008:514). The Charter was premised on the basis of a hastily signed Rudd Concession of 1888 in which Lobhengula had been tricked and pressured to sign (Madhiba 2010). The Charter conferred administrative, legislative and judicial powers as well as powers to acquire and dispose land (Best and Zinyama 1985: 421).

The BSAC relied on Article 14 to justify their actions, which read:

> Careful regard shall always be made to the custom and laws of the class or tribe or nation to which the parties respectively belong, especially with regard to the holding, possession,

> transfer and disposition of lands, and estate or intestate succession thereto' (Chigora and Guzura 2008:515).

The Charter had by this clause sought to protect the indigenous population, but as the process of occupation began, to a large extent this clause was disregarded.

4.5.4.2 Matebeleland Order in Council 1894 and 1898

The second of the instruments that left a significant impact on land tenure and distribution were the Orders in Council of 1894 and another of 1898. The Matebeleland Order in Council of 1894 came as a result of indiscriminate plunder of land and livestock by the BSAC following the defeat of the Ndebele in the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893. The war was a Ndebele response to increased plunder of Ndebele resources by the Company, the influx of the Europeans, and the interference in Mashonaland. At the fall of the Ndebele, the Company rewarded those who had participated in the war by giving them large tracts of land and cattle looted from the Ndebele. This clandestine expropriation of land and cattle was creating other problems unforeseen earlier, such as the lack of land to settle the defeated Ndebele. To address these unforeseen challenges and difficulties a land commission was set up to come up with proposals (Palmer 1971:46). On 18th of July 1894, the British promulgated the Matabeleland Order in Council which provided for the delimitation of the territory under the company's rule. Section 49 of the order provided for the establishment of a Land Commission to assign land to Africans (Chigora and Guzura 2008:516). This order gave way to the creation of the first reserves which were Gwaai and Shangani to which the Ndebele were settled. Much of this land was not suitable for habitation as it lacked sufficient water and in some cases was infested with tsetse flies.

A further Order in Council was enacted, the Southern Rhodesia Order Council of 1898 (Nyandoro 2019:113), this was now a national order incorporating Mashonaland as well. At this point, land expropriated by white settlers amounted to 23.4% of the total national land of which 26% was declared native reserve, implying that this was the land available to indigenous population. This land became the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). The Tribal Trust Lands were badly watered, sandy and largely unfit for human settlement (Chigora and Guzura 208:517). Through this instrument segregation in the form of land holdings had begun. The instrument created what became European areas and black areas called the reserves.

4.5.4.3 1918 Privy Council Declaration

The third instrument arose in the context of the question of unalienated land. The BSAC wanted to be granted authority over unalienated land. This was the land which had not yet been allocated either to the blacks or the white settlers. In addition, the BSAC wanted to be compensated by the British Crown for its role in the administration of the colony ever since it was established in 1890. Meanwhile there was a growing debate in the colony on the need for political rule as opposed to company administration. The increase in population of the African community was posing a threat to the European land. Noble notes that the BSAC was under triplesided pressure comprising, a) the settlers who wanted to reduce reserve land and purportedly increase their land for agricultural purposes, b) The BSAC Company which was under pressure to liquidate land since there was little gold available, and c) the Africans, who through taxation and tenure security were being pushed into the reserves and the least fertile areas of land (Noble 2016:20). The land alienated to white people on 4th August 1914, measured approximately 21,000 000 acres, whilst about 70, 000 000 occupied by indigenous people within and without the Reserves was designated "unalienated" land. It was to this 70, 000 000 acres of Southern Rhodesian land that the Chartered Company laid claim as a commercial asset of the shareholders (Harris 1920: 133). In effect, it was a case of the Company and its fellow settler colleagues fighting over African land at the exclusion of the *bona fide* owners, the Africans themselves.

In 1918 the Judicial Committee sat and decided that all property rights to the land no longer belonged to the BSAC, nor to the indigenous people. "By virtue of conquest" all land now belonged to the Crown (Nobel 2016:21). The British Privy Council held that Africans had no tittle to land (Nyandoro 2019:113). In addition to this, the Crown ruled that the BSAC be compensated. The company won and indigenous people lost. This instrument effectively took away the right of Africans to the land of their forefathers.

4.5.4.4 Land Apportionment Act 1930/31

The fourth instrument as regards land rights was the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. This act was a by-product of the Morris Carter Commission, which had been appointed to investigate the utilisation of unalienated land. Soon after the BSAC gave way to the responsible government,

Charles Coghlan the first Prime Minister, appointed the so-called Morris Carter Commission in 1925 to investigate the utilisation of unalienated land in Southern Rhodesia. The Commission's report was issued in 1926 and its recommendations became law in 1930 which became known as the Land Apportionment Act (Gundani 2019:4). The Land Apportionment Act sought to segregate and divide land permanently on the basis of race. The European settler was convinced that an African did not matter. '…until the native has advanced very much on the path of civilization, it is better that the points of contact between the two races be reduced (Carry and Mitchelle 1977-1980) in other words there was not supposed to be contact between whites and blacks. Blacks who resided in perceived white areas had to be moved to pave way for the white settlers. Nyandoro highlights the effect, this Act had on the population, in Rhodesdale (Nyandoro 2019). Under the Land Apportionment Act, Europeans who constituted 6% of the total population controlled 35% of land and the land available to Africans was mostly in low rainfall areas and away from towns, roads and railways (Mosley 2007:3). As Chigora and Guzura observe, this Act rescinded the Africans' rights to land ownership anywhere in the colony and as compensation, they were given the right to purchase land in the Native Purchase Areas (Chigora and Guzura 2008:518). The Africans were not all economically able to purchase the land. Many remained in the poor unfertile and unproductive land.

The church's position was at most indifferent to the legislation. The very fact that the colonial government had dispossessed blacks did not matter much, at least the church advocated for training of blacks in new agricultural methods, but this ignored the fact that they had been put on less productive land, and secondly that their heritage had been taken away. The following is a quote from the Synod minutes in 1920:

> The Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Rhodesia, assembled inSalisbury, in January 1920, urges upon the Administration of this country the desirability and importance of undertaking as early as possible, some definite form of Agricultural training for the Natives of the territory (Synod Minutes, 3 January, 1920, WMA).

In the same year, 1920, Synod made another request to the settler government, "The Synod also requests the Administration to consider the question of facilitating for natives the purchase of land from the Government" (Synod Minutes, 3 January,1920, WMA). The church's view was clearly not opposed to the dispossession of the indigenous people, on the contrary it accepted colonial authority as legitimate.

4.5.4.5 Maize Control Act of 1934

The Maize Control Act came in to control the production and marketing of maize. Maize was a critical commodity in Southern Rhodesia (Vickery 1985). The Government of Southern Rhodesia had encouraged productivity on the land and particularly maize-growing by the indigenous population. However, as indigenous people began to produce enough maize this created competition with white farmers with regards to marketing. This led government to intervene by enacting the Maize Control Act of 1934 which made it impossible for indigenous people to sell their products at ordinary market rates. The indigenous farmers would sell their Maize to white intermediaries who then sold to the region at a much higher prices, and by that the white farmers had an economic urge over the pblacks. Under the circumstances, blacks were then forced to buy back their own grain at a higher price per bag than that at which they had sold it. Manzungu and Machiridza argue that African farmers were forced to subsidise white farmers (Manzungu and Mchiridza 2005:3). The act disadvantaged the Africans in that their normal agricultural and economic life cycle was frustrated, in order to benefit their white counterparts,' as a result white agriculture blossomed. This was a grossly unfair disenfranchisement of the indigenous people. Indigenous people were forced to participate in an imposed economic contract with terms they were not able to negotiate. While they used to grow enough for their consumption, that right was taken away from them. The church's response was to plead with government to consider the suffering of the people. The minutes of the Synod in that year read: It was resolved that, "... Synod approach the Government concerning the great suffering among Native people caused by the new Maize Control Act. The selling price is too low and the buying price too high" (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (31-32) Synod Minutes, 14 January, 1932).

4.5.4.6 Land Husbandry Act

The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 was enacted in a guise to ensure productivity in land that was owned by Africans, yet in effect it was a way of interfering with the African life. A commission on native production and trade purported to focus on Native improvement, led by Godlonton in 1944, gave birth to the Native Land Husbandry Act. Of 1951 (Nyandoro 2019). The Act's promulgation was a result of a belief in the philosophy that communal land tenure led to misuse of land. As such, it was believed that security of individual tenure would give Africans the incentives to adopt 'good husbandry' and maximise production on the land. Through this act,

Africans had to earn the right to be on the land by producing to a certain level. In order for them to get the right of tenure, peasants had to get a permit to cultivate land called a 'farming right' and a permit to graze called a 'grazing right' (Tshuma 1997:25). Only people who were actually working a piece of land in an area at the time of its implementation received land. Without a permit, the cultivation or grazing of livestock was illegal. However, these rights expired on the death of a holder and were not disposable of by will. In other words, despite the claim that the act empowered Africans, vis-à-vis land ownership, it did not allow them permanent 'ownership' on the same terms as their white counterparts (Chigora and Guzura 2008: 518).

The challenge paused by the act was that it worked against African understanding of land tenure and use. For Africans, land is part of life and under no circumstances can one be told that because they are not productive, they have lost their right to land. A similar approach was employed at the mission farm, where title was dependent upon keeping of rules and was limited to the title holder, children were not entitled to the same they had to look for land. In effect the Land Husbandry Act was a further frustration of the already battered Africans.

4.5.4.7 The Land Tenure Act of 1969

The land Tenure Act was introduced to repeal the 1931 Land Apportionment Act. By 1961 opposition to the Land Apportionment Act of 1931, which had divided Rhodesia on racial grounds, was growing, and the Government started to consider ways of lessening the apparent inequalities (Christopher 1971:140). This the colonial government did by allowing certain land to be made available to blacks to purchase, especially those that were able to. This attempt was not as successful as was intended. In 1962 a radical all white Party the Rhodesia Front won the elections in Rhodesia and it was led by Winston Field with Ian Smith as his deputy. The elections were fought on issues of land and the British government who were seemingly becoming sympathetic to Africans taking overpower. This was happening in the context of many former colonies gaining independence through out Africa. The rise of the Rhodesia Front stopped any concessions on land for the blacks. And when Ian Smith rose to power in 1964, he rebelliously declared independence from Britain, the so-called Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) This declaration heightened tensions on both issues of land balance and issues of self-rule among Africans. This

directly provoked the armed struggle as a means to force the white minority regime to concede black majority rule.

Smith had hoped a settlement would be made with the British government, and by 1969 it seemed improbable. In an attempt to douse the heat, Smith's government introduced a kind of balance in parliament, a situation where all races were to be equally represented. This was despite the fact that Europeans were a significant minority. This parity was also extended to land distribution. It came about as an economic strategy which arguably put into account the fact that Europeans produced better for commercial purposes. The idea of parity ignored that the blacks constituted 95% of the total population while whites constituted a mere 5%. The following is the representation of ownership of land in the context of Land Tenure Act of 1969. European land in 1969 was 18 205 924hactares, while African land was 18 202 523hectares (Christopher 1971:143). This goes to show the disparity in land ownership between the majority black indigenous population and the white settler minority. This particular Act divided land strictly on racial lines, no white person could own land in a black area and the same for blacks (Zvobgo 2005:387). At most the Act was an introduction of racial segregation. The Act limited interaction and enforced separate development.

The church's reaction to this piece of legislation is summarised by Zvobgo argues as follows, that there was no single piece of legislation passed by the Rhodesian Parliament during this period that aroused as much passion among church leaders as the Land Tenure Act of 1969 (Zvobgo 2005:387). The church vehemently opposed the Act as segregative.

4.5.4.8 The Lancaster House Settlement of 1979

The Lancaster House Agreement was an attempt to end the war. The conference was called against the backdrop of so much loss of life and the devastation to the economy following a raging war in which the minority Rhodesian government was increasingly coming under intense pressure militarily and diplomatically. It was therefore to address the issues that had led to a bitter guerrilla war in which limp and life had been lost. Land imbalances was the major one and other colonial policies that had disadvantaged the African over against the European settler counterparts.

The Patriotic Front which was a political formation made up of ZANU and ZAPU was forced to agree to a willing seller and willing buyer model on the issues of land. The agreement regulated the transfer of land on a willing seller willing buyer basis. Sibanda illustrates the extent of the land disparities in the following words, 'At independence 1.2 million blacks lived on 19.8 million hectares. Eight thousand five hundred (8.500) black small scale and commercial farmers owned 1.6 million hectares whilst 4500 white largescale commercial farmers owned 12 million hectares in a country with a total land area of 39, 6 million hectares' (Sibanda 1991:152). Although the Agreement provided a way for a cease fire, it did not exhaustively deal with the gross land imbalances between the white minority and the black majority. Arible land remained in the hands of the few and the willing buyer willing seller model was open to abuse. The new political leadership had to rely on the will of the seller to offer land at a price agreeable to both and availability of resources to purchase it, yet as political leaders they carried the hopes of many landless blacks. There was high expectation among the indigenous population that the liberation struggle would lead to a complete reversal of fortunes, with all lost land being recovered. Rural peasants, urban dwellers and peri-urban landless people like those in Epworth mission and their children expected to benefit from such a land redress.

In summary, the colonial system used legislation conveniently to disposeess, dominate and control the economic life of the indigenous people of Zimbabwe. The law was in a way a measure to sanitise and legalise the illegal situation which had arisen. All the legal instruments were biased against the indigenous population. In almost all processes of enactment, indigenous people were not consulted. It was a process that assumed the indigenous people were non existent.

4.6. Independence and the aftermath

4.6.1. Mission in crisis in post-colonial Zimbabwe

The previous chapter traced the roots of the crisis in mission stations, and how there was interplay between the politics of the time and the work of the missionaries. The chapter also looked at the precarious relationship between missionaries, the church and the liberation struggle. The relationship is summarised very well in Rev Canaan Banana's words, The church was privy to the colonial escapade, fought African resistance to colonial penetration, helped pacify and counselled against nationalists' agitation and demands for self-determination, enjoyed a long spell of flirtation

with colonialism, fell out with colonialism, criticised it, fought it, and eventually helped in its overthrow and the reassertion of legality, justice and autonomy a long arduous path fraught with contradictions and hazards (Banana 1987:17).

The following episode looks at the post-independence era and how the past has played into the new nation and how the mission stations, particularly Epworth have evolved under a new set of circumstances. This chapter begins by assessing the granting of autonomy, how this enabled or not the church's ability to carry out its mandate. On this subject Banana advises pointedly, 'when one talks about indigenisation of the church, the uninformed reactionaries rush to put in black faces in the administration in an attempt to give the impression of change. … We are talking of fundamental radical transformation in witnessing and the total orientation of the church to the new social, economic and political movement of the masses the church professes to serve (Banana 1987:21). Banana espouses a dynamic idea of autonomy which has an impact on a new orientation of the church in terms of its mission thrust and praxis. This chapter goes on to consider the atmosphere presented by independence, the church's response and the effect on the mission stations.

4.6.2 Autonomy and its implications for the Mission Station in Zimbabwe

The Methodist Church was granted autonomy by the British Methodist Conference in 1977 and three years later, the nation of Zimbabwe gained its political independence from Britain on the 18th April 1980. From its first Synod in 1895 which was facilitated by George Weavind, the Chairperson of the Transvaal District of South Africa, Zimbabwe was a District of the British Conference (Gondongwe 2011:53). What it meant was that every year, representatives were to be seconded to the British Conference and reports submitted on the progress of the mission work. Decisions and resolutions made by the District had to be ratified by the Conference in Britain before they were to be implemented. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe was still white dominated, and so were its structures and leadership. The majority of representatives to the British Conference were therefore white. The leadership of the church was white awith a few black people holding influential positions from the Circuit to Connexion. It was, therefore following the pattern of the colonial government; a case of a few minority representing and at the same time exercising authority over the majority.

The context of the granting of autonomy requires special attention here. The granting of autonomy to the Zimbabwean Church was not new to the British Conference. Autonomy status was usually granted to countries that proved capacity to self-govern and self-support, with the ability to account for resources which usually came from the Missionary Society (Pritchard 2016). It is important to observe that the British Conference was already warming up to this initiative. Pritchard has proffered a detailed analysis of the events and processes leading to autonomy. In his analysis he shows that the British Conference after the Indian model and West African proposals for autonomy convened a consultation which clarified the difference between political independence and the need for autonomy. Central to the conversation during the 1961 consultation, a consultation which brought together Britain and its Districts in over 28 countries (Pritchard 2016:205), was an observation of the positive nature of autonomy vis-à-vis the advent of independence and its attendant militancy. Quoting Thompson, the convener of the consultation Pritchard says:

> The different nature of the church when compared with the nations is demonstrated by the disparity between the reasons for which a church seeks independence and the world's nationalist slogans. Nations wish for freedom for the reasons which could be comparatively described as 'negative', they wish to be free because they do not wish to be bound. They wish to escape domination because they dislike domination. The churches on the other hand desire autonomy for positive reasons… (Pritchard 2016:205).

However, the irony of it is that, the reasons for both the nationalists and church were not different because they were both arising from the same desire for self-determination.

For the Zimbabwean case, the granting of autonomy came about through a combination of political pressure, ecumenical and general missionary trends of that period. By the close of 1950s, it was becoming increasingly clear that the African church was ripe to have a significant role in the running of its own affairs. This was inspired by more and more African countries which were gaining independence, starting with Ghana in March 1957, Nigeria in 1960 and Sierra Leone in 1961. With political developments in the continent, the British Conference was aware of the pattern of events that followed, as soon as countries gained their independence, the search for autonomy seemed to gather pace.

Secondly, the British Methodist Church Conference was quite under pressure due to rising ecumenical convergence and pressure from the World Council of Churches, the British Council of

Churches being a member, which were actively advocating justice and the removal of oppressive trends in Africa through the World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism (Taggart 2012). In the same consultation of 1961, it was observed that, the church would be effective if it was a self-governing unit within its own people, a national church without strings fitted best into a nation, with national power (Pritchard 2016:205). The trajectory in Africa was clear and mother churches would rather not delay giving their missions autonomy.

Thirdly, there was a general disillusionment with missionaries in the era of 'Missionaries go home', with a call for parent churches to give leadership reins to Africans. All these pressures militated towards a resolution to grant the Zimbabwean church its autonomy.

Ghana was granted autonomy in 1961. Autonomy for Nigeria was approved by British Conference of 1962, Ceylon and Upper Burma's in 1964, Kenya, Sierra Leone, the Caribbean and the Americas in 1966. In Zambia, the Northern Rhodesian District became part of the United Church of Zambia in 1965 at its inauguration, just three months after Zambia gained political independence in 1965 (Pritchard 2014: 210). In 1964 the Methodist Missionary Society in London, mindful of the rapid political and ecclesiastical trends taking place elsewhere in Africa decided to anticipate similar change in Rhodesia by appointing an African chairman of the Synod in the name of Rev Andrew Ndhlela (Peaden 1979:195). These events were quite revealing of the state of African political and religious paradigm.

The appointment of Rev Andrew Ndhlela was done without consultation of the Rhodesia Synod effective January 1965 (Taggart 2012:97, Zvobgo 1991, Peaden 1979:195), implying a haphazard approach. Had it been done through consultation it would not have gone through, the Synod which was largely white dominated would have opposed the appointment.

4.6.3 Limitations of autonomy and the challenges of the Church in a new era

The autonomy was granted within an opportune time to enable the new church to be strong enough to face a potentially volatile future. However, the new leadership lacked readiness to lead especially in a volatile environment like the one introduced by the independence period. The British were right to appoint Andrew Ndhlela much earlier than the granting of autonomy and it

was meant to prepare him to eventually lead an autonomous church. What the church did not manage to do well was to ensure that the entire system is trained in running the church without assistance. The missionaries continued to run critical offices like finance. Their funding declined. A reduced funding would have direct implications for sustaibnability of programs and projects for a church in post independence reconstruction. This meant that the church in the new dispensation had to resource itself locally.

The context was a challenging one. As Mugambi observes, even then; the new leadership was operating in a volatile political and religious environment where neither of the first generation of African church leaders were not adequately equipped for the transition nor were African churches themselves. Having been accustomed to missionary leadership, it was difficult for them to assume responsibility effectively at the same time that political agitation was accelerating in the secular arena (Mugambi and Mugambi 1995:204). Andrew Ndhlela's appointment was itself contested by a largely powerful and significant white community. The Bulawayo area council actually passed a resolution deploring the nomination of Rev Andrew Ndhlela as President (Mosley 2007:2). The church was entering unchattered waters, yet it was not fully equipped to sail in such waters. Evidently the new leadership was bound to fail.

4.6.4 Theological and Strategic orientation of the church

A church entering a new ecclesiological and political dispensation needed a clarity of ideology and theology that would underpin it, taking into context both the background of the nation and that of the people. Most churches were missionary products. They had emerged from missionary societies in Europe. The necessary transition was therefore not as quick in terms of alignment with the new needs. Considering that the political struggle was led from a socialist angle, churches were usually ambivalent to join the bandwagon. The challenges of independence required addressing the needs of the poor against capitalist colonisers. This misalignment limited the church. There was need for a theology that addresses the needs of the new situation, a theology that angled itself towards resolution of the imbalances existing in the country.

In Zimbabwe, the challenges were compounded by how quickly political events turned out considering the reconciliation agenda and the political disturbances in Matebeleland. The upheavals of the post-independence period were a test of the readiness of the church to respond relevantly to the changing and emerging new realities. The disturbances like those in Matebeleland were disruptive to the agenda of the church. As Kaulemu observes,

> in situations of conflict, churches find themselves divided between a civilizing mission and upholding the interests and dignity of the local majority, between helping to maintain the status quo and helping the forces of change. Church members, including church leaders, have often been divided on what strategies to take (Kaulemu 2010:47).

Balancing the obligations of a prophetic church as well as a transformative partner, who upholds reconciliation and yet remains critical of the government proved a daunting task. The need for development and particularly the need for land grew at this critical time and it required a theological perspective fit for the time. Whether or not the church adjusted for the eventuality of dealing with the challenges, theologically and ideologically, is a question that needs close attention.

4.6.5 Financial capacity

For some time, the church remained dependent on missionary support from its Western origins. The Methodist Church continued to receive the bulk of its expenditure from the Methodist Church in the United Kingdom. In 1979 the church received $163 000 and in 1980 $113 000 (MCA 1980). While this figure looks high the needs of the church increased after autonomy and advent of political independence, considering the challenges of post-war reconstruction. Added to this, as alluded to earlier, this funding continued to decline after autonomy was granted. This limited financial capacity had a direct impact on mission effectiveness of the church. It meant that the church was limited in terms of what initiatives and priorities to implement. As Mugambi and Mugambi observe, the dependence of African churches and Christian councils on development funds from their parent churches abroad, has meant that their priorities were greatly influenced by the programme guidelines of the donors (Mugambi and Mugambi 214). The church needed its own resources from its membership to fund its programmes as it saw fit.

4.6.6 Political developments in the post-independence era

Independence in Zimbabwe meant a lot to the people of Zimbabwe, who had endured over 90 years of colonialism. The end of the liberation struggle had given people hope of redress of all the issues they had fought for, principaly being freedom and the right to their land. At independence, the black majority population had high hopes and expectations of the new government. They expected to participate fully by owning property anywhere in the country, especially land and businesses (Kaulemu 2010:48). The liberation struggle had gained the support of the rural and urban population due to the promise 'to re-establish justice and equity in the ownership of land (Palmer 1991:165). However, their hopes soon dissipated as government seemed not to be as swift with regard to their expectation in easing their suffering. Part of the reason was that the Lancaster House Conference had provided a clause known as willing seller willing buyer clause that limited the new government's capacity to address issues such as the land imbalance. The Lancaster House Agreement brought about a Constitution which required the recognition of the sanctity of the institution of private property in the means of production (Sibanda 1991:10). This protection was guaranteed by a mechanism which provided within the constitution a reservation of 20 parliamentary seats for white settlers. Considering that only a hundred percent vote could change the Lancaster House constitution, this provision made it impossible for the new government to effect any changes. This implied that the government had to rely on the willing seller willing buyer principle to access land for resettlement. Land and significant resources remained with the white minority and where land was availed to blacks it was not fertile and attractive land.

Added to this challenge was the failure by the colonial power to adequately finance the acquisition of the land and redistribution exercise. During the run up to diplomatic negotiations leading to the Lancaster House Conference, Britain had promised to raise 75 million pounds to assist the new government buy land for resettlement. After making certain tranches of payments Britain reneged (Palmer 1991:166). This followed allegations of misuse of the money for buying land that the new labour government felt cheated and offended then stopped paying. This failure implied that the new government could not satisfy its supporters thirst and aspirations for a better life.

These challenges increased as more and more people were becoming restless and in need of land. Rural areas were already congested. With a new independent and African government, and with

the removal of racial laws aspirations grew and movement from rural to urban areas increased. Due to the various acts of the colonial regime, blacks had been concentrated in what were called the reserves, which were arid, lacking proper rainfall and were hence unproductive. As Palmer observes, by 1980, population densities were over three times greater in black than in the white areas, and some 42 per cent of the country was owned by 6,000 white commercial farmers, most of whom had fought tooth and nail to prevent Rhodesiafrom becoming Zimbabwe (Palmer 1990:165). Most densely populated were the rural areas. There are two points that need pondering, the first is the observation that overcrowding in the unproductive reserves was a factor in pressuring the people for better settlement, that many blacks were squashed together and there was pressure to find better places to reside. Secondly that the minority was less cooperative in ensuring that there is redress of the situation. During and after the war, people flocked to urban areas to escape the effects of the war or to seek better chances to eke out a living. They also sought cheaper and easier places to settle like Epworth where initially other natives were permitted to stay. Another factor that increased pressure on mission stations particularly those in peri-urban areas was the labour practices of the colonial government which emphasised male members coming to work in town and going back to the rural areas by the weekend. As independence drew close many families were joining their spouses in the city which was short of accommodation. Places like Epworth became highly attractive because they were cheaper to stay and close to the city.

4.6.7 Church and state relations after independence

The coming of independence in 1980 was welcomed by the church with excitement and hope just like other partners in war. However, the church afterwards seemed to have gone to sleep. Part of the reason was that the coming of independence was somewhat like utopia, a feeling that the nation had arrived in the proverbial Canaan. Political independence was equated with the coming of the kingdom of God. This was evidenced by the fact that the church needed to critique the government, but the church was in fact ambivalent. The reason being that the church had always been divided in its approach to the war, largely due to its multi-racial nature and strong dominance of the white settlers before the war. De Waal makes an important observation, that:

> ‘Under the Smith regime, the Roman Catholic bishops became increasingly identified with the liberation movement, while the leaders of the Anglican church, believing that they could influence government policy best behind the scenes, came more and more to adopt that regime’s perspective’ (De Waal 1990:125).

There had been some clear voices speaking in support of the war, however on the whole, a generally cautious approach was adopted. Becoming outspoken in the new political era had the potential to cause conflict. This was further compounded by the fact that one of the prominent clerics, Bishop Abel Muzorewa of the United Methodist Church had attempted to broker a settlement in 1979. De Waal's statement helps us appreciate the church's predicament after the war. It shows the state of division within the Christian fraternity and this had a negative effect on the role the church could play during the post-war period. De Waal goes on to show the manner in which the church participated, in the post war politics, citing the Roman Catholic Church for example about which he says kept an arm distance:

> On Independence Day 1980, the Catholic Arch Bishop blessed the new nation's flag, but since then his bishops, shrinking at Marxist terminology and suspicious of liberation theology, have held Government somewhat to its disappointment, at arms' length. The result, however, is that opportunities for exerting influence, for example in education policy, have been missed (De Waal 1990:125).

This statement is a fair commentary of the general church's response and engagement within political terrain after the 1980 independence. Especially significant within the realm of our scheme of analysis is that the church by keeping a distance, missed on the opportunity to influence the new government on policy, not only on education but the general character and tincture of development in toto.

The Methodist church on the other hand had a fair share of its contribution in the person of a Methodist church cleric, the Rev Canaan Banana the first President of an independent Zimbabwe. Quite a number of the first cabinet ministers were Methodists, these comprise Joshua Nkomo, Josiah Chinamano, the Ushewokunze (Chris and Herbert), Nathan Shamuyarira, Edison Zvobgo to name but just a few.

4.7 Epworth developments after the war

The crisis of a mission station in Zimbabwe manifested itself in regard to Epworth Mission in respect to four major challenges. The first being the church's lack of capacity to handle emerging issues and problems at Epwort; second, the growing overcrowding and landlessness, indiscriminate illegal sale of land; third, crisis of development, health and other social ills

emerging, poor water and sanitation issues, crime, prostitution and fourth, the crisis of identity among the people of Epworth in the post-independence and post missionary era.

4.7.1 Lack of capacity by the church

What was intended to be a model community espousing Christian standards of community living and values deteriorated into an urban menace (Msindo *et al.* 2013:172). The Methodist church in Zimbabwe struggled to handle the plethora of challenges at the Epworth mission farm, culminating in the church handing over part of the land to government while remaining with a small portion, namely Lot 2, and the institutions namely the Mission station (Church, manse and primary school), Matthew Rusike Children's Home, and the United Theological College. The problems at Epworth were however not new to the period after independence period. They have their roots in the colonial period as has already been examined. They only became manifested after the war. Contestations over land tenure have always been there. As early as the inception of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the church had to grapple with issues of tenancy at Epworth, especially the security of tenure and what could be done on the land, along with the problem of inheritance. The colonial government compounded the problem by constantly threatening to remove people from Epworth citing the fact that it was not supposed to be land for blacks. This created uncertainty within people, considering that the church which had given them lease seemed to be helpless in the hands of government. Several meetings were held involving the residents, the church and government on various issues. However due to the racist nature of government, resolutions were always illusive. The end of the war only brought the various issues and challenges to the fore. The church found it difficult to handle them alone. With mounting problems at Epworth, the church donated its land to the government in 1982.

4.7.1.1. Events leading to the donation of the land

The Methodist church in Zimbabwe Conference in August 1982 voted unanimously to hand over part of Epworth land to government (MCA 1982). This donation of Epworth land to government must be seen in the context of wider crisis, that which evolved around the sustainability of the mission station in its original form. As shown by Mujinga (2019:291) in 1998 the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Conference again voted to cede part of Kwenda Mission (another Mission station of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe) to government. The resolution to donate Epworth

land to the government was done by conference through a recommendation from the standing committee. However, it must be of interest that the proposal was made by the government, who made the suggestion that the church hands over part of Epworth. The church was battling the squatter problem and crime that was brewing at Epworth owing to the exponential unplanned population growth as earlier discussed. A draft of proposals was made by the ministry of Local Government and National Housing on the 6th of October 1981. The proposals included the following undertaking by the Government:

- That the Director of Planning with the assistance of Housing Development services, would prepare a plan for the improvement of basic services on the basis of Squatter upgrading program within the already settled Areas.
- These were to include portable water facilities, sanitation and social infrastructure. Planning was to be carried on people with the right to reside in Epworth, with newcomers being discouraged to come in.
- The existing land rights of the original tenants, those whose forefathers had assisted in the purchase of Glenwood and Adelaide were to be protected. Government was to create employment for the area surrounding.
- The government would then seek international donor funding for further improvement of Epworth. It was suggested that in order for the project to be successful, the land had to be state land (MCA 1981).

The government cited the rapidly deteriorating public health, lack of infrastructure, and crime as reasons for their proposition that the church hands over part of Epworth. Government also acknowledged the responsibility for the occupiers of land and the associated challenges as urban housing problems (MCA 1981). The proposals were in one way attractive to residents, and in another intimidatory to the church, especially where donor support could only be accessed if the land had been handed over to the state.

The church in response sat on Friday the 16th of October 1981 and responded to government proposals. The meeting was attended by the President Rev Andrew Ndhlela, Rev O. D. Ramushu, Rev Dr F. B. Rea, Rev P. West (Secretary) and 25 representatives of the Epworth villages (MCA 1981). The meeting resolved that the tenants were going to sit and consider the proposals of the

Provincial Planning Officer and the office of the Minister of Local Government and National Housing and respond by Monday 9th November 1981. Meanwhile an Epworth Lands Steering Committee was held at the Methodist Church Connexional office on the 13th of October 1981. The meeting resolved that the Methodist Church agree to the proposals from the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing, and that for the best development of Epworth, Adelaide, and Glenwood farms be handed over to the state without any payment. The Methodist Church would retain freehold rights on three sections of the farm, Matthew Rusike Children's Home, United Theological College, The Mission Station, Church and Primary School (MCA 1981). The conference in 1982 voted for the resolution to hand over part of Epworth to the government, the following were the votes, For 55, Against 7 and Neutral 12.

The votes show that a quarter of the members of conference did not agree. This goes to show that there was no unanimity on arriving at this decision. Further, there seems to have been so much pressure on the church to hand over land rights as quickly as possible, judging by the chronology of the events. Either it was from those remaining Missionaries who would have been keen to please the government at any cost in order to improve their image, or it could be political pressure from the new government who stood to gain significant political mileage being seen to act resolutely on human plight alleviation. There was plenty of support of such a trajectory considering that the new President Rev Canaan Banana was a Methodist cleric, who would be thus seen to bring the church and government into a closer working relationship towards betterment of the people's lives. Why would a steering committee meet and make decisions even before the tenants have met? The logic was that the church would listen to tenants and then bring its own input together. The farm was donated without any payment. The government used the Deeds Registries Act Chapter 139 to re vest the deeds in itself, something which was done in 1994. The government undertook a programme to develop the area for eventual incorporation into Harare City. It directed a freeze on all non-permitted developments (Chitekwe Biti *et al.* 2012:132, Chirisa 2010).

The Epworth Local Board was created in 1986 to run the affairs of Epworth. However, as Mhanda (2018:92) observes, these boards had limited capacities in terms of funding models and that much of the decision making was and is concentrated in central government. The transfer of land to government did not ease the problems at Epworth. In fact, problems actually increased. Challenges

affecting the donated sections of land, could not be isolated to that part of the land that remained in church hands. The people who live in the land donated to the government remained in the Methodist fold, as practicing Methodists, and/or as descendants of Methodists. The land they occupied lay in close proximity.

4.7.2 The challenges of overcrowding

Epworth had become a haven of sporadic squatter settlements in Zimbabwe, with an impact on the Local board and the church's ability to provide necessary and adequate services and therefore improve the quality of life. The dynamics are faster than the authorities' ability to react appropriately. The government of Zimbabwe in 2006 embarked on an operation restore order, and as its reasons, it argued that it sought,

> to deal with crime, squalor and lawlessness, and rebuild and reorganise urban settlements and small and medium enterprises (SMEs)…It was a follow-up to the anti-corruption drive started by the Government in early 2004 to cleanse the financial services economy, which had become the centre of speculative activities… (Sachikonye 2006:16)

When government took over Epworth in 1982 it directed a freeze on all new settlements so that it could focus on those already settled. But a combination of factors militated against government directive, instead of abating, more settlements emerged. The increase in population at Epworth had an effect on the capacity of the land donated to the government and that which remained in the hands of the church.

As Mhanda (2013:92) observed, the lack of resources had a negative impact on the Local Board's ability to deliver its mandate. The council could not service enough stands, as per demand from the home seekers, and where they managed, the cost was beyond the generality of the population of Epworth dwellers who largely were either self-employed or were lowly paid. The Local Board made several unsuccessful attempts to control unathorised development and evict all those in illegal settlements on the land without success (Chitekwe-Biti *et al* 2012:133). The lack of resources was also exacerbated by political meddling during election time. Politicians who promised desperate people land without proper administrative support from the Local Board meant that settlement was haphazard and uncontrolled. Msindo and others (2013:176) show that political meddling had a significant effect in undermining the Local Board and the church's efforts in managing land.

The uncontrolled influx and settlement of people at Epworth meant that the available adjacent land belonging to the church could not remain immune to those hungry for land for a very long time, it was also at risk of being invaded. As anticipated, the land has now all been invaded. There are reasons why the church land at Epworth has been taken over by land hungry people and parcelled out despite the government being pro-church as far as land acquisition is concerned (Chitando 2005). The church did not use the land that it retained owing to its limited capacity in a post-missionary era. Although the church had plans for projects, it took too long to implement them. Second, the church itself had serious gaps in administration of its land at Epworth as evidenced in a Report by a commission set up to investigate a demonstration by Epworth residents who were accusing the church, especially its Bishop Rev F. Chirisa of abusing land for his own personal gain. The findings of the Report indicated that there was no clarity at the lower echelons as to who had the right to sell or distribute land, citing instances where the local minister would give rights to people who wanted to settle in the land (Report of the commission of Inquiry into the Epworth Demonstrations, MCA 1996). As with the Local Board, there has not been strong political will to remove the unregulated settlers from the church land. The church has tried to evict the desperate landless, but because of political interference the church has not been able to evict them. There is always a promise by government to assist, but both legal notices of eviction, and political pressure have ended up in smoke. The church has also been sympathetic in its approach as evidenced by lack of zeal to remove people who settled themselves.

The result has therefore been an increase in settlements over the years, so much so that all the land has been taken over by unregistered settlers. This is affecting the church's ability to utilise its own land, and it further threatens the already existing institutions like the Theological College, the Matthew Rusike Children's Home, the Mission station itself as well as the Clinic. The recent farms Report commissioned by Conference found out that expansion of the church's institutions is now impossible until there is a way of clearing the squatters.

4.7.3 Crisis of development

A third crisis presented by the Epworth mission scenario is the crisis of development. Development is a multifaceted concept which can be used differently depending on context. Mensah and Casadevall (2019) however, give a helpful guide into the matrix of development. They define

development in terms of a multidimensional process that involves major changes in social structures, attitudes, and institutions, as well as economic growth, reduction of inequality, and eradication of absolute poverty. In other words, development is a positive change towards improvement of structures and social institution that lead to a sustainable empowerment of people. Rabie (2016) locates development as an economic concept that has positive connotations bent on improvement of people's quality of life.

Development in Epworth is lagging behind in both its facets. Infrastructure, housing, provision of social services, water and sanitation are way below expectation. The emergence of health problems and other social ills, crime and prostitution are evidence of the lack of both progressive attitudes, structures and institutions and economic capacity to sustain normal life. In a community with a population of 168 000 (ZimSats 2019), it is ironic that it has only seven primary schools, two secondary schools and three clinics of which only one is a Methodist clinic (Slum Dwellers Report of 2009). As discussed earlier, Epworth lacks proper housing, most of the houses do not meet the standards as they were never planned or supervised, some lie in wetlands and often flood during the rainy season. Chirisa shows how the limitations of the Epworth Local Board is also militating against the ability to plan, service and supervise proper housing (Chirisa 2010:12).

Epworth is poor. Poverty in Epworth has many dimensions. It ranges from limited income levels owing to the incapacity of its residents. This is largely due to the kinds of skills and jobs they undertake, (Chirisa 2010). The church had plans for a few original tenants, the institutions and facilities were able to cater for the few residents. The church never anticipated illegal influx of people, and never planned for the post-war pressure on the land. The influx of people during the war, further complicated the capacity of the church, as most of those who settled illegally were never provided for during planning. The residents therefore became informal, and mostly their jobs were also not high paying, making it worse, as it also affected the Local authority's ability to serve the informal settlement, due to inability to collect enough taxes. The informal nature of the settlement affected land tenure and residents' ability to attract funding or investment. Most settlements in Epworth have not been regularized and therefore residents do not have title to the land on which they are settled.

While it is true that the current scenario is a product of the colonial legacy it is equally true that in the post-missionary period the church has not been able to grasp the extent of the needs of Epworth or anticipate them. Missionary mindset was based on a colonial ideology which focused on separation, managed development which was guided by control of a few selected people with vested interests to keep blacks as underdogs. The onset of independence changed the social, political and economic dynamics not only of Epworth but of the entire post-colony. Select development was no longer possible, the poor now also demanded universal development.

At the root of Epworth misery is therefore the legacy of colonialism and the limited power of missionaries and the church to arrest this. Epworth is a cry for sustainable human development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2002 describes human development in the following manner:

> Fundamental to enlarging human choices is building human capacities: the range of things that people can do or be. The most basic capacities for human development are leading a long and healthy life, being educated, having access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and being able to participate in the life of one's community. As this Report emphasizes assuring people's dignity also requires that they be free—and able—to participate in the formation and stewardship of the rules and institutions that govern them (2002:13).

Amartya Sen (1999:14) in his seminal contribution to development discourse, argues that development is freedom. He suggests that poverty in its proper definition, should not be seen in terms of income levels but, a deprivation of capabilities. What he calls unfreedoms are a result of inadequate processes and inadequate opportunities. Unfreedom can arise either through inadequate processes or through inadequate opportunities that some people have for achieving what they minimally would like to achieve (Sen 1999:17). He says 'development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives people lead and the freedoms they enjoy' (1999:14). This kind of development is what has lacked in mission stations and have given rise to growing poverty.

Epworth as a mission station and centre has not been able to provide the benchmark for human development environment due to a culture and an era that deprived the African resident the necessary involvement in the processes and opportunities for development. That failure has come back to haunt the church. The paternalistic approach of missionaries, served to a certain extent but

could not stand the test of time. In actual fact after independence, the situation worsened. The influx of people into urban areas and particularly Epworth was driven by a desire to improve life, since the colonial era had condemned every black person into the reserves with limited capacity. Human capacities and choices have not been expanded, instead with more needing expansion of opportunities, the few facilities available could not handle these and infrastructure collapsed at the pressure from hungry population.

4.7.4 Crisis of identity

One of the critical effects of church handing over part of Epworth to government in 1982 was the loss of identity of the residents and the mission itself. Taurus and Lowery define identity as 'both individual and personal traits as well as social aspects acquired from the groups one belongs to' (2017:305). As discussed earlier, a person belongs to a community (Mentiki 2001, Battle 2000) of the past the present and the future, an individual is part of a larger collective which includes the dead and the yet to be born in an African society. Identity in this sense incorporates all this that makes up a person and his community. Deng states that African societies functioned through an elaborate system based on the family, the lineage, the clan, the tribe, and ultimately a confederation of groups with ethnic, cultural, and linguistic characteristics in common (Deng 1997:1). He further states that society is backed by 'values, institutions, and patterns of behaviour, a composite whole representing a people's historical experience, aspirations, and world view' (Deng 1997:1). The people of Epworth existed before Epworth was formed, who they were was thus defined.

Before the onset of the missionary era, Epworth was ruled by chiefs and was connected by family lineage, the customs and values that brought together their sense of being. In the course of colonial and missionary era Epworth assumed a new identity as a mission community, created for people who had become Christians. The old structures, norms and value systems were uprooted, and new ones centred on the church and the missionary emerged. For over ninety years this had become the new society.

When the missionaries departed, and when in 1982 the Methodist Church handed over Glenwood and Adelaide to Government, they were throwing the entire community into serious identity confusion. What had become a *bona fide* identity was dismantled without neither a negotiation nor

an offer of a new form of identity. With the challenges enumerated above, particularly after independence Epworth has found itself struggling as relates to its new identity.

Court cases and Commissions of Inquiry show clearly a community struggling to redefine its identity. In the following a Commission of Inquiry and two court cases will be discussed to expound on the nature of the identity crisis.

In 1996 there were several demonstrations at Epworth and these were a culmination of a number of concerns and disgruntlements ever since the church had donated part of the land it previously held to government. Even though the church had donated the land residents still identified themselves as part of the church and the church being part of them. The relationships seemed not to have been severed with. There are reasons to back the view that Epworth residents were united by their history and their church and as well as thier graves. For the past century they had been identified as believers under the church. They knew no other identity. Between 1982 and 1996, they were now to assume a new identity under the Epworth Local Board, a scenario that was confusing. Yet they still congregated at church on Sundays and still buried their dead at the church cemetery. It must be highlighted that most of these processes had not involved wide consultations. The creation of Epworth had happened without consultation, and the dismantling was now being haphazardly done. This reminds one of Lamin Sanneh's lament that coverts were 'dislodged' from their cultural system and that missionaries were deaf to local voices in assembling 'experimental communities'. In doing this, he bemoans the fact that Christianity dispossessed Africans of their natural ties without giving them a real stake in missionary culture (Sanneh 2010:222). The handing over of the mission is an example of an experimental community being dismantled.

Among the series of demonstrations, the one held on the 16th of July 1996 caught the church's attention, leading to a Commission of Inquiry being instituted by the then Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, The Rev Farai J. Chirisa (Commission of inquiry into demonstrations at Epworth, MCA 1996). The Commission sought among other objectives to:

i. identify the problem,
ii. collect and assess evidence,
iii. recommend solutions to the Standing Committee.

The demonstrators had demanded the removal of Rev Farai Chirisa as Bishop, accusing him of among other cases of carrying projects without consulting the community, that he wanted to build flats at Epworth and bringing people to squat in the area. Above all, they claimed that their ancestors had bought the land through their rents (MCA 1996).

The commissioners on researching proved many of the accusations to be false. However, they observed that central to the problems at Epworth was the question of ownership of the land at Epworth and the problem of communication. They went further to show that the High Court had settled the issue of ownership on the 3rd July 1996 in the case between Chiremba Residents Association and Epworth Local Board. However, what is clear from this analysis is that the Epworth residents still did not understand that in the new scheme of things the land no longer belonged to them and that they had no role in its administration. Epworth residents still believed they and the church had a relationship and that the church had to continue consulting them on issues pertaining to the land. Such a relationship no longer existed, the church no longer had obligation to account to them on land that belonged to the church, that is Lot 2.

Second, the Epworth residents did not understand their new place under the Epworth Local Board. They had limited understanding of leases, and what rents meant. In as much as over ninety years had passed under church administration, Epworth residents still believed in the traditional tenure, where one was entitled to land on account of genealogy. In addition, they challenged the church, their claim being that their forefathers had contributed to the purchase of part of Epworth.

A further indicator of the crisis is the court cases that Epworth residents lodged against the church and or the local board claiming rights to the land at Epworth, both the section that had been donated to the government and the remaining Lot 2. From the commission findings, it is clear that residents in some sense believed that they had a right to the land owned by the church and this led to continued invasion despite appeal and courts directing otherwise. In July 1996 the residents approached the courts challenging the Epworth Local Board's jurisdiction over the land that used to belong to the church. The residents argued that their forefathers had paid for the land through rent, and that they had tittle to the land which the church had taken to England (MCA 1996). The Court ruled against the residents, citing lack of evidence of ownership that the original residents

claimed they had a right to owing to the rents they had paid before. The court also disputed the title issue confirming that the Methodist Church had the title which the church had voluntarily ceded to the government.

Three years after the demonstrations, a further case was lodged with the High Court, in which the church pressed charges against a Mr Solani and residents of Epworth.This was prompted Mr Solani who was beginning to erect buildings on the church land (MCA 1999). This was the beginning of the further encroachment on the church' land. What is however clear from these processes is that as soon as the church gave up on the land, those people who had relied on the church were left vulnerable and unable to self-determine in the light of new settlers who were competing for the land. The disagreements and the battles have not stopped as evidenced by the media attention in the following headlines: (Zindoga, *The Herald*, 'Epworth a forgotten Suburb' April 2014, The Zimbabwean, 'Epworth land wrangle hots up', May 2014).

Demonstrations and court battles have continued to date. These conflicts and appearances must have been a way of trying to salvage some identity and rights to self-determine out of a murky unpredictable terrain. However, all these efforts proved illusory. The church on the other hand failed to manage the pressure and encroachments continued. Currently all land that belonged to the church is now occupied by illegal tenants and some of the land is hardly suitable for settlement. There are no facilities and services and because of that it is a health risk.

Since independence Epworth has struggled to define itself. It has been characterised by conflict as it sought to redefine itself as a community. Epworth is a pale shadow of its former self. What used to be a promissing mission area, built up in hope is a symbol of squalor. Today Epworth is a symbol of struggle, of a failed suburb, harbouring crime, prostitution, an example of the worst squatter area.

The 2016 Commission of inquiry into the church mission farms was mandated to 'assess the situation and status of the Methodist church in Zimbabwe mission farms, in the light of manifest challenges including the general underutilisation of the land, invasion by illegal tenants, disregard of the farm rules and policies by tenants and increased conflicts arising out of exercise of authority

by local chiefs councillors and politicians on the mission farms' (Farms Commission Report 2018:8). Some of the commission's findings were as follows:

- Inconsistency in policy implementation and weak enforcement
- Antiquated rules and regulations which are difficult to enforce
- High leadership turnover, which is not compatible with project implementation, thus creating disconnect on project cycle
- The church's sensitivity in not asserting its legitimate authority and resorting to empty threats, thus widening the rift with farm tenants

On Land tenure

- It was noted that there is a general feeling of entitlement over church mission land
- The tenants and their children have concerns regarding their future on the church farms that arise from traditional expectations for land inheritance
- Lack of resources has made it difficult for the church to implement land use programs and farm development activities.

Among the recommendations, the critical ones related to church policy on Christian villages. The commission observed that the concept of Methodist Christian villages was no longer sustainable and does not serve any functional and practical purpose given the modern multi religious, multi-denominational settlement trends. (Farms Commission Report 2018:27). They advocated for a redefinition of this concept in the light of changing role as regards mission of the church.

These are signs of a church which is coming to terms with the challenges it is facing and making attempts at attending to them. It is also an invitation to a task of redefining of mission in the current and future context.

4.7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the origins of the current challenges. It has demonstrated that the problems in the mission station particularly at Epworth have their antecedents in the colonial era. The challenges are rooted in both the systems and structures imposed and extensively used by the colonial administration as well as the close relationship the colonial administration had with missionaries, and therefore the church. It has also traced the developments at Epworth Mission,

the motivation of missionaries and their approach and how these are related to the wider missionary and political developments in the country. The interaction between the missionary approach and methods with local context, the disruptions they caused and the different ways in which local people reacted. The legal instruments considered above help to show the paternalistic, patronizing nature of the colonial administration and how it was effectively bent on depriving, and subjugating the local African inhabitants. The church which was a benefactor of the colonial administration was limited in its advocacy, considering that its own entrance into the country was supported extensively by the colonial administration. In the words of Gundani, colonial government and missionaries were paternalist, idealist and naïve (Gundani 2019:15). They believed that Africans were backward and lacked capacity to self-determine. Africans could not be viewed as equals with their white counterparts and that those who wished could follow their programmes and gain some bit of respect. Missionaries on the other hand had a condescending attitude. They believed that it was their mandate to represent the interests of the Africans when in actual fact they were not appreciative of the gross dehumanisation that Africans were enduring. The church therefore was incapacitated from acting decisively on issues of justice even on behalf of the poor Africans. The system that was brought about by these legal instruments and employed in an almost similar way by the missionaries had a way of disorienting community without a guaranteeing of the future.

This chapter went on to show that missionaries and their colonial colleagues were ‘strange bedfellows’ (Gondongwe 2011:44), agreeing in some principles and disagreeing on others, but that on the whole there was close collaboration. Although missionaries worked hard to improve the life of local Africans, to a greater extent, they were complicit with the colonial administration. As David Bosch argues, the problem was that, even where they launched stringent criticism against the colonial administration, they never really doubted the legitimacy of colonialism; they assumed, virtually without question, that colonialism was an inexorable force and that all they were required to do was somehow to try to tame it (Bosch 1991:312). The chapter has therefore gone on to show that on the other hand, mission work was the inspiration of the liberation struggle, in that the church pioneered black education, and thereby inspiring new ways of envisioning society. The church played activist by voicing its concerns where injustice was prevalent. The luminaries who played an important part in the formative years of black activism, such as Thompson Samkange and

Joshua Nkomo drank from the missionary pot. These went on to spearhead the fight for the liberation of the country.

The onset of autonomy in September 1977 and the political independence that came three years later brought completely new social, political and economic dynamics to the practice of mission especially with regard to mission stations. The high hopes of the population, especially with regards to land redress caused by the colonial imbalances, the lifting of racial laws meant that more and more people entered cities with the hope of a better life. The optimism of the political leadership versus the limited capacity and resources as well as bureaucracy led to the slow implementation of developmental projects such as housing and provision of essential services. The church never anticipated the new dynamics of the post-independence era. It was obviously never prepared owing to the comfort and support it had enjoyed during the colonial and missionary era for the past 90 years. The church struggled with the pressure of the new dispensation and succumbed quite early by giving up its rights and power. Owing to this, it therefore threw the lives and dreams of its faithful away. These combined to give birth to chaotic settlements, with a serious impact on the goals initially set out for mission.

Mission stations in the post-independence era have been faced with many challenges which continue to dog it. The problems are rooted in the past, the contestation on land ownership, the hopes of the people who for years were under domination of a few. The present, the promises of the new government versus capacity limitations of local government, the church's lack of preparedness to engage with mission issues in a new era. The new dispensation could not be served with old means because a shift had now occurred in a number of fundamentals comprising, the political, the social and the economic. Only a new set of mission tools could be employed to engage the new challenges facing the poor and the deprived. The tragedy is that the church used the old paternalistic models which led to continuous squabbles and misunderstandings by the black settlers and squatter occupying Epworth Mission.

CHAPTER 5: UNSUNG HEROES IN THE FORMATION OF RELEVANT MISSION INZIMBABWE

5.1. Prominent Methodists who participated in the liberation struggle

This chapter focuses on the luminaries of the Methodist church who played a key role in both the church and the liberation struggles. Despite the challenges of this colonial mission paradigm, it is important to recognise the role of the Methodist church members whom we shall refer to as the unsung heroes, who exhibited such social and religious activism. These luminaries highlight the signs of a crisis in the mission paradigm, its inability to address the complexity of the needs of the African context and its people. To their era they were a voice in the wilderness. These are the people who began to sound a diferent tune and call for a different approach to mission practice. These heroes represent a voice of protest against a biased and flawed mission approach and its attendant political environment. On the other hand, it represents the overall African Methodist *missio* perspective, and in that way the contribution of the church towards a relevant missiology for Zimbabwe. In order to have a better appreciation of the reactions and responses of the local people it will be appropriate to focus our attention to these unsung heroes in the formation of a relevant mission in Zimbabwe.

These activist legends and organisations they represented shaped the Methodist missionary outlook. They were reacting to how mission was being done and their actions help us understand deeper the missionary methods as they reacted to them. They provided a suitable context in which mission should be evaluated, understood and done. Their legacies are being included here to open up further understanding in mission history in Zimbabwe. The manner in which mission was carried out in Zimbabwe had significant gaps, such that Africans found their faith limited in addressing the realities they encountered every day. The rise in these luminaries represents attempts to embolden mission so it could encompass the holistic world view of an African. More often they were misunderstood, due to a colonial convenient approach which fostered a colonisation of mind, creating in African Christians a false consciousness. The church was also dominated by a white colonial leadership and drank from a colonised western theology which was grossly inadequate to address African issues. It negated Africanness, and propagated western culture and civilisation as gospel, this which was not sustainable and potentially conflictous. These are church's voices in the wilderness who tried to bridge mission from western to African context.

The focus of this chapter in particular is on Methodists' contribution in particular. The Methodist Church influenced and was also influenced and inspired by many clergy and lay people during the period prior to independence, during the struggle and after. Not all have been included in this discussion, the following are representative of the so many Methodists who have served God in ways uncommon, those who have highlighted the inadequacy of western missionary approach by becoming voices in the wilderness, sacrificing their lives for the liberation and emancipation of many people's lives.

Mujinga argues that religion was a riding horse of colonialism in Africa (Mujinga 2018:246). He argues that although the relationships between religion and politics was not an 'all weather' relationship, being used, misused and abused by politicians at will, religion on both ends was employed for colonialist saje as well as inspiration for liberation (2018:245). Maenzanise (2008:70) also concurs, showing how missionaries not only engaged in evangelism but also pressured for colonialisation of territories on behalf of their parent states. An example offered here is that of the key role played by Robert Moffart in King Mzilikazi's capital. The role played by Rev Charles D. Helm of the London Missionary Society in securing the Rudd Concession with Lobhengula in 1888 which led to the occupation of Matebeleland. This goes to the extent of showing how Western Mission in Africa came wraped in ideologies of conquest driven by political, economic and cultural interests. There was therefore a need for political, economic and social activism to liberate mission from such an entanglement. These unsung heroes entered the political field, because they realised that the theological orientation of the missionaries was inadequate in addressing the social, political and economic well being of the black population.

The church's reaction as a whole to the shift in the mission field in the second half of the 20th century is well documented (Maenzanise 2008, Moyo 2012). The changing times were represented by growing discontent over racial segregation and a quest for political independence of African countries. The formation of a different missional praxis in Zimbabwe, is represented by a significant number of African players, both the clergy and lay such as the following, Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Rev Ndabaningi Sithole, are but some of those who were pioneer nationalists. The first President of the independent Zimbabawe, Rev Dr Canaan Sodindo Banana was a Methodist minister and the first Prime Minister, Robert Gabriel Mugabe was a devout Roman Catholic while

the first black Chief Justice Enock Dumbutshena was an ardent Methodist (Chitando 2005:182). The underlying denominator among all these is that they were raised and educated in mission schools (Maenzanise 2008:77, Moyo 2012:16). These indivduals and the organisations they formed or represented projected a changing missional terrain and challenged the status quo as no longer sufficient or adequate to respond to the needs of the time. They not only visualised the future of a liberated Africa but they worked toward it while risking their lives and carreers to achieve it. They were prophets of their time.

5.1.1. Rev Thompson Samkange (1893-1955)

Rev Thompson Samkange is the earliest of the black Methodist religious luminaries to get involved in socio-political issues affecting the black people. This was way before black political activism became formal and organised in Zimbabwe. He represents the earliest of Christians who found out that the theology of the church then, did not address the existential needs of the black majority and attempted in their way to address these disparities. The colonial government and Missionaries in particular tended to regard African Christians as either objects of pity or, if powerful, potential threats (Summers 1999:75). Rising in the social ladder was often met with stiff resistance.

Thompson Samkange was endowed with many gifts and so much energy of an African in one, despite his age. He was an ecumenist who founded the Wesleyan Evangelists and Teachers Convention and becoming Secretary to its Mashonaland section. As early as 1921 he began to lobby for an all-Protestant African Conference, and when the Native Missionary Conference was formed in 1928 he became its first Secretary (Ranger 1993:318). It was no wonder that despite his limited education he was nominated to attend the Tambaram Missionary Conference in India in 1938.

Samkange was an early astute activist, discerning then, a need for decolonization of an African mind. Ranger (1993) argues that Thompson Samkange was a Methodist prophet of his day. He points out features of Samkange's early activism which was both spiritual as well as social. Samkange stressed the need for revival, aspiration for new life and affirmation of indigenous ethos. As Ranger records, by stressing revival, blacks would counter both spirit worship and purely formal Christianity. By 'stirring of a new life among indigenous people' blacks would bring to an end white racist paternalism and by reaafirming African value system which valued humanity,

Africans would avoid the temptation to be transformed into being black Europeans (Ranger 1993:319).

Rev Samkange was born Mushore Samkange of the royal Gushungo chifeftainship in Zvimba, Lomagundi. His father Mawodzewa was a great hunter who hated missionaries and Christianity, because of the oppression it had become linked with and friction it had brought leading to the first Chimurenga (Ranger 1995:2). Mushore went to Gatooma (Kadoma) in search of work in his teens and it was there that he came into contact with Christianity. Despite his father's hatred of the new religion Mushore was converted, baptised and christened Thompson. In February 1915 he entered Nenguwo (Waddilove) Institution where he trained as a teacher and an evangelist, after which he taught briefly in the Nenguwo circuit. He married his wife Grace Mano in 1919 and their wedding was held at Madzima Church in Makwiro circuit. Thompson's political interest was evident even this early. He started a movement called Wesleyan evangelists and Teachers' convention (Ranger 1995:2). In 1921 he became the secretary to the Mashonaland Convention.

At the beginning of 1922 he was posted to Wankie as an evangelist and because there was no resident minister there, he assumed all the responsibilities and proved very successful as he was able to speak all the different languages used on the mine, and he was popular with the people. Thompson was very gifted as an organiser, becoming the inaugural secretary of the African Missionary Conference in 1927. He was accepted as a candidate for itinerant ministry in 1928 and enrolled at Waddilove Institution at the beginning of 1931. Reverend Thompson Samkange was among the first generation of African Ministers to be recruited and trained locally, the second group to be trained at Waddilove institution. This group included the likes of Simon Chiota, and EsauT.J. Nemapare. They were ordained in 1936, having completed a six-year course of study (Gondongwe 2011:93). Before that, Waddilove used to train only evangelists, and those who committed to be ministers were trained while on the job. Rev Samkange's leadership was outstanding and undoubtedly, this led to his being seconded to attend the 1938 Tambaram Missionary Conference in India. Tambaram had a significant impact on his understanding of mission and the role which younger churches could play. The exposure was also confidence building as he began to visualize the capacity of Africans. One of the messages he passed around was on the place and independence of the church in Africa. To this effect he said there must be an

indigenous Church, 'self-supporting, self- propagating and self-governed... For the work to progress it must be by the efforts of the African Christians (Ranger 1993:332).

Rev Thompson Samkange and his children were among the earliest people to be involved in politics. His first notable political activity was in 1925 when he joined the Southern Rhodesia Native Association, one of the elite pressure groups that emerged in the post-First World War era (West 1997:133). His political and racial consciousness was being sharpened evidenced by his popular statement, 'Are we not also men, What Stops us black people from being like the whites? Are we not also men born with the spirit of manhood within us' (West 1997:133). Rev Samkange became President of the Bantu Congress in 1940 with his son Stanlake being its Secretary, being a post which he held until 1948 when Enoch Dumbutshena took over. His son Sketchley was also one of the founders of the National Democratic Party in 1960 (Ranger 1995). Rev Thompson Samkange died of heart attack on the 27 August 1955 (Ranger 1995:155), having fought and left a legacy in the church as to what it meant to be Christian in the world. He made a significant contribution to the nationalist movement by engineering its formative expression, raising consciousness of the ills and problems of the colonial administration. He was effective both in the church and took his faith into the public square arguing for the rights of the oppressed.

5.1.2. Rev Dr. Canaan Sodindo Banana (1936 – 2003)

Rev Dr Canaan Banana is described by the *Telegraph* UK as a man who had an honourable career as an opponent of the Smith regime and as a radical theologian (*Telegraph* 12 November 2003). Banana was a Methodist church in Zimbabwe ordained minister of religion and politician, who served as Zimbabwe's first President from 1980 to 1987. Banana was a pragmatic, existential, and radical liberation theologian, who sought to interpret the gospel in the context of the poor, marginalized and the oppressed in the society (Odhiambo 2018).

Rev Banana was born in Esigodini, a small village town in Matebeleland South province to a Sotho father and a Ndebele mother. He attended Mzinyathi Methodist Mission for his primary education and then proceeded to do teacher training course at Thekwane Mission in Plumtree. In 1961 he was married to Janet Mbuyazwe and together had three sons and one daughter. Canaan Banana then joined United Theological College in Harare where he obtained his diploma in Theology and

was ordained in 1962. Rev Canaan Banana served the church as a schools manager in Hwange and Plumtree before coming to work in Njube, where he was elected Chairman of the Bulawayo Council of Churches from 1969 to 1971. During the same time, he was part of the advisory board of the World Council of Churches.

Rev Banana was a vocal critic of the Smith regime. He is well known for having resigned from his ministerial position in the Methodist Church because the Synod of Rhodesia had voted against the programme of the World Council of Churches to combat racism (Thomas 2005:321). The programme proposed grants in solidarity with victims of racism and they were to be earmarked for humanitarian and educational purposes, of which the liberation movements in Southern Africa were the first beneficiaries (Targaart 2012:92). Canaan Banana joined the African National Congress (ANC) which was led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa as the Vice Chairman. The ANC was subsequently banned by Ian Smith the then Prime Minister of the racist supremacist government of Rhodesia. Banana, however switched sides during 1976 Geneva Conference to join Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) following disagreements with Bishop Abel Muzorewa. Banana fled to the United States of America, from 1973 to 1975. While he was in the United States of America, he pursued studies at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC, where he obtained his Masters of Theological Studies. He was arrested on his return in 1975 and only released to attend the Geneva Conference and later the Lancaster House Conference. On independence, Rev Canaan Banana assumed the honorary role of President of the new Republic a role he served until 1987 when the constitution was amended to give way to the executive Presidency. Rev Banana led the World Council of Churches Eminent Persons Group to South Africa in 1989, and was also the Organisation of African Unity's representative to Liberia as an envoy to broker peace (Thomas 2005:322). From his retirement from presidency he taught at the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Religious studies, Classics and Philosphy as an honorary Professor. He also taught at the United Theological College, the largest ecumenical theological institution in Zimbabwe.

During his term as President he is renowned for his key role of bringing the squabbling ZANU and ZAPU nationalist parties around the table for peace discussions which led to the Unity agreement of 1987. The agreement ended the Matebeleland and Midlands disturbances.

Canaan Banana was a radical theologian who strongly advocated for a liberationist missional praxis. In 1973, he alarmed the authorities by publishing his own version of the Lord's Prayer, while encouraging Africans to resist white supremacy (*Telegraph* 12/11/2003). In his book the *Gospel according to the Ghetto*, he articulated the gospel in the light of the experiences of the poor. He changed the Lord's Prayer to reflect the context of the people in the ghetto.

> Our Father who art in the ghetto,
> Degraded is your name,
> Thy servitude abounds,
> Thy will is mocked,
> As pie in the sky.
> Teach us to demand,
> Our share of gold,
> Forgive us our docility,
> As we demand our share of justice.
> Lead us not into complicity,
> Deliver us from our fears.
> For ours is thy sovereignty,
> The power and the liberation,
> For ever and ever.
> Amen (Banana 1981:1).

For Banana, the ghetto is the rural reserve to which the majority of the blacks had been banished. It was the roots and identity of every suffering Zimbabwean. He argued therefore that God was with his suffering people in the ghetto, the reserve (Odhiambo 2018). Canaan Bananna advocated a theology that addressed the experiences of the struggles of the people. He responded to criticism that his theology was not systematic, remarking that there is no systematic agony or systematic hunger (Thomas 2005:320). He advocated for empowerment of the people and led by example raising chickens in his backyard at state house and encouraging cooperatives. Despite the controversies that arose towards the end of his career, he stood up as a clear voice of the struggle of the poor and oppressed during the colonial era and after independence.

5.1.3. Dr Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo (1917– 1999)

Dr Joshua Maqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo was an influential Zimbabwean icon of the nationalist liberation struggle for independence. Dr Joshua Nkomo was a pioneering political liberator and a conciliatory nation builder—affectively known as 'Father Zimbabwe' (Benyera 2017:279). Dr Joshua Nkomo represented maturity among the African nationalist leaders who were more

interested in the liberation and freedom of the people and not power for its sake. This maturity led his critics to accuse him of being weak, prevaricating, moderate and a non-committal liberator (Benyera 2017:279). Nkomo was a conciliatory leader who, despite challenges with his counterpart Robert Gabriel Mugabe and post independence abuses on his person and of his people, he was always willing to talk peace for the benefit of the country. While in exile in England, running away from Mugabe he wrote two letters chronicling the abuse he had endured and proposing a way forward:

> From London I wrote two carefully considered letters to Prime Minister Mugabe. One detailed his political; mistreatment of Zimbabwe since taking office. The other proposed a non-political national conference chaired by himself of all the major interest groups in our country – churches, trade unions, farmers' organisations, professional bodies, local councils, political parties, together with representatives of students' societies, the armed forces, ex-combatants and youth groups – in order to trash out an agreed understanding of our problems and to work towards a reconciliation of the nation with itself (Nkomo 1984: 244).

Despite losing to Robert Mugabe during the first democratic elections in 1980, Nkomo was willing to serve the post-independence government for national interest, this was despite him being the earliest of the leaders of the liberation struggle. Dr Nkomo was the earliest of the revolutionary leadership to lead the struggle, beginning with the landmark trade unionism and the first organised political movement against the oppressive minority government of Southern Rhodesia. He served as the president of National Democratic Party (NDP), Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and the People's Caretaker Council (PCC).

At the root of his emergence as a political leader is the role played by his religious faith during the early stages of his life. Joshua Nkomo was born to a teacher and lay preacher of the London Missionary Society near Simukwe reserve in Matobo District, Matebeleland South. He received education in a mission school there before moving to Tsholotsho where he did carpentry before joining teaching for a short time. At the age of 25 he attended Adams College in South Africa, where he became influenced to become a Methodist Lay Preacher. The young Nkomo was no doubt influenced by the benevolent staunchly Methodist paternalism, that permeated Adams College during the principalship of Dr Edgar Brookes. He was sufficiently influnced to become a Methodist local preacher (Rotberg 1962:3). He then proceeded to do social work at the Jan H. Hofmeyr School of Social Work in South Africa, obtaining a diploma in 1952. While at Adams

College, he came across the likes of Enock Dumbutshena and Stanlake Samkange who were also students there. It was also during his time in South Africa that he came into contact with African National Congress leaders like Nelson Mandela. This political movement had an impact on his future political career. Returning to Southern Rhodesia he joined the national Railways of Rhodesia as a social worker. He was the first African to hold such a post.

By the time he came back to Rhodesia, there was already some political ferment arising from the discontent over the proposed Federation. Nkomo became involved in politics, initially assuming the leadership of African National Congress in 1952, a party which gained popularity on the opposition to the Land Husbandry Act of 1951. The party was banned in 1959 (Mlambo 201:145). In response to the banning of their party, nationalists formed another party, the National Democratic Party (NDP) in January 1960. The new party was banned in December 1961 while Joshua Nkomo was attending Tanzania's Independence celebrations (Nkomo 1984:96, Mlambo 2014:145). On his return, Joshua Nkomo and fellow nationalists resolved to form another party with a different name, which was called the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) ten days later in the same year (Mlambo 2014:147). Unfortunately, ZAPU was banned a year later in September 1962. By that time the leadership had already agreed to smuggle weapons into the country and war had begun (Mlambo 2014:147). A year later while ZAPU was still banned, and under the pressure of the colonial government and need to find solutions in terms of how to proceed with the struggle, a splinter party the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) emerged in August 1963, Rev Ndabaningi Sithole who had been the deputy president of the former, assuming the leadership of the new party. Leopold Takawira was its Vice with Robert Mugabe as the Secretary General (Nkomo 1984:116, Mlambo 2014:148). This put the liberation struggle into deep confusion at a very critical moment of the nationalist struggle. The leaders of both movements were arrested in august 1964 and sent to Gonakudzingwa (a holding camp for political prisoners) until 1974. On his release he went to Zambia where he continued the fight for independence.

Joshua Nkomo is credited with the name 'Father Zimbabwe' (De Waal 1990:3) in recognition of the critical role which he played from the formative years right to the end of the liberation struggle, in addition to his fatherly conciliatory tone of leadership. Although his party did not win the 1980 elections, his stature has not diminished in the post-independence state. It is his leadership that

has been credited with the crafting of the Unity Accord of 1987, and reconciling Zimbabweans from different political backgrounds.

5.1.4. Josiah Mushore Chinamano (1922 – 1984)

Josiah Mushore Chinamano was a renowned Christian educationist and liberation struggle politician. He distinguished himself within the formal education system of the colonial era, as well as the informal one. During the 1962 Highfields riots, where young people demonstrated against lack of secondary school places, he is well known to have come out of his short retirement, to help set up Highfields Community school to cater for young people. This initiative became famous as a community self help project, with Chinamano as its head. While in Gonakudzingwa detention camp, he helped many political detainees with their studies, by establishing in prison a miniature school system from basic literacy classes right up to university level.

Josiah Chinamano was born in Epworth mission. He was the son of a headman. He received his early education from Epworth Primary school before moving to Waddilove Mission in Marondera. On completion of his studies he came back to Epworth to teach, before moving to other schools near Harare including Police Depot. Having gained experience, he returned to Waddilove as supervisor. He went to study at the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, the first institution of higher learning in Africa to admit black Africans. Here he obtained his B.A majoring in History and African Administration between 1949-1950. It was while he was in South Africa that he met his wife Ruth. On his return, he was appointed Head of Marshall Hartley Methodist Boarding school where he served for three years, subsequent to which he was sent back to Marondera where he supervised 26 Methodist schools.

In 1955 he was invited to teach at Selly Oak group of Colleges, (Anglican and Methodist colleges) in England, during which time he took the opportunity to study towards a Diploma in Education with the University of Birmingham. He returned home after a year to teach at Waddilove again. In 1959 when the first Government Teachers College was opened in Mutare he was invited to be an instructor at the institution.

At the formation of ZAPU in 1961 he became actively involved, becoming a member of the Executive Committee. Through his political involvement he, Joseph Msika and Joshua Nkomo

were arrested and detained at the infamous Gonakudzingwa prison in May 1964. After a year, they were released for a few months and redetained in Hwahwa prison for five years. He and his colleagues were released on 6th August 1970, but confined within a radius of 5 miles of their homes. This did not deter him, as he continued to be involved in politics actively, assuming the post of Vice President of ZAPU in 1975. He continued his involvement with all subsequent discussions and conferences towards the resolution of the struggle.

Josiah Chinamano was a conciliatory nation builder. Asked if he was bitter about the arrests; detention and abuse, he had this to say:

> I suppose within myself I am bitter, but I control myself because I went into detention for a purpose. If I came back home with bitterness and generated bitterness for future generations, I would have defeated everything that I went out to detention for. The whites who will remain here after the majority rule will be lucky, because they will find out that there will be no vendetta. This is the sort of philosophy an African has (*Rhodesia Herald*, 29 July 1977, 23)

Chinamano reflects both his African philosophy and Christian upbringing in his political and social engagement in that he was not vindictive and vengeful, but kept the vision of a peaceful co existing society. He represented a breed of politicians who visualised a reconciled society without rcial segregation. At independence he joined the new coalition government under ZAPU and served as the Minister of Transport. This was however short lived as he and his ZAPU colleagues were sacked by Robert Mugabe in 1982. Chinamano however died in 1984 and was buried in the National Heroes Acre in Harare.

5.1.5. Stanlake John William Thompson Samkange (1922–1988)

Mr Stanlake John William Thompson Samkange is one of the early Methodist luminaries, who became distinguished in many fields, as a Zimbabwean historiographer, educationist, journalist, author, and African nationalist. He was a member of an elite Zimbabwean nationalist political dynasty and the most prolific of the first generation of black Zimbabwean creative writers in English.

Stanlake Samkange was born in Zvimba in 1922, Mashonaland in the then Southern Rhodesia. He spent much of his childhood in Bulawayo, Matabeleland where his father worked as a Methodist Minister. Stanlake was a product of ardent Christian upbringing, the son of the Reverend

Thompson Samkange, a Methodist minister and one of the early nationalist politicians. His mother Grace Mano was a daughter of a Methodist evangelist. Stanlake attended Adams College in Natal, South Africa ahead of Joshua Nkomo and the likes of Enoch Dumbutshena. Nkomo in his auto biography mentions that on their arrival at Adams College they were welcomed at the train station by Stanlake Samkange, implying that he was already a student there (Nkomo 1984:31). Samkange later went to the University of Fort Hare in Eastern Cape, South Africa.

He graduated with an Honours degree from Fort Hare in 1948 becoming the first African from the Shona-speaking area of Southern Rhodesia to achieve that distinction (West 1997:133). He returned to Southern Rhodesia to become a teacher and it was during that time that he became involved in politics. While pursuing his teaching career he began to make plans for Nyatsime College, a secondary school to be controlled by black officials rather than the government or missionaries. The school, which opened in 1962, provided academic, technical and commercial education for black Africans. He was deeply involved in the liberal politics of Southern Rhodesia during the 1950s and 1960s, He was secretary of the Bantu Congress during his father's tenure as president and continued under Dumbutshena. When ZANU was formed, he was part of the team and in 1964 he was elected to its executive as deputy publicity Secretary (Zvobgo 2009:118).

Stanlake Samkange later moved to Indiana University at Bloomington inthe United States to further his education, earning a PhD from that institution, after which he taught at several institutions including Harvard University, rising through the ranks to become Professor of African American Studies by 1978 at North Eastern University in Boston. On his return he worked alongside Joshua Nkomo. He was a great writer and De Waal has had the following to say about Stanlake:

> Stanlake Samkange set out to correct the false picture of his people's history taught by Europeans. He vividly drew together colourful evidence of an elaborate African civilization, wise in the ways of government, religion and medicine, practiced in overseas trade, and skilled in mining and manufacturing, agriculture and crafts a whole way of life on which the white man insensitively trampled' (De Waal 1990:8).

Samkange is among those Christians who believed that nationalism was an expression of one's spirituality. He defended Christianity against those who suggested that it was a relic of old

colonialism. Stanlake and his wife Tommie remained solid in their support for the church. Stanlake Samkange died on March 6, 1988 in Zimbabwe.

5.1.6. Nathan Shamuyarira (1928 - 2014)

Nathan Shamuyarira was a son of a Methodist evangelist and he was born in 1928. He attended Waddilove Mission for 8 years after which he qualified as a primary school teacher. He taught at neighbouring schools while at the same time completing his secondary education by correspondence. Between 1950 and 1953 he taught at Domboshawa, after which he shifted and joined African Newspapers as a cub journalist, rising through the ranks to become an editor of the *Africa Daily News* by 1956. Between 1959 to 1962 he became the editor-in-chief of the African Newspapers Ltd. In 1964 he went to the United States where he pursued a degree in in Political Science, graduating in 1967. He joined Dar es Salaam University in Tanzania, where he became a lecturer. True to his spirituality he remained connected to the liberation struggle. He wanted to see ZANU and ZAPU join hands during the war since they shared a similar objective. In that pursuit he and Chikerema joined hands to form the Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI) in 1971. The following are the Cabinet posts which he held in the post-independence era, Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications from 1980-1987. Minister of Foreign Affairs 1988-1995. In 2000 he retreated from Ministerial roles but remained active in ZANU (PF) his party. Nathan Shamuyarira died on 4 June 2014, having served both his country and church diligently.

5.1.7 Enoch Dumbutshena (1920 – 2000)

Enoch Dumbutshena was born in a Methodist Mission, Marshal Hartley in Zvimba area. His father Job Dumbutshena was a member of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union. His mother was a devoted member of the Methodist church's Manyano/Ruwadzano. Enoch was bred Methodist, attending mission schools at Marshal Hartley, Waddilove and together with Joshua Nkomo, attended Adams College, which then was a Methodist Mission in South Africa (Nkomo 1984: 30).

On his return, he taught at St Augustine Anglican Mission, then at Mzilikazi in Bulawayo. During this period, he did some correspondence work with University of South Africa (UNISA), obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in History and Politics in 1950. He continued studying going back to Fort Hare to obtain a Diploma in Education, then a Bachelor's degree in Education with UNISA. Dumbutshena became involved in politics in the 1940s where he joined the likes of Joshua Nkomo

in the Southern Africa National Congress, where he was elected vice- president. He received a grant to study journalism in America, after which he embarked on legal studies, becoming the third advocate in Zimbabwe, after Herbert Chitepo and Edison Sithole. He was part of the subsequent liberation movement until Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980.

In the independent Zimbabwe, Dumbutshena played a significant role. He became Zimbabwe's first black judge at Independence in 1980 rising through the ranks to become independent Zimbabwe's first Chief Justice between 1984 to 1990. During the Matebeleland disturbances, he was asked to chair a commission set up to investigate the violence that occurred at Entumbane in Bulawayo and other demobilisation camps across the country following the 1981 clashes between ZANLA and ZIPRA ex-combatants (Murambadoro and Wielenga 2015:35). Unfortunately, that report was never published. At his retirement as Chief Justice he became involved again in party politics. He formed and led the Forum Party of Zimbabwe in 1993 (Laakso, Kriger 2005:20). The party called for a cut in government expenditure and called for an all-party constitutional conference. Dumbutshena was also involved in church activities, chairing several boards including Moleli High School board of Governors, one of the top Methodist church mission schools.

5.1.8 Rev Andrew Ndhlela

While the other luminaries considered above had a political history added to their Christian persuasions, Rev Andrew Ndhlela never entered into the politics of the liberation struggle *per se*. However, he served the church at a very critical time of transition from white to black leadership. He was the first black General Superintendent of the church and President in 1965. Rev Canaan Banana paying tribute to Ndhlela in 1980, acknowledged that Rev Ndhlela had managed to keep the multi-racial Methodist church together through some very hard and racially tense times (Nheta 1980:6).

Rev Andrew Ndhlela was born in 1912 in Mhondoro Area of the current Mashonaland west. He was the only son in a family of three, born to Mr Ngirazi Chisiiwa and Vaida. (Nheta 1980:1) He attended Nyatsanga School in Mhoondoro in 1924 before moving to Waddilove up to Standard five. At this point because of the problem of fees, he briefly pursued teaching in a number of schools including Matenda School in Shurugwi until 1934. It is at this point that he was nominated to be a Circuit evangelist and sent to Thekwane Mission to undergo standard six, at the same time

being trained to become a teacher. He went back to Waddilove for training as an Evangelist. It was at this time, that he got married to Sarah Gombera who became a strong support through her role as Ruwadzano/Manyano leader.

Rev Andrew Ndhlela candidated for itinerant ministry in 1940. He worked as a precollegiate in Bulawayo before coming to work in Harare, where he doubled up as an army Chaplain. He entered Theological training in 1944, after which he served in what was then called Salisbury African Circuit. He served many other circuits from then culminating in him being chosen as Selukwe (now Shurugwi) Area Council Chairman in 1963. In 1965 he was elevated to the highest office in the land, that of General Superintendent, which he served until 1977 when the church was given autonomy. At this point in time he led and became the first President of the Methodist Autonomous Church in Zimbabwe. He retired in 1980 at independence. Besides being the President of the Methodist Church, he had been elected in 1963 to serve as the President of the Christian Council of Rhodesia, at the same time he was a member of the University College of Rhodesia Council.

5.1.9. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated an important development in the life of the church. The rise of the church's own unsung heroes who represented signs of a looming crisis and at the same time a consciousness of a need for an alternative mission practice. The chapter has articulated in brief the contributions of individual Methodists who played a significant role in the church and in the world, especially in the context of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe's independence. These individuals illustrate a departure from the *status quo* of dominance of one race against another. They represent a movement from acceptance of a mission practice that did lip service to the needs and aspirations of indigenous people, and a search for a mission practice that addressed realities of oppressed people. They also exhibit the transformative effect of the Christianity and education which they had received, though it had come in a colonial garb. These unsung heroes show how African people on their own translated this gospel in their context. As has been explicated earlier, these are but a few of the many African Christians who worked towards a relevant mission practice in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 6: MISSION AND DECOLONISATION OF THE MIND

6.1. Mission and decolonisation of mind

This chapter is a follow up to the roots of the crisis of mission in Zimbabwe, it examines the extent to which mission was carried out in close proximity to colonial privilege and power and how in the post-colonial, post-missionary era, such a missionary paradigm could not survive. It builds up from the chapter on unsung heroes, the individuals and their organisations who espoused a yearning for an alternative and relevant missional praxis.

One of the unintended legacies of the 19th century mission enterprise was the colonisation of the African mind. Through the mission station, people were easily enticed, pacified and controlled for the benefit of the colonist. A kind of Christianity was forced into Africans, a kind that made people believe that to be Christian was synonymous with a Western lifestyle, achievable only by being 'culturally circumcised', while discarding all that is African, identity, culture, worldview and knowledge systems, and embracing everything European (Banana 1991:1). This process was propped up by a Western Theology, which Wa Said defines as a disbelieving, anti-Christ, inhuman, racist, colonial scientific ideology whose main purposes are (1) to save the white races by all means necessary, (2) to exploit non-whites, and (3) to dominate non-whites economically, politically, socially, and spiritually.

Western Theology is an ideology of dehumanisation and depersonalisation – is the embodiment of all forces of evil, which contributed to the misery of the world in general, and to the eternal pains and sufferings, especially of the people of African blood (Wa Said1971:504). This westernisation left the African hanging in an unsustainable false consciousness, unable to self-determine and dependent forever on the European. A divisive and isolationist tendency made converts think that they were better than those living in the outlying areas yet they were not (Maluleke 1995). In effect converts lived double life (White 2017:1). Maluleke shows how some converts lived in deliberate hypocrisy. For example, because beer drinking was taboo at the mission station, people would drink their beer from tea-pots so that it looked as if they were drinking tea should the missionary walk in (Maluleke 1995). Mission Christianity gave rise to false identity and unsustainable dislocated existence. Yet those who came to live as new converts in the mission station were content to exist that way and perpetuate that kind of Christianity.

Conceptualising mission in the post-colonial and post-missionary era requires a complete re-evaluation of the form of mission that gave birth to the current church in terms of how that form was conceived, its motivation and underlying assumptions, conscious and unconscious. It requires an understanding that the form of mission that gave birth to the Methodist church in Zimbabwe was cooked in a colonial pot. Consciously, but sometimes unconsciously, missionaries worked alongside the colonial system to erect their systems and structures of community that at best served colonial interests of colonising and disempowering Africans rather than empower them (Molosi & Dipholo 2016:45). It was for that reason that some Africans who became Christians soon found the kind of religion insufficient to deal with their African realities. The Mission station was a popular model missionary approach which was characteristic of a kind of mission approach of the 19th Century which in turn was a convenient, but not clearly thought-out approach and unfortunately became usable by the colonial system to colonise the minds of the African, by modelling and inspiring a life and culture that was Western.

Through the mission station, the school and the village, the mission station was able easily to make the Africans completely discard their culture, customs, religion and their worldview, and adopt a totally new one in a mission station. As Dascal shows, 'colonisation of the mind' may take place through the transmission of mental habits and contents by means of social systems other than the colonial structure. One may be mentally colonised through the family, traditions, cultural practices, religion, science, language, fashion, ideology, political regimentation, the media and education (Dascal 2007:4). The mission provided an appropriate breeding ground for a mind colonisation, which stuck deep without the colonised being aware. Dascal also shows that those who are agents of colonisation, may be oblivious to the fact that they are actually accessories to the process, they are also unaware of the fact that for the most part their minds have themselves been colonised by others, whose agents they become by attributing to them the same epistemic authority they rely upon vis-à-vis those they colonise (Dascal 2007:5).

6.2. Defining the colonisation of African the mind

To understand decolonisation, we must first understand the nature of colonisation. Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana defined colonialism as the policy by which a foreign power binds territory to her own economic advantage (Wa Said 1971:502). Smith defines colonialism as

the invasion of the territory of another people, appropriating the territory as their own, asserting control over and actually or essentially destroying the original inhabitants through outright murder, hegemonic subjugation, enslavement, removal, or absorption into the society and culture of the colonisers (Smith 2010:270). Bulhan echoes the fact that a colonisation process is ridden with violence as it is meant to be psychological, asserting superiority of the powerful over the weaker. Bulhan argues that colonisation involves three stages, the assault on the body, the mind of the people, and on the land for purposes of pursuit of material exploitation and cultural domination, and European self-aggrandisement. Colonialism was therefore economic, political, cultural, and psychological (Bulhan 2015). The coloniser was desirous to exert economic, political, cultural and psychological superiority on the colonised in a significant way, and this could not be achieved in only one dimension, it required both physical and psychological interventions. While it was easy to achieve political and economic emancipation, it is the psychological aspect of colonisation that is difficult to deal with.

Kgatla defines colonisation of the mind as a subtle manifestation of political, economic, cultural and religious beliefs taking possession of and control of victims' minds by the colonisers. The purpose of colonisation was to introduce new forms of seeing reality and unconsciously or consciously relinquishing one's cultural norms and adopting new ones (Kgatla 2018:147). He identifies two levels of this process, the one being the external depositing of habits into the psyche of the colonised, leading the colonised to mirroring the coloniser in everything as beautiful and ideal, and black as backward (Kgatla 2018:148). Ultimately the colonised loses their identity and dignity as they begin to strive to be like the coloniser in all aspects of their life style. The second level is what Kgatla calls, 'learned indifference', which manifests itself through self-destructiveness characterised by a psychological disorder of being disinterested in issues that promote the self-worth of oneself. The refusal to join hands with others towards self-determination. At the centre of this indifference is self-hate, jealousy and pull-down syndrome. The colonised may defend the coloniser unawares that it is at his/her expense. He argues that a worse scenario is a resignation from the cause of justice by the poor. This form of defeatism and indifference to inhumane circumstances may be the goal that the colonisers wanted to achieve with the colonised as it becomes a type of self-fulfilling prophecy (Kgatla 2018:149).

The means of colonisation are the mind (Nengwekhulu 2000) and language (Wa Thiong'o 1986). These two play a very significant role in engendering and justifying a kind of social existence in the colonised. The mind is according to Steve Biko the chief instrument used to colonise people. Steve Biko argued that the greatest weapon in the hands of the oppressor was the minds of those whom they oppress (Kgatla 2018:150). These sentiments are echoed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who argued that the most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control (Wa Thiong'o 1986;16). These scholars show that the coloniser embedded in their system a domination that entered deep into the mind of those they oppressed, such that the oppressed would willingly accept and celebrate their oppression without complaint. They would not only comply but become complicit in perpetuating the status quo and the subjugation of others.

The second means of colonisation was the use of language. Language was a tool that was effectively deployed to alter both the identity, culture and worldview on the colonised, so that they would appreciate all things Western and look down upon their own heritage, culture and identity. Wa Thiong'o observes that language is not a mere string of words, but it carries with it suggestive power, language, through images and symbols, gave a view of the world, with a beauty of its own (Wa Thiong'o 1986). Language therefore is a powerful means of communicating identity, worldview and culture. By denying the African the use of their language, the coloniser was wiping, memory, identity and a complete world, supplanting it with his own. Wa Thiong'o goes on to show how English language was entrenched in Kenyan schools, while being promoted at the expense of local Gikuyu. He articulates how in a subtle way language was taking students away from their identity, worldview and culture towards the Western one. He posits thus, language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds (Wa Thiong'o 1986). This view is picked up by White who echoes how African customs were discouraged; African languages banned in mission schools; and African heritage ridiculed and suppressed (White 2017:3). Shongwe bemoans the anguish of seeing black people relinquishing their mother tongue in the former model C schools in South Africa just to have a 'better' education and forced to do English as a 'home language' and do their real home language as a first additional language if they are lucky enough (Shongwe 2016). This is the highest form

of a colonised mind, where parents celebrate another language at the expense of their own. Through the mind and the language colonisation was able to tilt and completely take over the African, considering that land was already in their hands. Colonisation was able to engender the superiority of the coloniser over the colonised for the pursuit of material exploitation, cultural domination and European self-aggrandisement.

6.2.1. Colonising of African land through the right of conquest

Colonisation of the mind should be viewed in the context of other cumulative stages of colonisation. The colonisation of African land is what Bulhan, in stages of colonialism, defines as classical colonialism (Bulhan 2015). Bulhan calls classical colonialism an assault on the land, the occupation of the land achieved through violence and conquest for the purposes of economic advantage. Classical colonialism, according to Bulhan, was meant to achieve economic superiority by affording the coloniser access to land, the minerals therein, cheap labour and secure market for European industrial finished products. The slave trade was abandoned according to Bulhan because it had ceased to be profitable, due to industrial revolution and other changes in European society (Bulhan 2015). What was now needed was space and land. Violence is therefore a psychological means of engendering the coloniser as superior to the colonized. So, the colonisation of the land and the resources had to be achieved through a show of superior force.

Mission benefited from land attained through conquest. As Maluleke points out, the truth is that the "power" of the mission Station approach related to land ownership and/or access to land. He goes on to argue that because the missionaries owned dispossessed African land just like the settlers and apparently in the eyes of the Africans, lived according to the same foreign cultural and economic norms, and under the umbrella of colonialist military protection, it must have been very difficult for Africans in general to make any distinction between mission and colonialism (Maluleke 1995:20). The conquest aided the mission and it gave missionaries similar power over those they presided over.

In Zimbabwe, a similar show of force was used through the Pioneer Column whose very formation was military in nature, evidenced by the forts built along the wayand the rise of missionary activity followed immediately after. After Lobhengula had been cheated and forced to sign the Rudd

Concession with an 'untidy cross' (Thorpe 1951:32), force was used at the slightest justification. The two wars (Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893 and the first Chimurenga 1896-7) (Zvobgo 1991:5) achieved this kind of conquest which gave rights to Cecil John Rhodes not only the right to divide and parcel out the land, but also to rule Zimbabwe for nearly a century to come. It was during this period that missionary activity and conversions increased as missionaries flooded the country, establishing mission stations, schools and hospitals along the width and breadth of the colony.

6.2.2 Missioning of African culture and worldview

The methods of mission have been discussed before, which include, the three self-model, self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting as popularised by Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson (Dorn 1982). Other methods included the use of local evangelists and the use of institutions. However, as has been observed in the preceding chapters, the mission station stuck as the default missionary method. The missionaries established mission stations with a church at the centre and infrastructural facilities for education, health and other social services which they used to accomplish their objectives. Further the missionaries established modern methods of agriculture, irrigation and technology apart from institutions. In addition, orphan houses, dispensaries and printing presses were also established in some mission stations (Hovland 2013:12). A work ethic was developed which in a way was designed to improve the African way of living (Frescura 2015:66). These stations were models of civilisation which were meant to entice the African. The missionaries achieved their goal by basically three means, modelling the new life through the mission, uprooting and culturally reorienting converts from their natural environment and by identifying young clones.

Sanneh argues that the stations were imagined little bits of Europe rolled up and transplanted to a foreign country. Their walls contained European civilisation, and outside them were heathen, un-enlightened elements of culture. Missions represented the boundary delineating one world from another, the age of civilisation from the age of heathen customs (Sanneh 2008:220, Frescura 2015:65). The mission was built on a hill, reminiscent of Matthew 514, 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.' Through this graphic presentation, it modelled the ideal new life to be envied by those who remained outside the mission. The model was attractiVE in that once people entered the mission, they would no doubt begin to see the new lifestyle as best,

theirs as undesirable. Of the biggest sphere of influence were the rural areas where most missions were erected.

Second, they uprooted people and planted them in a new environment, where the missionary ruled and converts became the subjects dependent on missionary benevolence. Converts here, were vulnerable and easy to instruct and change, as they now depended on the missionary than their community. Sanneh comments that this concentration on missionary life as the model Christian life; required converts to be 'dislodged' from their cultural system and to be cast on the goodwill of missionaries (Sanneh 2008:221). Their social and cultural environment was their sustainable source of wellbeing, psychologically, economically and spiritually. Through mission stations, missionaries removed people from their communities and placed them in a totally new environment, where the missionaries as leaders dictated the new customs and acceptable cultural practices. So, the chief task of the church was conversion of as many people as possible and turning them into Christians. The call to repentance and faith according to Sanneh was the call to renounce nonwestern customs and to repose faith in the ameliorative projects of mission (Sanneh 2008:220). This was a civilising method, in which the African was assumed to be backward and ignorant, lacking any knowledge of God, and therefore in dire need to be converted through throwing away all that was African, including his/her customs, beliefs and culture.

The other way of culturally uprooting the convert was by cutting the new convert from their natural ties with their village life cycle. Through the rules and regulations, instituted at the mission station, converts were discouraged from engaging in any activities of their communities. Rules on the mission farm were an effective tool in conditioning the African to begin to live a different life (Frescura 2015:67). Through the carrot and stick approach, it was made clear that the converts were not in any way supposed to join in village ceremonies aand rituals.

The missionary influence was significant in changing the African's culture and worldview, by also focussing their attention on the younger people. Missionaries understood that young people were ambitious and easy to teach new ways of life. Sanneh shows that they would identify and select the best and most promising young people of the school and to take personal responsibility in tutoring them, after which they would be siphoned off, trained, and equipped as faithful clones. Such young talent would become the most assured channel for the mediation of western

civilisation, and the weapon with which to undermine the authority structure of the village elders long considered impediments to civilization (Sanneh 2008:220). By catching converts young missionaries were convinced of a future led by the young enlightened Christians.

6.2.3. Western education

Missionaries provided convenient education for the coloniser and the church. As Maenzanise observed, colonial governments deliberately discouraged missionaries from introducing higher education for Africans preferring instead the establishment of industrial schools, for fear of competition (Maenzanise 2008:77). Besides, it took much effort to bring African children to school and Africans were poor. Those who did manage to do primary school, despite its limitations, viewed it as a significant success. The coloniser needed a literate workforce, and the church needed teachable converts. The churches received significant support from the colonial government in establishing these mission schools. For example, Rhodes granted missionaries land to build and carry out their work and provided salaries for the teachers. Primary education from the first half of the century, and later some few secondary schools, were funded by the colonial government through *per capita* grants and the payment of teachers (Zvobgo 1980). The missionaries were instrumental in achieving African education and social service provision. The question is to what extent? This criticism is not to trivialise the contribution of the church to education in Zimbabwe, then and even now. As Zvobgo (1980) shows, African education for the seventy years between the inception of colonialism to 1970 when Smith took over was solely administered by the missionaries. However, with all the good will the system had its limitations.

This question comes in the context of how far the colonial government was willing to cooperate with missionaries in terms of their mission work. What is clear is that the colonial government was willing to cooperate in partnership with missionaries in the spheres of African education and social services as long as their interests were being satisfied. This will be addressed in the next section. The missionary primary goal of social service provision such as education and health was for the furtherance of their religious purposes.

That type of education offered was based on an assumption of Western superiority, and African ignorance. Billy notes that missionary education was essentially Eurocentric and it demeaned indigenous African knowledge systems,

> … it is often alleged that traditional African education is non-formal, unstructured and not scientific. I, however, wish to enter the plea that such judgments attempt to remove the African system out of its own context and to treat it according to the values of another ethos (Billy 2019).

There was complete disregard of African culture, traditions and knowledge systems. European colonial education was based on the belief that "superior races" have the privilege and the duty to civilize *inferior races*. Mart quotes James MacQueen, as having said, 'If we really wish to do good in Africa, we must teach her (Africa) savage sons that white men are their superiors (Mart 2011:190). This goes to show the motivations of British Education policy in Africa. It was meant to impress upon Africans that they were ignorant and that they were inferior. The education softened the African so that they would be pliable to colonial administration. According to Nkomazana; missionary education produced Africans who would accept the supposed cultural inferiority of the Africans; accept the settler colonialism as a fact of life; and admire the white man for his power, wealth and technology (Nkomazana and Setume 2016:46). The education system was as a result closely guarded in terms of curriculum, administration and financing. To lose such a critical matter would thus have amounted to fighting a losing battle against supposed African barbarity and savagery.

Not only was the education guarded; it was limited to the interests of the labour demands of the European industry. As Zvobgo shows, Europeans preferred a type of education that was suited to their needs and not an academic one for fear of competition. When the likes of Joshua Nkomo and Stanlake Samkange attained higher education in 1934 from South Africa, Europeans increasingly felt insecure. As Zvobgo observes, there grew strong demands from the white population for more government control of African education and the rate over African political, economic and social advancement, with a view to preventing the Africans from encroaching on the European position (Zvobgo 1980:96). Missionaries were constrained to oppose the colonial administration. Zvobgo notes that it was not the intention of the churches like the Wesleyan Methodist which claimed to be progressive to antagonise the government which they supported and agreed with in many other

spheres (Zvobgo 1980:95). As a result, missionaries offered the majority African education in Sub Saharan Africa despite the constraints (Gallego and Woodberry 2010:298), and the emphasis was on practical subjects. Zvobgo shows that in 1952 there were only 10 secondary schools, and 9 of them were mission schools (Zvobgo 1980:153). The majority of mission schools were primary schools which were located in the rural areas. These were elementary which practically meant that all they offered was basic literacy and nothing more.

6.2.4. Giving of aid and development by Western missionaries

European missionaries used aid and welfare to support their African missionary enterprise. They built schools, clinics and hospitals through aid and support. Much of this aid came either from Missionary societies and voluntary organisations who fundraised in home countries, or from European colonial governments, who often did not have enough budgets for welfare. As Manji and O'Coill (2002) observe, missionaries were the precursors of development agencies as we know them today. The indictment of aid has been that it has left Africa poorer and its economies weaker. However, as Parker opines, a large number of Africans are today even poorer and many African states are less developed than they were before. Despite continuous massive inflows of foreign aid far exceeding debt servicing outflows, Africa has failed to use aid to make significant improvements in its development (Parker 2019). Dambisa Moyo questions why despite so much aid, Sub-Saharan Africa is still well known for the harsh degree of poverty, the rampant extent of corruption, the high incidence of disease, the dearth of infrastructure, erratic economic showing, political instability and the historical propensity for violent unrest and even civil war (Moyo 2009: 48). The irony is that the more aid was given, poverty, corruption, debt, civil unrest increased instead of decreasing.

This is due to the fact that aid has not come cheap to Africa, besides the fact that it created dependency upon the borrower, it has also left Africa with unmanageable debt, rampant corruption and complacency (Kwakye 2010). The support that Africans received instead of bolstering their economic capacity, actually created more dependence on the missionary. This is what Parker observes, that the more aid was provided, the more it would be seen as given and its value would decline in the eyes of its recipients (Parker 2019). Manji and O'Coill see the role of missionaries as complicit with an ideological warfare of the colonialists. 'If the welfare of Africans was not a

primary concern of colonial administrators and missionaries, control of them certainly was' (Manji and O'Coill 2002:569). They argue that missionaries provided a cheap form of private welfare as a means of controlling the behaviour of blacks, because they feared blacks would riot. Charity was not only designed to help the poor, it also served to protect the rich (Manji and O'Coill 2002:569). Missionary and colonial benevolence, in as much as it sought to capacitate the African people it had a degree in which it sought to colonise them as well. Missionaries may have had altruistic motivations, but in the end, the support they received from colonial government had other ulterior motives.

6.3. Means of decolonising the black mind

In 1967, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, A.L. Adu, could remark in a public talk that the political revolution that brought African leaders to power has undoubtedly failed to satisfy the economic and social needs of the people. Wiener notes that new nations had been crippled right at their birth by the continuing institutions, arrangements, and culture of their colonisers, to the extent that despite political independence. The new states have continued to struggle due to conflict, authoritarianism, corruption and struggling economies (Wiener 2013:5). The reason for the above is a colonial legacy bequeathed to African states at independence. The colonial legacy represents a situation where former colonies are in asymmetrical fashion inhabited by their own memory of the empire (Bayart and Bertrand 2006). The colonial state and its political economy remain subconsciously dominant in the new.

Bulhan (2015) has remarked that social and political systems seldom die or dismantle easily. This is particularly true if these have been deeply ingrained into the minds of people to the point that they represent reality. Bulhan identifies three reasons why political and social systems often reinvent themselves. He argues that, the economic and political interests they served in the past continue to prevail in subsequent generations. Colonialism brought with it economic and political systems previously unknown to Africa that served the interests of the coloniser. These systems seemed perfect and user-friendly, the political structures and the banking system, which served a larger system that is not easy to break. Bulhan argues that even the current globalisation system must be viewed critically in terms of who it does serve.

Bulhan goes on to highlight that the institutions, schools, law enforcement agencies, courts and others that served colonial interests do not readily change. Wiener points out that at independence 'an old and cracked dish and little fit for any further use was bequeathed to new independent government. Worse than that, it was not an empty dish, it carried the junk and jumble of a century of colonial muddle and "make do,"' (Wiener 2013:6). Wiener's illustration points to the state apparatus which was handed over to the new government at independence. Bayeh has lamented that post-independence African states are a western model; they rest on a colonially imposed system (Bayeh 2015:90). Carrissa Chew shows how laws enacted to control Africans in the colonial Zimbabwe were also used post-independence (Chew 2018). Zimbabwe still uses the colonial education system in policy formulation, and if there are changes, he argues that they are nominal (Gomba 2018:78). One example is that Zimbabwe still prioritises the English language as a measure of success, without which a student cannot progress. Many laws such as the Public order and Security Act of 2002 (POSA)is a development from Law and Order Maintainance Act (LOMA) of 1960 an instrument created to suppress any form of civil unrest. The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2001, the Broadcasting Act (1957) are all laws being used in Zimbabwe today, but date back to the colonial era and were used to oppress and control the African people.

Those who grow up under these systems, both the beneficiaries as well as victims are so indoctrinated through childhood socialisation, schooling, and adult experiences that they do not seek or accept alternative ways of looking at the world (Bulhan 2015). Colonisation is one such phenomenon which is not easy to get rid of. Thus, while African states and churches have gained their independence and autonomy, the colonisation of the mind is not easy to discard due to the above reasons. It creates in the colonised a false consciousness that the colonised continue to take pride in. This colonisation must be viewed in the context of the churches and mission products that were created.

In decolonisation every effort is placed towards re-orientation, redefinition and rebuilding of the colonised's self-understanding, bringing back their true identity, dignity and positive affirmation. White defined decolonisation as the meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuates the subjugation and the exploitation of minds, bodies, and land. Its ultimate

purpose is to overturn the colonial structure and realise indigenous liberation (White 2017). As pointed out earlier, Kgatla posits that the only way out of the entrapment of colonisation is to inculcate change in the minds of the colonised belief systems in order to embrace self-definition, self-determination, self-affirmation, self-love, and self-defence (Kgatla 2018:151). Decolonisation of the mind is the re orientation of the psyche, removal of all misconceptions regarding identity, rediscovering of self-worth, it begins with the physical and economical to the psychological as well as religious and theological.

Kgatla argues that the first step towards decolonisation is realisation, which he calls coming to senses. In his words, the first step in re-discovery is for the oppressed to come to their sense, so to speak 'pump back life into their empty shell' and to infuse them with pride and dignity renouncing their complicity in their crime of entanglement in the colonial system (Kgatla 2018:151). Without this realisation of the social circumstances, there is bound to be a false consciousness of being. Where the oppressed celebrates the oppressor more than themselves. Shongwe calls this abnormally a misadventure, where Africans have long ceased to play their own game and are busy playing other races' game (Shongwe 2016). The starting point is recognising that the *status quo* is an abnormality and seeking redress and alternative existence.

Bulhan proposes a paradigm shift by engaging in helping professions as an approach to decolonisation of the mind. Bulhan's contribution begins by locating the problem in Eurocentrism, which infuses cultural bias and errors, and that European experience is the most valid in the world and provides the only model of humanity (Bulhan 2015). To achieve decolonisation of the mind requires a complete epistemological, methodological and practical shift in worldview orientation within the post independent, post missionary existence. To this he proposes six shifts, which represent a movement from Eurocentrism to a more African centredness are as follows: a shift from Individual to Collective Well-Being, from Obsession with Instinct to Promotion of Human Needs, From Adjustment to Empowerment, From Passive Victims to Self-Determining Actors and from Top-Down to Bottom-Up Approaches.

The European worldview is individualistic. There is more emphasis of the individual liberty at the expense of the collective. Bulhan advocates a bottom up approach. The bottom-up approach forces

the self-declared helper to examine motives, question dominant theories, and be open to learn the experiences, thoughts, and traditions of those one seeks to help. The bottom-up approach also affirms that the so-called recipients of help own the process and product of change; that success and failure are shared; and that change is reciprocal because the supposed "helper" learns, is healed, and grows alongside "the recipient" of help (Bulhan 2015) This shift represents a recognition of the value other than that of the coloniser, a recognition that affirms Africanness.

Third, Black Consciousness is one other paradigm of decolonisation of the mind. This theory reaffirms blackness as authentic. Both black history, experience and culture world view is good. It reinforces the idea that black people are human beings, complete, full and total in themselves, and not as extensions of others (Nengwekhulu 2000). This theory evolved as a result of experiences of South Africans under the burden of Apartheid and was popularised by Steve Bantu Biko, it also spread in the United States of America (Shongwe 2016, Cone 1970). Shongwe argues that Black Consciousness is the theory that can liberate black people from self-hate and colonisation of their mind (Shongwe 2016). Nengwekhulu defines Black consciousness as: an attitude of mind, a way of life whose basic tenet is that the Black must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of birth and reduce his basic human dignity, an awareness and pride in their blackness by Black people and implies that Black people should and must appreciate their value as human beings (Nengwekhulu 2000). Black Consciousness argues James Cone, is the black community focusing on its blackness in order that black people may know not only why they are oppressed, but also what they must do about that oppression, it is the black man's self-awareness. To know blackness is to know self, and to know self is to be cognisant of other selves in relationship to self (Cone 1970:49). Black Consciousness seeks to encourage the black people to take pride in their identity and value it despite the history of oppression due to colour. It is meant to liberate the African from a belief that their skin, their status must resemble that of a European. Black consciousness has an economic, political, literary and religious aspects. It re-affirms the black worth in both economic, political and literary spheres. It justifies the reality and authenticity of the black experience of poverty, exclusion and resultant struggle against oppression. Kgatla (2018:152) shows how introduction of black community projects was used to redirect Africans in South Africa from a conviction of powerlessness and dependence on the European to self-affirmation.

Missionally, decolonisation of the mind must be seen as the affirmation of the black African experience of God and the African's response through their cultural and traditional experiences. Decolonisation has implication for an African theological and contextual orientation, which must transform both the theological institutions as well as churches, to how these engage their local contexts. The challenges of mission stations such as Epworth raise issues of African realities, which theology needs to appreciate and correct. Epworth mission can be seen as a crisis or a problem, but on the other side it awakens the current missional practitioners to the limitations of a colonial mission in addressing African realities. A decolonised mission must affirm African struggle for recognition, and fight for economic and political justice.

6.4. Decolonised Missional Theology- Mission as Liberation

Decolonisation demands a contextual theological approach (Billy 2019), considering that Western theologians did not remove their subjectivity and Eurocentrism in their missional engagement with Africa. It was for this reason that the form of Christianity they transmitted had a lot of European cultural import in it. One of the United Methodist Church Bishops, Dr. Ralph Dodge who came to Zimbabwe during the colonial era said something significant about the missionary Christianity:

> 'many of the churches of this country are agents of government in the oppression of the African people. ... . There is always conflict between a missionary and an African Christian; the latter wants both Christianity and freedom from colonial powers. There are some missionaries who support colonial powers. The Christian missionaries accommodated themselves to the psychology of the colonisers' (Wa Said 1971:505).

At one point he bemoaned the position of the European thus, 'there is an undeclared emphasis on seeking a livelihood and perpetuating their position as bosses at the expense of the Africans. (Goto 2006:158) Bishop Dodge, did not stay long in Zimbabwe. His stinging criticism of both missionary and colonial administration, resulted in his early, untimely return to the United States America. Decolonisation implies changing the mission and its image so that it affirms God's work in Africa and not a Western cultural crusade.

Bosch has argued that contextualization begins from the affirmation that God has turned towards the world, God through Christ his Son is where the hungry and the sick, the exploited and the marginalized are (Bosch 1991:430). The face of a decolonized missional theology must identify with where God is and what he is doing at that moment. African theology represents such an effort

to identify God's missional activity in context in the context of African worldview and experience. Billy argues that decolonisation is Africanisation. Noting that, Africanisation represented the beginning of a new decolonisation within theological trends that were interested in the search for an authentically relevant African perspective on the Christian faith (Billy 2019). Inspired by the rise of independence of African states, the rediscovery of African culture and the position and uniqueness of the worldview in African traditional religion African scholars such as John Mbiti, Lamin Sanneh and Bolaji Idowu have sought to interpret God's activity in language perculiar to Africa, away from a Western theology and affirm the existence and vitality of a relavant African missional theology.

6.4.1. A Biblical grounding

The starting point of a decolonized missional reflection is best represented in the Lukan depiction of Jesus' mission in Luke 4:18,19, where Jesus quoting from Isaiah articulated his mission in radical language that purposefully identifies with a particular group of people:

> The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18,19 NIV).

His mission is typically liberational in nature. It is 'to set the oppressed free'. It focusses exclusively on the poor and the marginalised. Wa Said interprets this to mean that Jesus, who came on this earth, came to decolonize the ones who were under the political and spiritual yoke of colonialism (Wa Said 1971:503). This biblical motif of God as a liberator and a decoloniser, a motif that depicts God as activily involved in the struggle alongside with his people, with a purpose to set them free begins earlier in the Old Testament Exodus story and goes through the exile and prophets (Dempsey 2009:81, Yoder 1973:297). He is a God who says:

> I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land… (Exodus 3:7,8 NIV).

This identification of the biblical story with realities of the suffering poor in the world, the Exodus, the Exile and prophetic utterances of Isaiah 61 which are picked up in the New Testament in the Luke-Acts was highlighted at the Assembly of the Commission on World Missions and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches in 1972. The Biblical story, especially that of

Exodus and Luke was interpreted as a story of liberation, lending direct support to the quest for political, economic, cultural and/or personal liberation (Yoder and Yoder 1973:297). There was criticism of this literal translation of the texts and the patronising of the 'people of God' to mean the suffering oppressed people in many parts of the world particularly the colonized. Critics particularly attacked the use of violence as a means through which the oppressed sought freedom. A tendency of the period was towards spiritualization of the text (Green 2014:175). Yoder and Yoder for example argued that the Exodus was not the war of the people but of God, that it was not a take over but a withdrawal. He argues that the form of liberation in the biblical witness is not the guerrilla campaign against an oppressor culminating in his assassination and military defeat, but the creation of a confessing community which is viable without or against the force of the state, and does not glorify that power structure even by the effort to topple it (Yoder and Yoder 1973:300). What critics like Yoder did not do; was to put the same criticism on Western theology which condoned violent take over of African land and watched as the colonisers abused native peoples through forced labour and inhuman treatment. What the Lukan and Exodus narratives offer to the debate about decolonisation is that God has interests in the challenges, especially the suffering of his people. It is God's mission not only to know but to act on injustices and oppression his people are experiencing. Both spiritual and temporal needs of his people concern him. As in Exodus God comes to deal practically with slavery and oppression, acting on the side of the weak to liberate them. Jesus comes to set the captives free. It is not enough to allegorise the human need and suffering, what the biblical story portrays is that action is urgent towards justice for those who are oppressed.

Kgatle (2019:60) and Green (2014) provide important direction in relation to the decolonising mission, in terms of its identity and focus. Kgatle sees Luke as representing the identity and work of Jesus which is steeped towards a concern for social justice. She defines social justice as a situation where benefits and burdens in society are dispersed in accordance with an allocation principle, where procedures, norms, and rules that govern political and other forms of decision making preserve the basic rights, liberties, and entitlements of individuals and groups; and human beings are treated with dignity and respect, not only by the authorities but by other relevant factors, including fellow citizens (Kgatle 2019:60). Kgatle's reflections are based on the context of the urban poor and homeless in the midst of plenty, with particular reference to Tshwane in South

Africa. Social injustice leads to so many poor people living in squalid conditions in the middle of plenty. Green defines the poor to include those who are misused, enslaved, or tyrannised by others. They are those conventionally understood as unlucky or unwanted, those people distinguished by their dishonorable status and miserable treatment. They are located on the margins of acceptable society, and their positions on the lower rungs of the ladder of power and privilege (Green 2014:176). The biblical story as represented by Exodus and Luke is about freedom and hope. It is a story of a God who sees, who hears and who comes not only to identify, but to set the captives free. The mission of the church is derivative mission which must side with those whom God has come to attend and deliver.

6.4.2 Decolonising mission and its consequences

At the core of a decolonising mission is the centrality of the underprivileged, and the disempowered poor. God is always concerned about transformaing circumstances of the weak. Green (2014) shows that decolonising mission stands on the side of the poor, the marginalised, oppressed and dislocated. This must take seriously the temporal, socio economic conditions of the world today. The poor are identified by Bosch as the marginalized. They are those who lack every active or even passive participation in society; it is a marginality that comprises all spheres of life and is often so extensive that people feel that they have no resources to do anything about it (Bosch 1991:434). The poor following, Green and Bosch definitions include, the displaced refugees (Buffel 2013), both economic and political, the racially and economically excluded, the unemployed (Nel 2011:4) as well as women and children. There is also a sense that poverty is now regional and it is predominantly in the South, and in formerly colonised countries.

Buffel notes that the state of the world poverty today is not an accident. This poverty is entrenched in the socio-economic and political structures of the world. It is a cruel trap that keeps many of the unfortunate people who are ensnared in this painful leg-hold cycle, in which escape on their own can be but impossible (Buffel 2013:243). Nel posits that the current system is a world wracked by vast economic inequalities between and within nations; a divided world where powerful elites remain the key players, the rule-makers and the referees (Nel 2011:2). Dealing with poverty begins by understanding the nature of the empire and how the empire is structured in a manner that perpetuates the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. A decolonising church should be

able to identify and denounce the empirial, colonial systems and structures that keep the poor poorer while protecting the interests of the rich. Mission challenges 'powers and principalities' with an agenda of conquest, oppression and 'thingification' (Wa Said 1971:524), a dehumanisation of people.

Decolonisation implies a deliberate identification with the poor and oppressed. Put succinctly, God is not a neutral God. Wa Said argues, that the idea here is that God is the God of and for the oppressed. He is a God who takes care of business. That is to say, a God who takes sides in any situation because his righteousness cannot stand aloof. He is a God who does not only listen to the cries of the inferiorised, but also does something for or process of their liberation from the forces of inhumanity (Wa Said 1971:520). God stands on the side of the weak in order to empower them. Decolonised missional theology seeks to empower those who have been deprived, and dehumanised. As Billy puts it, it is theologising with people from the grassroots through their own experiences, sufferings, needs, tears, happiness and hopes (Billy 2019). Mission in this sense is not from the top, but it is from below while taking into account the capacities and experiences of those being capacitated. It is mission with, not for or on behalf. It is not pre-mediditated, but contextual engagement that ensures dignity and confidence. This mission for the poor changes dynamics of all development programs and projects. Their charaesteristic must be collaborative.

6.4.3 Decolonising mission and the language of black theology of liberation

Decolonising mission would speak the same language as that of black theology of liberation. Billy (2019) in his blog asks whether it is possible to decolonise African theology, considering that the current theological discourse has deep historical roots, which have framed the way of life, moral criteria, theological paradigms, and language (Billy 2019). This is particularly true considering how missionaries employed all means possible including the texts to entrench white superiority and justify black inferiority as natural (Wa Said 1971:510). This is actually the starting point of a decolonial enterprise whose design is to remove all that is not authentic and bring about a language that speaks to the African condition and prospects. Black theology of liberation views with suspicion Western or traditional theology which it sees as having aided the colonisation of Africans and created a cult of white supremacism while justifying it but pacifying Africans (Wa Said 1971).

A decolonising mission speaks the language of the black theologians. This is a language of the struggle for survival. This is what Ngugi wa Thiong'o endeavours to articulate. When he says language in Africa was not only a string of words, but it carried suggestive power, bringing with it a complete world view, of life, daily struggles and hopes (wa Thiongo 1986:385). Decolonising mission articulates experiences of exclusion, oppression and dehumanization. It is not theoretical imagination but arises from a long period of pain and suffering.

Decolonisation is a reversal and reconfiguration of theology to bring back the dignity and identity of Africans. It goes further to articulate a theology that encoutrages the African to seek their freedom political, economic and personal by any means. It is a theology which is attempting to liberate blacks from the yoke of white oppression. Wa Said says about it:

> Its task is to analyze the black man's condition in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ with the purpose of creating a new understanding of black dignity among black people, and providing the necessary soul in that people, to destroy racism (Wa Said 1971:517).

Theology of decolonisation is a theology of the people and a theology of food. It addresses practical realities and the needs of people. That is, it helps the churches and other secular associations to unite and make farms and factories on a local basis, in order to feed the children of God on this earth. It unites the local people to organise themselves in financial cooperatives (Wa Said 1971:521). Decolonising mission converges with liberation theology on the issues of people's emancipation and addressing of their needs in the context of a history of oppression and disadvantage.

6.4.4 Transformation of racial and oppressive structures of greed and self-centeredness

One of the distinguishing marks of poverty in the past century is that of colour. Race has played an important part in the process of colonialism and it has always been biased against the black people who have been on the receiving end (Bulhan 2019). It has led some and with a fair amount of justification, to conflate colonialism, white racism and the missionary enterprise. Malcolm X puts it this way:

> My brothers and sisters, our white slavemasters's Christian religion has taught black people here in the wilderness of North America that we will sprout wings when we die and fly up into the sky where God will have for us a special place called heaven. This is the

> white man's Christian religion used to brainwash us black people. We have accepted it. We have embraced it. We have believed it. And while we are doing all of that, for himself, this blue-eyed devil has twisted his Christianity, to keep his foot on our backs . . . to keep our eyes fixed on the pie in the sky and heaven in the hereafter . . . while he enjoys his heaven right here . . . on this earth, in this life (Wa Said 1971:511).

Decolonising mission seeks to bring racial parity in the world by intentional acceptance of the error of racism and working towards addressing it in all its forms. This includes deliberate efforts to uplift of formerly dehumanised, dispossessed and economically excluded back to the table, and giving them space to seek redress of their past deprivation. Decolonisation envisions a racially just society, where the economic and political power does not favour one against the other. The current face of the economically deprived everywhere be it in Africa and elsewhere is black. A theology of Decolonisation calls for reconciliation between races in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ. But such a reconciliation is not the work of the oppressed, because, historically, he has already played his part for some 529 years, loving, forgiving, serving, and even dying for the oppressor (Wa Said 1971:518). The church is that appropriate place where this ideal can be addressed, due to an understanding of God who has already acted to reconcile himself with the world, and he expects the world to reconcile within itself.

6.4.5 Life giving theology with ecumenical interest

Working towards a decolonised mission is the effort of churches together and learning together ecumenically. Liberation, then, is not freedom from something or a group, as in a separation from a particular Christian tradition. Liberation is a process of contextual, ecumenical dialogue that opens Christian belief to all spheres of life (Sands 2018). The World Council of churches has been an important arena where this ecumenical convergence has been made possible, through the various publications. This vision is critical in ensuring that mission is holistic and contextual.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter has considered the colonisation of the mind and how it impacted mission during the colonial period and subsequently. The chapter has analysed how the colonisation of the mind can be a major challenge to missional orientation of the church, as the church may remain loyal to the colonial past. The chapter ended by discussing how decolonisation is a critical tool in presenting a relevant missional thinking and practice. While missionary work in Africa had good intentions,

it was complicit in the colonisation of the African mind. This is the type of colonisation which is not easy to get rid of. The kind of mission that was propagated was a civilising mission, which denigrated all Africanness, and replaced it with a Eurocentric orientation of Christianity. The missionaries used the mission station to carry out their mission agenda, which served very well in a colonising environment. This kind of new religion was not sustainable. It has led the church in post-independence to struggle to survive as it remains stuck in a now defunct kind of missional practice of the good old days. Decolonisation is important in recovering an appropriate missional thinking and praxis that positively empowers the church in Africa and the people. Empowering the people begins with a reaslisation of how deep the people remain colonised in the mind and finding and coming to proper senses. Using Bulhan's paradigm changes, and black consciousness it is possible to re-orient people to appreciating their identity and affirming their dignity.

CHAPTER 7: TOWARDS MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY FOR METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapters have considered the challenges which mission in Zimbabwe has experienced over the years including the period post-independence using the Methodist church mission at Epworth as an example. The preceding four chapters traced the history of Epworth mission as the focus of the study entails, while paying special attention to the impact of colonisation and missionary work on the people of Epworth before and during colonial era. The chapters two, four and five widened their scope by considering the role of the Methodist Church as a whole in this enterprise. The chapters two and three have also gone on to analyse the colonial era, tracing the origins of many of the challenges facing the church and the country at the moment. Methodist church in Zimbabwe autonomy (1977) and Zimbabwean independence (1980) exposed the church and its mission to challenges it was not ready to deal with hence the crisis. The question is, did the church adapt its approach as circumstances changed? According to David Bosch, with changes in paradigm, an equivalent shift must occur within the church's ecclesiology in response (Bosch 1991:7). In this chapter attention will be drawn to missional ecclesiology as a means to addressing missionary Christianity and particularly mission station Christianity inadequacies.

Attempts will be made to indicate the scope of new emerging elements of new missionary paradigm that constitute relevance of missional church. The argument will constitute an epistemological break from Eurocentric to Afrocentric model. Bosch (1991) suggests a number of critical ecumenical approaches of which constitute the section 3 above. Some of the critical aspects discussed included, mission as mediating salvation, mission as the quest for Justice, mission as liberation and mission as common witness among others that have been assessed. This chapter builds on this, taking advantage of the missional movement to suggest a relavant mission approach for today.

7.2. Mission Station approach of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe

As earlier observed, the Methodist Church mission in Zimbabwe was based on the mission station method (Thorpe 1951:81, Zvobgo 1991:26) – a phenomenon adopted by missionaries on the mission field without proper missiological reflection on implications and ramifications for the future. It is from the mission station that the majority of its membership has been constituted and nurtured, and from the mission institutions such as schools, clinics, children's homes and theological colleges, the church has had tremendous influence and contribution to society development. At the least, mission station Christianity was an unconscious duplication of the church in the West and at most it was an impulsive reaction to the resistance among the Africans whose social organism was based on a collective rather than individual (Agonga 2018). The mission station approach achieved a measure of success as shown by Henry (2016) when he posits that,

> the exploits of the Western missionaries were quite fruitful in Africa. Mission stations where missionaries lived and worked were developed throughout Africa. Hospitals and schools were built. Much was developed and achieved from this standpoint (Henry 2016:6).

However, in tandem with this apparent success, came some attendant challenges. The Mission station was haphazardly thought out as method of removing the newly converted Africans and placing them at an experimental village with an alternative government, where the chief was replaced by the missionary. People went to the mission for more than just the love for the new religion, but also out of fear. They also went to the mission for the benefits of education and other fringe Western benefits. This is particularly true with Chiremba (Gundani 2007), who sought

protection from the missionary during the 1896-7 Shona uprisings and the education that he received. The method was based on some form of prejudice, in that missionaries did not find it comfortable staying among the Africans. Sanneh puts it clearer when he posits that:

> The missionaries for example decided that it was impossible to dwell among the people and to share their life because it would have seemed like sharing the sinful life of unredeemed heathens even if it were physically feasible to do so (Sanneh 2008:219).

Little or no reflection or engagement was ever attempted on how to engage mission in an African context effectively. There was never an attempt to study the socio-religious dynamics of the Shona and the Ndebele in order to establish both the reasons for resistance or how best to evangelise them. The result was the challenges such as have been experienced at Epworth.

Today as new developments have emerged, which include end of colonialism, the decline in the Western Christianity, globalisation and the culture of post modernism, the innovative technologies and internet, mission as it used to be is encountering significant challenges in Zimbabwe. The change in both local and global politics and ideology, the shifting of religious terrain has called to question a missionary initiated church's preparedness to deal with issues of mission in a changed environment. The issues of the church's groundedness in its current religio-cultural context, the church's identity, its ability to respond appropriately to emerging mission issues to its ability to blossom in a highly competitive terrain of Pentecostalism and African Initiated Churches have emerged.

The church set up commissions to address land issues and disputes. For example, the Chirisa commission and the recent commission chaired by Dr Herbert Murerwa. The only challenge is that the church saw issues in isolation. For example in the Murerwa Commission terms of reference, it stated that the church was concerned generally and specifically with illegal invasion of church farms, some of which may have begun as early as 2000, that there was general concern about the concept of Christian villages whose expansion the church may not have envisaged at inception, for example, children of original tenants are of denominations and religions from their parents and may not be compliant with the vision of Christian villages (Farms Commission 2018:12). The challenges on farms are only signs of a deeper crisis of a people struggling to make sense of their identity. These are challenges that require a holistic definition of what mission is all about.

These new challenges call for authentic mission approaches, that address the past and current context holistically. A relevant missional ecclesiology must define mission and locate it appropriately. It ought to address the issues of sustainability, identity and deal with poverty at a practical and structural level. It is the conviction of the researcher, that the missional ecclesiology framework is a sound missiological approach that can bring respectability to God's mission in the country, for the following reasons. It is theologically sound; ecumenically and historically relevant as well as responsive. A missional ecclesiological framework is biblically grounded. It is grounded in the Trinity and places mission where it belongs and the church in a perichoretic relationship with the Triune God. Mission ceases to be some altruistic effort of some privileged individuals, located at a privileged geographical position, but a purposeful kingdom of God driven glocal initiative which takes seriously the concerns of the whole world, starting with those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable. Missional ecclesiology is dynamic, contextual and accommodative, and adaptive to changing context. For the Methodist context, missional ecclesiology relates well with the Wesleyan mission spirituality earlier stated.

7.3. History of the Missional Movement

'Missional' is a relatively new terminology in the field of missiology, only appearing in the middle of the twentieth century through the work of Bishop Leslie Newbigin and later blossoming through the Gospel and Our Culture Movement in the United States of America (Guder 1998:9, Goheen 2002:367). It represents a departure from the old term 'missionary' which has increasingly become associated with colonialism, subjugation and exploitation of people of colour by the West and it carries the baggage of guilt on the part of missionaries from the west (Bosch 1991:3). Missional seeks to be true to cultural sensitivity and dynamic, responding relevantly to a given paradigm, as opposed to the missionary which was static, rigid, paternalistic and condescending. Missional is a departure from us and them, North and South to a sense of glocallity, (Henry 2016:6, Kristensen 2012:27), a balance between the local as well as the global orientation of mission. It unearths the Biblical imperative of witnessing (Acts 1:6-8), beginning in Jerusalem to all Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth motif.

Macllvaine defines a missional church as a unified body of believers, intent on being God's missionary presence to the indigenous community that surrounds them, recognizing that God is already at work (Macllvaine III 2010:91). We take note that Macllvaine begins with emphasis on

the unity and goes on to individualise this community. This is a departure from an institution to a living body of people. He goes on to emphasise that these believers identify themselves as God's people, their purpose is bound up with God, as they belong to God. They carry out their mission around where they are, within their community. This is a further departure from seeing mission as what is done away from locality to what believers do within their indigenous community. This definition must be seen in the light of a departure from a Christendom understanding of mission, which saw a world divided into the Christian and the non-Christian, vis-à-vis mission being predominantly cross-cultural. Brouwer adds a critical dimension to the definition. He defines 'Missional' as God's *shalom* for the world, which is represented in *kerygma*, lived in *koinonia* and demonstrated in *diakonia* (Brouwer 2009:57). First and foremost, he concurs that Missional, is about God's shalom, the goal towards which God is working, the realization of the full potentialities of all creation and its ultimate reconciliation and unity in Christ (Gillett 1975:2). Missional according to this definition is authentic life of proclamation, fellowship and service to the community. Key concepts of a missional church include mission as participating in in the life of Trinity; the indispensability for a Christ-centred, spirit inspired and gospel shaped witness. Missional ecclesiology is an ecclesiology that responds relevantly to a changing world, a paradigm shift, deconstructing western altruist philosophy of progress and development, to authentic people-oriented transformation.

In defining missional ecclesiology Niemandt suggests that:

> Missional ecclesiology is a theological discipline that seeks to understand and define the church and does this from a missional point of view where the Church is understood as a community of witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify to and participate in Christ's work. It is the discussion of what the church is called to be and to do − its nature, its purpose, its hopes, its structure and practices (Niemandt 2012:1).

7.4 Background to the Missional Movement

There are two contextual viewpoints within which the birth to missional movement should be located and analysed. In all understanding, the missional movement development arises from the crisis of Christendom. The first view must be located at the close of Christendom, which Macllvaine explicates succinctly. The missional movement has its origins in the West, the misgivings and the over confidence in human agency which characterised Christendom. The peak of Christendom and the height of Enlightenment gave birth to the missionary era. However, the

sacrifices, the motives were misplaced. Enlightenment and the scientific discoveries of the century gave rise to over confidence in human agency. The success of the voyages of discovery and the opening of New World inspired excitement among both adventurers, businessmen, and missionaries alike to explore. Mission work was viewed as an effort of the church in spirit of civilizing of the heathen. Macllvaine traces this development in the following manner, he notes that Christianity and Western Enlightenment principles tended to coalesce in the missionary endeavours launched from Europe and North America (Macllvaine III 2010:94). There was so much confidence in human agency, such that it was easy for Christianity to be conflated with colonialism in the guise of civilising backward peoples. The West was Christian and civilised while other peoples were heathen, savage and barbaric. He goes on to say, 'people became so convinced of the importance of human initiative that they hardly thought of God as being active in mission' (Macllvaine III 2010:94). This period saw the church in Europe replicating itself in the mission fields, with all its images, in what Bosch articulates as 'replicas of the churches on the mission agency's "home front", blessed with all the paraphernalia of those churches, "everything from harmoniums to archdeacons"' (Bosch 1991:5). The result of this understanding of the world was some insincere altruistic interventions, the stations, schools and clinics which did little to transform people holistically. As political waves changed, mission became suspect in many cultures and resented.

The second viewpoint relates to the gradual but significant changes and shift in global political and religious terrain of the time. The shifts are represented by, the rise in nationalist sentiment in the Eastern and Southern former colonies of the West, the exponential growth of the church in the east and south, over against the decline of the church in the west. Laing notes that the collapse of colonialism, global westernisation, resurgent secularism, and a revolutionary optimism provided 'a volatile mix that made the 1960s volcanic' (Laing 2011:226). Beginning with Indian independence in 1947 to the expulsion of missionaries by China in 1951-2, voices of emancipation were getting louder. Mission confidence began to wane, and questions began to be asked as to what form and shape future mission would take (Kwiyani 2015:54). Added to this shift it must be observed that the centre of gravity for the Christian faith had begun to shift to the global South and to the East. Jenkins states that, over the last century (20th Century), the centre of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably south ward, to Africa and Latin America (Jenkins 2007:1). While this shift of Christianity is heading south, the church in Western societies has been pushed

to the margins and is facing serious decline (Niemandt 2012:2, Sheridan and Hendriks 2013:1). These changes put pressure on the missionary circles to engage on the theological implications of these shifts. The debate on the implications of these in mission, resulted in the birth of the *missio Dei* paradigm, a paradigm that was proposed initially by Karl Barth as *misso actio* in 1932 and concretised by Karl Hartestain in 1933 as *missio Dei* (Macllvaine III 2010:96). *Missio Dei* as the solution to the crisis, shifted the focus from man and church to seeing mission as the work of the Triune God, and the resultant reaffirmation of the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

7.5 The hypothesis of Leslie Newbigin

The foundations of the Missional movement however, in principle must be credited to Bishop Leslie Newbigin who, more than anyone else, is seen as the father of missional ecclesiology (Macllvaine III 2010:98). Leslie Newbigin (1909–1998) was a missionary and a missiologist who was born in England and went to Cambridge University and after graduation was sent to India as a missionary with the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland. He became bishop in India in 1947 and an active ecumenical practitioner. Goheen makes note of two factors that influenced Newbigin. His missionary work in India challenged his Christendom orientation. What he had been trained to do was not compatible with the destination's culture prompting him to rethink his premises. Secondly, Newbigin's close involvement and participation within the ecumenical movement in the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches, shaped his understanding of mission, especially as he observed the growth of the church in the south and decline in the west (Goheen 2002: 355). Critical to his observation was that the gospel needed to be appropriated in the context of the culture. In his missional ecclesiology he proposed two dimensions thus, being culturally sensitive and yet radically counter-cultural at the same time ((Macllvaine III 2010:99). This proposal gave birth to a number of works which built upon this foundation. Key among these was the Gospel and our culture movement in the United States of America. Darrell Guder's work is key defining missional movement.

Missional ecclesiology is a new philosophy of understanding God's mission in the world from traditional western Christendom, institutional framework of mission stations and understanding the church as in the driving seat instead of God/Trinity to a living dynamic community of believers who understand themselves as called to witness beginning where they are. It is a departure from

institutional, static, power, attractional, to a fluid, vulnerable, incantational transformative discipleship movement that is continually searching for the guiding of the spirit with the intent to participate with him.

7.6 Theological underpinnings of a Missional Ecclesiology

The work of Niemandt (2012) is a helpful guide in defining a theological basis of Missional Ecclesiology. Niemandt's work rides on the work of the World Council of Churches' critical offering, *Together Towards Life* Documents (2012). Niemandt's work is helpful because it provides a framework that clarifies missional ecclesiology for the preceding circumstances. He identifies what he calls six critical contours defining missional ecclesiology. These contours help in formulation of a relevant ecclesiology in the context of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

7.6.1 Participation in the Life of the Trinity

Niemandt begins by locating the mission at the heart of the Triune God and the love that binds together the Holy Trinity, overflows to all humanity and creation (Niemandt 2012:2). The language of participation is a language of humility. It speaks less of agency but more of cooperation. It is God who has a mission to accomplish and invites the church to take part in what he is already doing (WCC 2012). The triune God himself is the principal agent of mission in *missio Dei*. God is already at work. Mission as participation in the missionary work of God requires that the missionary who engages in the mission meets the work of God, who has already worked in the new missionary context before him (Sonea 2017:77). It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world. These words are derived from Christopher Wright, who said:

> It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God's mission (Wright 2010).

The church's involvement in mission is its privileged participation in the actions of the triune God. Mayer puts it succinctly, 'if mission is a response to the love of the triune God, the Church is participating in, and not mastering, her own plan' (Mayer 2012:129). The church is an invited and sent community. It is and indeed the *ekklesia* called out to participate and service the *missio Dei*.

7.6.2. Joining in with the Spirit

Joining in with the Spirit emphasises three critical elements in the church's own understanding, witnessing, transformational presence and liberation. Joining in with the Spirit emphasises the church's orientation, role and place of witness to the world, enabled and empowered by the Spirit who gives the church the gifts so that the church can participate in the work of reconciliation (WCC 2012:12). The church is sent in the world in the power and wisdom of the Spirit, so that the church is able to make a critical discernment of what the spirit is doing and joining in. Niemandt highlights that the church is finding itself in a complex world. The church itself is a complex system which finds itself in a dynamic reality where the dynamism also entails complexity. He says the church is in an age of accelerations (Niemandt 2019:151). The spirit of God is the spirit of wisdom, helping the church to discern creatively the direction of the spirit. The church must be able to discern in the context of diverse spirits, including evil spirits, "ministering spirits" (that is angels, Heb. 1:14), "principalities" and "powers" (Eph. 6:12), the beast (Rev. 13:1-7), and other powers—both good and evil (WCC 2012:12). The church must visualise itself; finding out where the authentic spirit is and what he is doing and joining in authentic witness that gives effect to life. God through his spirit is already at work in the world bringing out the potentialities of all his creation and ultimately bringing about *shalom*.

The church is an agent in the transformation of society, so that it becomes the world for all, living and flourishing. The church's witness includes the engagement of structures of society both locally and at global level that deny or reduce capacity of the poor to flourish. In a globalizing world, where market forces guide world economy; it is the poor countries that remain poor with their citizens facing death. The Spirit stimulates, motivates and gives dynamism to life's journey. It is the energy. Spirit speaks of the transformative factor of all creation for life in its fullness and calls for a commitment to resist all forces, powers, and systems which deny, destroy, and reduce life (WCC 2012:12). Such an understanding inspires the church to the task of worship and prayer as it continuously seeks to discern the activity and guidance of the spirit and appreciate its role.

Participating in the spirit also has implications for liberation, social justice and inclusivity. Jesus came and pronounced that he had come to liberate the oppressed, to open eyes that are blind, and to announce the coming of God's reign (Luke 4:16-18). He did this by relating with all the people

including those on the margins. This liberation was multi-faceted and it was spiritual in that, those with evil spirits were set free and, it was social in that, the excluded were brought into the community thus, the women, the disabled and the sick were all accomodated. It was economic. But also, the rich and powerful were set free from their obsession with power and riches of the world. The church has a calling to be a liberative presence in the various spiritual, social and economic bondages that exist in the world today. The Spirit must empower the church to deal with disparities that leave the poor marginalised. The political processes, that keep the rich richer and poor poorer must be revolutionised. Those in the margins deserve to be brought on to the table and gain the similar access. Ministry with those on the margins speaks to retrieving the dehumanised from the periphery appreciating that there are also created in the image of God.

7.6.3. Ecclesiology follows Mission

The structure or form of the church must be guided by its understanding of being a sent-out community. The basis of the argument is that ecclesiology follows mission, the church does what it *is* and then organises what it does (Niemandt 2012:5). The priority of the church is its self-understanding of what it is, and this must take precedence over its function, so that its function is properly informed. This leads us to Kirk's proposal, that the church is by nature missionary to the extent that, if it ceases to be missionary, it has not just failed in one of its tasks, it has ceased to be church. That is the church's self-understanding and sense of identity is inherently bound up with its call to share and live out the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and the end of time (Kirk 1999:30). Mission therefore as originating in the *missio Dei*, gives birth to the form and function of a community. The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae,* (Bosch 1991:370, 391 and Heyns 1978:374). In this perspective it is not the church that has a mission but rather the mission that has a church (WCC 2012:22). Mission does not belong to the church; it is not something people do − it is a characteristic of the Triune God. Sacrifice and all altruistic gestures must be viewed and done in the service of the *missio Dei*, not for gaining of leverage over the people in the margins.

7.6.4. Incarnational approach

A common discrepancy in the mission station ecclesiology was the distance and the objectification of the people being evangelised. The missionary and the community were far apart, so was the church which often was built on a hill. Becoming a member of the church required movement.

Incarnation implies the reverse; Christ comes to where people are and brings them the good news. The creation of an institution which worked around the attractional model, was a significant impediment to mission. Kok and Niemandt bemoan the loss of the Christological ethos of incarnation in the church and the crisis of the institutional church today is that it has lost the way of Jesus (Kok& Niemandt 2009:1). The church must embody the love of Jesus as he modelled it during his ministry. Billings makes the emphasis when he says, as those called to imitate this humble love (Philippians 2: 5), missionaries must leave the compound, learn the language, becoming one with the people in need, just as Christ became one with a particular human culture (Billings 2004:188). The incarnational approach grounds the church amongst the host people, the poor and the needy, just as Christ dwelt among the people he had come to serve, the church must immerse itself in the community. This approach presumes that the Church is not merely a free-floating, ultra-mundane entity. It is of an "incarnational" nature. It exists in the midst of differing particular contexts in this world (Mayer 2012:105). Kok and Niemandt go further to outline the nature of the missional ecclesiology.

Ecclesiologically, we have to be incarnational instead of attractional: Jesus's incarnational ethos results in the bringing of the presence of God into marginalised places or spaces where such presence is usually believed not to be found (Kok& Niemandt 2009:6). The church must assume the shape of the community, be one with it in a manner that the community begins to appreciate it and welcome its propositions of love. Niemandt (2009:5) describes four important elements of a missional-incarnational lifestyle, these are presence, proximity, powerlessness and proclamation. These will be analysed below. Presence has implications for becoming part of the fabric of a community and to engaging in the humanity of it that community. A mission of presence must become immersed in the community and not distance itself. Proximity assumes not only presence, but genuine availability. It has to do with spontaneity as well as regularity in the communities the church inhabits. By powerlessness Niemandt speaks of servant hood and humility in the relationship with the world. It is a *kenotic* lifestyle where baptism and the Lord's Supper remind the church that Christian life is shaped by the identification with the death of Christ. At the heart of incarnation is 'suffering alongside' and proclamation. An incarnational approach requires that we will be willing to share the Gospel story with those within our world (Niemandt 2009:6).

A missional ecclesiology must inform preparedness to move away from a point of strength, the mission, to where the people are. The church must be prepared to decentre itself and move to the margins. The current missionary churches and their membership suffer from the missionary legacy in which ministry was seen as power. Owing to this state of affairs, the church is unable to appropriately relate to the suffering and the nature of their suffering. The church is a place, a building to which people continue to flock and be served. The church is viewed in institutional terms and not in terms of community of witness. The strength of the incarnational ecclesiology is in its vulnerability, its fluidity, its ability to penetrate society to transform it by the love of God. The church proclaims the love of Christ from the same position as the marginalized, and as such the marginalized can appreciate the love.

7.6.5. Relational approach

A fifth aspect being brought up in relation to the issue of relevant mission is that of relationality. Christianity has a deep relational component which is evidenced by appreciating a covenant-making God who wants a relationship with his people. Conversion is more than a change in direction; it is a change in connection (Sweet 2009:128). Relationships must be understood in the context of discipleship as well as fellowship. Mission is expressed in relationships. Human relationships are fundamental aspects of their beings and they form the cornerstone of their ontological interactions and being. If one member suffers, the whole body should suffer (Kgatla 2016). The church is not a group of individuals, it is a coming together of a covenant community, related to God through Christ and related to each other. 'koinonia means an open and flexible community, directed at establishing significant signs of the kingdom of God in this world' (Brouwer 2009:57). In an African setting, relationships are concrete, they are the basis of acceptance or rejection. Ubuntu is one such understanding of relationships, it expresses the interconnectedness, common humanity and the responsibility of individuals to each other (Kusemwa 2019). Relationships emphasise the need for reconciliation. African society was built on relationships which were strong. Those who are imbued with God's love are said to possess the quality of Ubuntu that seeks to empower and transform those who are socially dehumanised and rejected purely because of their material and social conditions (Kgatla 2016). The concept of ubuntu is particularly significant.

7.6.6. The Kingdom of God

Missional ecclesiology is grounded and the Triune God and rooted in the vision of the Kingdom of God. The goal of a missional ecclesiology and its self-understanding is that of the Kingdom of God which has been inaugurated in Jesus Christ and is still not fully been realized. The church is not the Kingdom of God, it exists in the world, with its limitations and frailties, and in all its weaknesses it is God's instrument in the service of the *missio Dei*. The kingdom inspires the missional church to pray and act 'Your Kingdom come and your will be done'. This anticipation helps the missional church not to confuse its present role in the midst of the fast-changing world. The missional church also points to that coming kingdom as it signposts to that Kingdom. 'The Missional Church …represents God's reign as a sign, foretaste, and instrument of the kingdom; and it exists as its community, servant, and messenger' (Franklin 2004:94).

This Kingdom is described as God's *shalom*. By Kingdom, Jesus means God's 'dream society' on earth, spreading out from the land of Israel to encompass the whole world. Although the church must not be equated with the Kingdom, it cannot be separated from it either. The church lives and proclaims the gospel here and now and is both a sign and promise of the Kingdom (Niemandt 2012:5). Missional imagination keeps the goal of the church away from men's altruistic intentions, but ultimately higher in the kingdom of God. It escapes the temptation of the church settling for some political ideology, of accepting men's success as the Kingdom as Christendom did, it is a call to radical and costly discipleship, towards a vision of life and justice for all, towards a world reconciled to God and itself.

7.7. Towards a Missional Ecclesiology for Zimbabwe

7.7.1 Critical Elements of an African Missional Ecclesiology

A proper African ecclesiology that addresses the context aforementioned must include certain tenets that mark it off as unique. However, as Niemandt has alluded, Churches are complex organisations that serve in a complex world and these elements help give direction to what should be included. What weakened the efforts of Methodist missionary efforts was a failure to appreciate the African social, political and religious worldview. Their perception that Africans lacked religion and did not know God and the heavy leaning on a civilizing mission, which became highly discredited due to the evils of colonialism diluted the overall effect of the missionary effort. The methods missionaries employed and their motives which became suspect, gave birth to a church

that would develop problems in the future. A particular issue relates to the fact that their lack of contextualisation and not taking cognisance of the culture and the worldview of the colonised later greatly affected the mission in the post-colonial era (Marumo 2018:1). Dr Joshua Nkomo (a Methodist Local Preacher and former Vice President, when he authored a preface to the Methodist Centenary publication edited by Canaan Banana), said that mission gave birth to a foreign church in a foreign land (Banana 1991:1). In his view, since the church still used predominantly the English language, sang English songs, used English instruments and symbols in liturgy, while doing little to bring African culture to bear on worship meant that the church remained a foreign institution.

This is not to underestimate the significant groundbreaking work which the missionaries did in education, health and infrastructure. This analysis is meant to highlight the sources of current challenges in the work of mission and how these can be rectified if the church is to move into the future. A missiological framework must deal with these challenges for the benefit of a future Zimbabwean church. Two critical works assist in locating a relevant missiology for the Methodist church in Zimbabwe. Sheridan's work, '*The Missional Church Movement'* (2013), and that of Henry '*Reflections on a missional ecclesiology for Africa's expressions of Christianity through the Tswana lens*' (2016). The two scholars assist by providing the elements that must be included in an appropriate missional ecclesiology for an African context. Sheridan and Hendricks (2013:3) propose 5 key elements in a missional ecclesiology which are discussed below.

Missional ecclesiology is biblical, theological and needs to be grounded in deep biblical and theological reflection (Han and Beyers 2017:8). This implies that missional ecclesiology must draw from the biblical theology as its major and overarching source. Faithfulness to the Biblical narrative enhances authenticity of the movement. There is always a risk that in trying to contextualise, scholars fall into the trap of syncretism. Adeyemo warns, many churches and Christian leaders in a bid to contextualise are tempted to adopt uncritically indigenous customs and practices which border on syncretism (Adeyemo 1996:7). The second temptation is that the African church ends up making the same mistakes that Christendom made, becoming another cultural enclave, enslaved by its context, time and culture, unable to see beyond itself. Sheridan and Hendricks (2013:8) observe that without a return to an understanding of God as the subject

there can be no missional church. Biblical faithfulness ensures that in becoming contextual the church in Africa, is not compromised.

Second, missional ecclesiology is historical and is built on and take account of the historical developments and reflections on the church. There are two aspects of history that must be embedded in an African ecclesiology, the historical evolution of the church in Africa, what Henry brings out as African heritage and experience (African struggle, African nationalism and African reflection on her experience) (Henry 2016:5). The second is the history of the church itself, its traditions dating back from its inception, taking note of key developments in creeds and confessions. Missional ecclesiology must incorporate the story of both the church and the people. History brings with it the manner in which the experiences of the believers are recognised so that the church speaks to their past as much as it speaks to their future. The historical reality of the story is merged into their struggles and challenges.

Third, missional ecclesiology is contextual and develops within particular cultural contexts and seeks to be faithful to *missio Dei* and yet remain relevant within local contexts. Sheridan and Hendriks point out that understanding the relationships between gospel, church, and culture is of primary significance, they view a missional shift as the process of learning to "break the code" of the local cultural context in which the church finds itself (Sheridan and Hendricks 2013:7). The implication being that ecclesiology embraces the setting of the believers completely. As Henry implores, if we are to believe that theology is always contextual and the Christian faith and message 'liquid' and inherently adaptable and translatable, then it naturally follows that what we need to do in Africa is to establish continuity with the African world view and bridge the gap between the Christian faith and traditional religion as well as the transforming cultural and 'religious' scene (Henry 2016:4). An African world view and philosophy becomes particularly critical in this endeavour. Africa has a rich world view of God, and philosophy like '*ubuntu*' which find resonance with Christianity and appreciating its contribution brings continuity with African Christians.

Fourth, missional ecclesiology is eschatological and drives the church to be dynamic in its movement toward the consummation of all things. Kritzinger aptly suggests that all Christian

theology is eschatological in that it is concerned with the Kingdom of God, i.e., the 'new earth' which is becoming a reality in the present (Kritzinger 1987:14). Bongmba argues that Christianity is eschatology, it is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionising and transforming the present (Bongmba 2018:247). Bongmba criticises the missionary view of eschatology which focused on the future and bordered on escapism. He argues that this view was confusing to the African world view. Tapping into the New Testament eschatology, he observes that incarnation of Christ opened a future dimension and made eschatology a Christological event, and with Christ at the centre of all things, God's promises to humankind would finally be fulfilled (Bongmba 2018: 247). In the African context, therefore eschatology inspires a transformative vision of all the earth, a vision of social justice and peace. It is a vision of the end of all forms of evil and suffering, all systems and structures that impoverish life. These structures include colonial dispossession, racist domination, capitalist exploitation and cultural and religious domination (Kritzinger 1987:20). Eschatology must inspire hope that a different future is not only possible, but it is achievable. In this instance eschatology is missionary, it inspires a future that is inaugurated by Jesus, a future that begins in the here and now, transforming the current systems and structures in the vision of God's kingdom. A missional ecclesiology is the arena in which that reality is rehearsed.

Finally, missional ecclesiology is practical and therefore the missional understanding of the nature of the church is translated into practices (Sheridan and Hendricks 2013:3). The vision of a missional ecclesiology must be translated into practice for difference to be felt. At the core of the practices as suggested by Sheridan and Hendriks, are the proclamation of the gospel, discipleship making, Discerning God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members in its local place (Sheridan and Hendricks 2013:4). The summary of the practices is given by Brouwer. Brouwer earlier ably defined missional as God's *shalom* for the world, which is represented in *kerygma*, lived in *koinonia* and demonstrated in *diakonia* (Brouwer 2009:57). These three broad concepts best provide guidance to a missional praxis.

The church does not only embody the good news, it proclaims the good news loudly and clear, inviting all people to a reconciled relationship with Christ, each other and the created world. Good news may not always be seen as such by all, the privileged and those in charge of systems that

oppress people, and those in political and economic power, who manipulate the world systems to their advantage, sacrificing billions of people to poverty and death. The church is thus called upon to confront powers and principalities in the power of the spirit (Eph. 6:12). Discipleship must be done in the context of fellowship. This kind of discipleship must be radical (Kgatla 2016), calling on those who chose Christ to deny themselves, systems and realities that do not conform to the dictates of shalom (Luke 9:23). Authentic fellowship must be grounded in the respect and genuine love of Christ for everyone created in the image of God. The church should be involved in acts of service to its community, both local and global, advocating and working for peace and reconciliation, transforming society into a better world.

7.7.2. Formulating a Missional Ecclesiology for the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe

The process of defining a relevant African missional ecclesiology and particularly for Zimbabwe is not an easy one because churches are complex organisations. Adeyemo observes that many churches in the so called third world, born out of missionary endeavour, are struggling to free themselves from Western bondage to alien cultural accretions which came with the gospel (Adeyemo 1996:7). The challenges facing churches in the third world relate to their ability to move from a western missionary ecclesiology to becoming truly African and be home in an African context. Failure to do this has been articulated by Joshua Nkomo as giving rise to a foreign church that exists in a foreign land (Banana 1991:1).

Mwambazambi concurs that developing an African missional ecclesiology is not an easy task, because, it does not encompass an easily captured and objective body of ideas, practices or values that can be serenely contemplated and analysed (Mwandazambi 2011). He suggests that African missional ecclesiology can best be understood from the vantage point of African existence. In a follow up to this debate, Henry (2016) makes an important insight into that African existence which must assist in defining the African ecclesiology, in terms of how and what should constitute African missional ecclesiology. He identifies four critical elements that require attention which are as follows, continuity, identity and discernment and enterprise. Leaning on Muzorewa he brings into the fore the uniqueness and challenges that Africa has gone through and why its ecclesiology needs to be distinct and lean from the variety of sources which include African religious thought and experiences, African heritage which brings together her experiences, challenges and

nationalism and the Bible (Henry 2016:4,5). Following the missional movement ethos, Henry's tools prove significantly instructive in articulating a Zimbabwean missional ecclesiology.

7.7.3 Rooted in Christ and rooted in Africanness: The question of continuity

A Zimbabwean missional ecclesiology should be rooted in the unique and fertile African social and religious worldview. Traditional (mainline) Christianity in Africa has in many respects fostered a dichotomy between Christian faith and traditional religion, and the Christian and the not yet Christian. Pobee and Ositelu (1998) reiterate that sociologists and anthropologists have demonstrated that *homo africanus homo religious radicaliter*- the African is a radically religious person, religious at the core of his or her being (Pobee and Ositelu 1998:9). This deep religious heritage has never been disputed, but it was ignored by missionaries. The mission station in particular divided people into the *amakholwa* the believers and the traditional. Christian faith itself in the mission was divided into the religious and the secular. In the African worldview there is no dichotomy. This approach left many African believers somewhat existentially estranged, grappling to relate with their new-found faith to their African world, (Henry 2016:4). They were strangers to the new faith, but they further became misunderstood where they came from. African believers were made to renounce some of their cultural practices for example, payment and receiving of lobola, which were innocent the marriage customs.

Adeyemo concludes that this was painful. This comes out clearly where he avers as follows, 'Painful, because the realization that traditions religiously held in fact owe more to alien culture than scripture can make a young church resentful of those to whom it owes gratitude for the gospel' (Adeyemo 1996:7). Missionaries uprooted people because they misunderstood the depth and quality of their religion and culture. Authentic missional ecclesiology must bring the African closer home by breaking chains of the missionary era and bringing the gospel to bear on people's everyday cultural existence and in the process enriching their religious worldview. Theology, if there is to be continuity with traditional religion, must be responsive to African cosmology and a worldview centred on a concern for survival, for, unless any given 'truth' leads to or enhances survival, it cannot be deemed crucial for the African (Henry 2016:4). Authentic theology must make the church an African Church in an African soil.

7.7.4. Addressing the identity crisis

One of the challenges associated with mission is the issue pertaining to what was earlier on in Chapter 4 called the identity crisis. In the current section emphasis will be drawn to this subject. Han and Beyers posit that a key for understanding the concerns of Christian theology in modern Africa is the question of identity (Han and Beyers 2017:7). A missional ecclesiology of today must recover some of that African culture that was negated and demonized for centuries and ground African believers in authentic identity, without disrupting their community existence. The conflicts on mission farms and the challenges particularly at Epworth border around an identity crisis of people who for the past century had identified themselves as Methodists, but suddenly, without negotiation, they were thrust into a non-Methodist, secular administration under Epworth Local Board. This phenomenon is not unique to Methodists; it was a phenomenon of mission Christianity. Maluleke and Hovland narrate how the Swiss mission stations and the Valdezia missions among the Tsonga, the Nowergian Lutheran Mission station in Umphumulo Kwazulu Natal both in South Africa displaced people, but later retrogressed and left people without identity (Maluleke 1995, Hovland 2013).

This calls for a wider understanding of what it means to do mission in the world, it calls for a broader self-understanding of the church in a post-independence setting. Theology, polity and practice must be broadened. African Christianity while borrowing from the past has grown through African initiative. It is this Africanness that needs to be recovered and built up, to give an authentic African Missional Ecclesiology. It must be resourced from all that defines Africanness, including its heritage. African experience and heritage is wide, it draws from the struggle of African people, inter-continental pollination, suppression, exclusion and African Nationalism. It also includes African religious thought and experiences, traditional religions African Initiated Churches, Mission Initiated Churches and newer Pentecostal varieties, prayers, proverbs, the African experience of colonialisation, ethnic hatred, violence, suffering, discrimination as well as the Bible. These are also primary sources of Christian worldview contextualisation. Drawing from this rich cultural worldview and the concept of *ubuntu*, Zimbabwean ecclesiology must therefore bring forth forms of church that are sensitive and quick to respond to the African realities.

There ought to be a balance between being prophetic and avoid being complicit with the mistakes of politics. A missional church has to assume its own unique identity, governed by its vision of shalom, and the experiences of the current context, ministering appropriately to all its community, rich or poor, weak and the powerful. The missionary church identity was tainted by its proximity to the colonisers, such that its work became closely associated with colonialism. A missional church has to avoid being confused and conflated with political ideology in vogue.

7.7.5. Kairos consciousness

Kairos consciousness of the church is its ability to discern it unique role at a given time. Allan Boesak defines Kairos consciousness as,

> a revelation of the reality we live in, of what is at stake and our responsibility in that moment. It is a moment decisive in history. Not all history but ours, of the times in which we live. In that sense it is unique, for us to see, understand, and act upon. Without seeing, understanding and acting the moment passes us by. Being Kairos conscious is therefore being awake and open to the discovering of, and responding to the decisiveness and uniqueness of that moment (Boesak 2011) Or further still the consciousness that helps us to discern and act upon a kairos moment (Boesak 2015:69).

The church should continually reflect on what its form and role should be as the world around it changes. African Church is constantly finding herself in changing socio-political and socio-economic situations, which means a theology of the Church's response and involvement is needed. The challenges facing the church are both local and global. These are issues of poverty and dehumanisation of people together with issues of globalisation which affect African, Asian and Latin American economies, making them unable to provide basic services to the poor, along with the issues of climate change. In the local scene the issues of poor governance, corruption are issues that require authentic missional response. Poor government and contestations regarding land redistribution and issues of legitimacy in Zimbabwe are coinciding with real issues of deprivation and genuine need for land and right to self determine among the generality of the Zimbabwean population. What often retards or cripples the church's ability to respond appropriately is not only its theological deficiency and framework, but its decision-making processes that are archaic and borrowed from Western forms of Christianity. The church's polity must reflect the context in which the church is situated, enabling it to be proactive in its engagement with context.

A second aspect of consciousness is strategy. Being African must not close the church to the challenges of the global and ecumenical developments. There is a temptation of the church to be absorbed in its own local issues and miss the ecumenical and global nature of its calling thereby rendering mission to be irrelevant. Mission must be ecumenical, but also global. A glocal African theology is the only hope in providing a 'home-grown', holistic, African interpretation of the times that affect Church praxis. For the missional church, these two perspectives are both important perspectives:

> … The global perspective, ideally and normally also involves the local perspective, although exceptions can be found…. this means that a loss of the global perspective becomes more crucial than a loss of the local perspective (Kristensen 2012:27).

In a globalising world, it is not possible to survive in a landlocked environment. The church as an agent of *missio Dei*, must keep both perspectives in view.

7.7.6. Capacity building that inspires true autonomy

The ability of a missional response is capacity related. The availability of sustainable structures and systems that are long lasting and sustainable. Potter and Brough define capacity building as the creation or strengthening of capabilities for programme execution independent of changes of personalities, technologies, social structures and resource crises, it implies developing sustainable, and robust, systems (Potter and Brough 2004:337). Eade avers that capacity building concerns itself with enabling those out on the margins to represent and defend their interests more effectively, not only within their own immediate contexts but also globally (Eade 2007:630). Capacity building is about is entrenching sustainability by empowering people and their institutions to with stand challenges and pressures over time.

Capacity building for the purposes of this discussion must be viewed in terms of theological orientation, human resources, as well as financial wellbeing of the church to carry out its programmes even when the missionaries have left. A church in Africa must blossom in all its facets, discipleship and growth, its social transformational interventions (social development, schools, clinics and children's homes) and in its political influence, the prophetic voice of the church must grapple with powers and principalities locally and globally. To achieve this, the church must therefore be holistically capacitated. The missionary legacy inspired a dichotomised view of life, the secular and the religious, and these never met. The worldview kept people in a

kind of false consciousness wrapped around the guise of religion. Banana puts it in the following words:

> 'theology fed hungry millions with the great feast of Bermacide. It made sumptuous but empty promises. It pointed fingers at the transcendental Satan, ignoring the devil of capitalism, the Satan who daily made manifest his evil machinations in landlessness, poverty, disenfranchisement, repression and murder – a great pharisaical theology that ran with the African quarry and hunted with the colonial hound' (Banana 1987:2).

Training is one critical tool in capacity building, it enables development of skills and capabilities to ensure efficient administration. Training of both membership and ministerial candidates is critical in ensuring that both levels of ministry understand the implications of radical discipleship and the missional call. Ministerial formation is critical in forming a transformational missional mindset. Kaulemu's proposition is critical at this point, he pointed out that, Christians who occupy positions of responsibility are to be carefully prepared for political, economic, and social tasks by means of a solid formation in the church's social doctrine, so that in their places they will be faithful witnesses to the Gospel (Kaulemu 2010:52). He goes on to Prophetic churches, then, must strengthen their capacities for contributing to a national mindset and social conditions that facilitate the human development potential of every Zimbabwean (Kaulemu 2010:52). The church's capacity is as good as its ministerial staff and lay membership, who inspire the transformation mindset to their congregants and the world.

Discipleship training for membership must add to this capacity. Christ invited people to follow him, in doing so they were to be prepared for the implications (Luke 9:23). Jesus calls them, so that he can make them fishers of men. They must be willing to sacrifice; they must be ready to face the challenges associated with their calling. Kgatla talks about radical discipleship in the context of conflicting and unfulfilled hopes in post-apartheid South Africa. Radical discipleship is both an example to be modelled and a lifestyle. He argues that radical discipleship involves expanding one's space of life unconditionally to embrace the other (the poor) in such a way that it could be seen by the 'haves' as hating oneself (Kgatla 2016). Discipleship has implications for effective and authentic fellowship (*koinonia*), witness (*martyria*) and service (*diakonia*). The church must have capacity to rich out relevantly and serve the community

The other capacity that needs to be imbedded in discipleship training for sustainable mission is self-reliance. The church must be able to resource itself for the mission challenges without the support of its missionary partners. The exploits of the Western missionaries were quite fruitful in Africa. As observed earlier, missionaries were paternalistic and by this they denied Africans the ability to grow indipendently. This has given rise to a church that cannot sustainably care for itself. The missionaries gave the new converts all that they needed but somehow gave them little responsibility or freedom of choice. The effect was that the church relied heavily on benevolence and in the course of time this came back to be a challenge.

7.8. A paradigm shift

The type of church as articulated from section 7.7.3 to 7.7.6 represents a mission paradigm shift, which is centred on a new epistemological break from Eurocentrism towards a relevant Southern model. This shift is the ideal necessity to addressing challenges by Epworth mission station and other such mission stations in general and mission work in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. It is an affirmation that God is the sender, and that the church as well as its missionaries respond to his guiding spirit. The church and those missionaries it sends out participate in the mission of the Triune God in humility. It is an affirmation that God has turned towards the world, towards the poor and the marginalised in an incarnational way. To this effect even those at the margins, can identify with him, call on him in their own language and culture without shame, not only that, but also become participants in his mission. It is probably represented by Bosch's portrayal of mission as having shifted from an elitist enterprise, whose sources were 'philosophy and the educated non-believer to a theology from below, the underside of history, its sources being social sciences and participants being the poor and the marginalised' (Bosch 1991:423). This mission is liberative, it fights for justice and works to end inequalities, addresses the global challenges and causes of poverty and it is involved in issues of climate change which have adverse effects on poor countries. Mission should be transformative by addressing deep seated structures that keep poverty endemic to a group of people. As earlier discussed in Bosch's understanding of mission, the emphasis is in viewing mission in an ever evolving and therefore contextual way, the mission is local as well as global. Mission is ecumenical in which the church embodies unity with other Christian entities in its approach. Mission must never be a project of churches in isolation, the magnitude of the task is such that it can be best carried out in collaboration with other religious bodies.

Mission being liberationist should not be equated with cynicism. A particular comment must be drawn into the engagement with mission that seeks to self-aggrandise. The case of the Third Chimurenga in Zimbabwe (represented by the fast track land redistribution in Zimbabwe between 1999 and 2002) (Gundani 2003) has been couched in religious language as a success in economic and social justice, yet it has given rise to more poverty and economic downturn, partly because it was poorly done, it lacked appropriate support in terms of planning and funding, but characteristically it was led by 'graft and greed' (Gundani 2003:494). As Sibanda observes, land redistribution has become only 'evidence of pervasive '*lootocracy*' in Zimbabwe instead of *democracy*, where African people pose as their own liberators and oppressors (Sibanda 2014:67). This gives manifestations to a scenario where a few people continue to rule over the majority as a new class of not white but black elite, who become richer, with majority becoming poorer. Liberation leading to social and economic justice must speak more into a complete transformation of structures of society, from repressive colonial to just and equitable independence systems. An authentic missional existence must strike a balance between 'a rational ethic which focusses on justice and a religious ethic that idealises love' (Bosch 1991:402). It must be rooted in hope, a conviction that structures of society and people can be transformed, both those who rule and the citizens. Mission must be inspired a broader ethic whose goal is the empowerment and capacitation of all God's people, enabling them to self-assert and live sustainably, not dependent on some power or politician somewhere. In essence mission should not be about what the church wants, nor what governments want, but should be guided by what God through Christ has revealed as his intentions for all his people and creation, life in abundance (John 10:10).

7.9. Conclusion

This chapter has traced the missional movement and its development as an alternative missional paradigm in a fast-changing world. The analysed the origins and history of the missional movement and how it can be applied in the context of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The theological contours which Niemandt proposes were discussed as well as the constitutive elements of an African missional ecclesiology. While the movement originated in the west, its inspiration was the experiences of mission praxis in the South as well as context of mission in the world, as such it is an applicable model for an authentic practice. As has been observed earlier, missional thinking is dynamic and flexible, fitting very well in an ever changing global cultural setting. The

chapter ended by employing the elements of the missional ecclesiological paradigm to the Zimbabwean context with the result clearly showing that missional ecclesiology has the missing redemptive promises principally in terms of addressing issues of worldview orientation, identity, capacity building and Kairos consciousness.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Summary

The researcher investigated the crisis of the phenomenon of the mission station as manifested in the experiences of the Epworth Mission station of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Mission station was studied as a predominant means through which early Methodist missionaries attracted, converted members and established Churches similar to those in their mother countries in Western Europe. The research was predicated on the challenges mission in the Methodist church in Zimbabwe is facing, particularly the problems faced by one of the Church's early and potential mission station, Epworth, in Harare. These problems include loss of identity of a people, contestation of land, growing landlessness and squatter problems leading to land invasion, poverty and lack of basic facilities and the attendant squalid conditions thereof. The growing lawlessness and moral decadence considering that the original intention was to create model community based on a new value system. The study examined the root and source of the crisis facing Epworth as a general manifestation of the limitations of the 19th century missionary approach which arrived on the back of a colonial notion of conquest and dominance. The study investigated the sustainability of the mission station approach in the context of the post-colonial, post-missionary epochs. Based on qualitative methodology, which included, desk, archive, and ethnography, the study sought to uncover the motivations for the creation of mission stations in the first place, as well as the reasons why mission has struggled after independence and whether new and alternative approaches are available. David Bosch's paradigm shift provided a theoretical framework that helps to understand the reasons behind the crisis of mission and how mission can respond creatively to the changing context. What comes out clearly enough is that Mission station approach was used generally by the Methodist church as by other churches as well without proper reflection. The method characteristic of 19th century mission approach which was based on privilege and power which employed notions akin to conquest and domination.

The following questions guided the research and the findings are summarised and analysed below with limitations at the end.

a) Why mission stations were created? And how they were created?
b) What motivated missionaries to establish mission stations?
c) Were these occurrences unique to the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe? What was happening in other churches?
d) What issues arose around the mission station?
e) Is the mission station approach still sustainable in a post missionary, post-colonial era?
f) Is it not time for the Methodist church in Zimbabwe to look for an alternative missional approach that takes into the account the current context?
g) What form or framework will that approach have?

This study began by analysing the evidence available of the background of the coming of missionaries in general and Methodist missionaries in particular, who came as a wave after the conclusion of the Berlin congress. Particularly in Zimbabwe, it has shown that missionaries flooded the new British colony soon after the defeat of the Matabele and the entrance of the Pioneer column on the 12th September 1890. Before this period mission had struggled, as evidenced by the Catholic Mission led by Goncalo da Silveria and London Missionary Society in Matabeleland.

While this missionary resurgence has been well studied and documented (Mujinga 2018, Goto 2006, Zvobgo 1991, 1996, Banana 1991), it is the mission approach used at the mission station in Epworth that has been the focus of this study. Epworth is unique in that it started with a promise of high success owing to its close proximity to the capital city like Kilnerton, Pretoria, for Methodism in South Africa. It recoded signs of early success, but it later became an example of failure and squalor, with people living in squalid conditions, and the church having surrendered part of its land and people to government in 1982, and leaving people who for years had identified with the church without identity. Evidenced by the Report of the Farms Commission, similar challenges occur in other Methodist Church mission stations as well. The Methodist church is a product of this mission approach and has accumulated its membership and influence through the mission, its educational and health institutions. The church been in existence as an autonomous

church for the past 40years in 2017. The following is a step by step analysis of the findings of the research.

8.1.1. Why the Mission Stations were created and how they were created

Mission stations in general were spaces from which the new faith would radiate, converts would settle, live and express their newfound faith freely, learn new ways and culture without interference from their relatives and chiefs. It was the arena where activities of Christian life would take place, the church at the centre supported by a school, a clinic/or hospital and farm land where believers settled on certain strict terms, and new farming methods employed. Mission stations, as a model mission approach, however, were created by default, as a reaction to the resistance by Africans to accept the new religion. The closely knit African societies and their cultural world view made individual conversion difficult, and those who did convert were ostracised (Agonga 2018 in Maryks and Mkenda, Maluleke 2003, Hovland 2013:6). The mission stations succeeded because of a number of factors, chiefly economic and security related benefits, they were a place of refuge and afforded tenants land (Hutchinson 1959). People sought refuge from their relatives, and chiefs who accused new believers of witchcraft once they converted, but also during the colonial wars, those in mission farms were spared by the colonial armies. With the coming of colonialism land became scarce, mission land was easy to acquire. So, mission stations blossomed as centres of education and new life.

The Methodist Church adopted the mission station approach as it was already wide spread and a norm. The mission station at Epworth became the cradle of Methodism in Zimbabwe. In 1922 the Methodist Synod set out the rules, guidelines and objectives for the missio station as follows, to see the mission Farms populated by Christian natives whose manner of living would be a wholesome example to the heathen people of neighbouring reserves, to organise the Christians of Farms into a powerful agency for evangelisation, to teach tenants how to build good houses in planned villages, how to make the best possible use of the land allotted to them, by green manuring and rotation of crops, how to order their communal life by native councils. To introduce afforestation schemes under the guidance of the Government experts and to perform some small amount of agricultural farming work on behalf of the mission so that costs of mission, transport,

animal and native gatherings, such as Quarterly Meetings may be minimised. (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24)

To enforce these objectives, the Synod directed that the following rules be enforced, that no objections shall be raised to marriage arrangements already entered into, but a polygamous contract shall not be entered into after the person has become resident on the Farm, that no beer parties shall be allowed; and the sale of beer made on Mission Farms be strictly prohibited, all children between the ages of 6 and 14 must attend school. A fine of 5 Shillings was to be paid by the parents or guardian of any child who without satisfactory excuse failed to make at least 150 attendances per year, no non-essential works was to be done on Sundays. All persons settling on mission Farms were to be subject to the control and direction of the minister in charge of the station, both in regard to the lands they plough, and all other social matters (WMA, MH, Rules for mission farms, 11 January, 1922).

The mission station became the breeding ground for Methodist membership. Its schools and centres became the exponents of teachers, educationists and influential people in both business and political circles as evidence has shown. It must however be acknowledged that the agency of Africans in the growth of Christianity was significant. These included male and female evangelists, the drivers of wagons and the interpreters. There is often over emphasis on the missionary at the expense of the local people. The current growth of the church in Africa is through African Initiated churches and not often the missionary founded ones.

8.1.2 Motives behind the establishment of these Mission stations?

Given the challenge that the researcher was working on, this is the answer to the global question for which this research is about. The motivations for the founding of mission stations were varied and wide. From the perspective of the missionary, mission stations were ideal incubatory spaces to model the new faith and nurture the Christian in a conducive; non-hostile environment. The varied experiences of the phenomenon of mission Christianity however have led to the questioning of the sincerity of motivations underlying missionary work in Africa. This critique does not constitute a rejection of mission, but seeks to find a way forward for the present church's engagement with mission work. As has been observed while the holistic African critique of Western mission does not constitute a total rejection, it raises fundamental questions about mission

strategies, but also about the very ideologies and theologies that were exported to Africa. Mission work in general had both pure and impure motives.

The convergence of political and missionary conferences has led to a conclusion that missionaries and colonialists worked hand in glove. The Berlin Congress of 1884/5 that led to the partition of Africa and the resultant influx of missionaries into Africa can hardly be a coincidence. The letter of King Leopold of Belgium to missionaries in the Congo puts starkly the collaboration between the cross and the crown in the subjugation of the African people and calls to question the genuineness of many missionary projects. A similar example in Zimbabwe is the arrival of the Pioneer Column and the rise in missionary arrival and activity subsequent to which has been the generosity of Cecil John Rhodes in supporting Methodist mission, by granting farmland for mission station as well as providing an annual stipend to the pioneering Methodist Missionary Rev Isaac Shimmin. This goes to reveal the deep-seated colonial and imperial interests in mission and how Christendom coalesced with imperialism to create a tainted effort. This is in agreement with the works of David Livingstone who combined Christianity, commerce and civilization.

Mission education was good, but it was given only to create a kind of clientele. It was at least basic education, and at most helpful as far as missionary interests could go and white industry required. It could go only as far as creation of labour force. It was for this reason that while missions dominated the majority of African education provision, it went only as far as primary level and it was labour based, selective in terms of the kind skills it could proffer. Missionaries and colonial governments agreed as long as colonial interests were served by missionary work. This kind of education served only to alienate and Europeanise Africans culturally. Africans who attended the early mission schools became a new élite no longer able to identify completely with the traditional society. There were some genuine motives in mission work, but these were compromised by the close proximity of missionaries to colonial and imperialist power, and a general prejudice that arose from a lack of appreciation of the African context, world view and philosophy. This ignorance which had an adverse effect on how missionaries carried out their work, but also the perceptions mission began to acquire in the long run among the African communities.

8.1.3 Whether these were unique to the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe? What was happening in other churches?

That the mission station was not unique to the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe has been well documented and has been discussed. The phenomenon of mission station was widely used in Southern Africa, with regard to Swiss missionaries in Valdezia and with the Swedish missionaries in Umphumulo in Zululand. In Zimbabwe mission stations were widely used by many missionaries. The Catholics established their mission stations, especially in Empandeni in Matebeleland, the Salvation Army in Mazowe and Dutch reformed church in Masvingo. There is a clear pattern of the establishment of mission stations in Zimbabwe especially with regards to churches that emerged as missionary initiatives. To date all churches of Western origin, have mission stations, and institutions like schools, clinics/hospitals, children's home. These places are strongholds of these churches, where their membership is strong and their influence radiates.

8.1.4 Issues that arose around the Mission station

Critical issues that evolve around mission stations border on sustainability. Issues of land contestation, land tenure, rents, customs and practices, maintenance of mission rules, the nature of education and the future of tenants were among those that feature prominently from the onset. As shown earlier, most people entered the mission not out of genuine interest in religious commitment but for security as well as for economic reasons. The availability of the land and an opportunity to further their status in life by gaining education. Some sought refuge in mission stations to escape tribal offences. This soon became an issue as religion would soon be thrown out in favour of the economic benefits. Conflicts would also emerge as neighbouring communities would view the mission as a threat to social cohesion as it undermined the authority of traditional chiefs. The sustainability of the mission model had both social, cultural and political impediments. Could people reside in a mission farm without security of tenure, could it be possible for people to live away from cultural networks of their communities? How strong was the new community to help the new believer to subsist without their cultural and religious relationships? Soon fault lines began to appear and conflicts within and without mission farms began to emerge.

Contestation of land and issues of tenure and the future of children of tenants emerged early in the history of the church but became apparent after independence. Problem of payment of rent in farms

was often misunderstood. Issues of alienation and social cohesion emerged. These challenges, all stemmed from the missionaries' failure or reluctance to understand the African way of life. The missionary was able to suppress these complaints and problems due to their reliance on the colonial government laws and arms for support, and home mission board for funding, but with the coming of independence, these issues manifested aggressively.

8.1.5 The extent to which the Mission Station approach was a success or failure

Epworth is but one symptomatic example of the challenges that mission stations have encountered and that their survival hangs in the balance due to the nature of their constitution and the changing political and socio-economic and religious dynamics. Epworth has been subdivided and the church no longer owns the entire mission farm except for the institutions and a small plot, lot 2. Evidence shows that while most missions continue to exist, many have similar problems or the models have evolved and changed. With reference to Kwenda Mission Mujinga has shown that the challenges at Kwenda led the Methodist church to vote to cede part of Kwenda Mission to Government in 1998.

Concluding their report, the Methodist Farms Commission shared the following insight into the challenges with mission farms. The Methodist recommendations on mission farms are important in so far as to highlight the success and the failure of the model. As observed, one of their recommendations was that the concept of Methodist Christian villages was no longer sustainable and does not serve any functional and practical purpose given the modern multi religious, multi denominational settlement trends. They propsed a redefinition of the concept in light of changing role and mission of the church. The mission station achieved a significant success in the colonial era, it was an education centre, inspiring a significant number of players in the political, social and business sector, but has struggled to survive in the post-independence and post missionary era.

This is not to say the model has not succeeded, but that the station lies on unstable and unsustainable ground and as society is changing, the foundations are shaking, and the model is losing its value and significance. While the mission station achieved a significant impact before, it lay on a faulty foundation, the mission station concept. The church's membership and influence in society in general has been the result of the work of mission stations through the churches, the

schools and the institutions that continue to mould population to date. The significant number of political and business leadership emerged from missions.

8.1.6 In search of an alternative missional approach for the Methodist church in Zimbabwe that takes into the account the current context

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe has an opportunity to build on the success of the past, and learn from its subsequent mistakes. The church should take advantage of the African context and world view and build a missional vision that addresses the African and particularly Zimbabwean context holistically and relevantly. The context of prevailing worldview, knowledge systems, poverty and deprivation, globalisation and attendant new challenges comprising the body of instruction in which to cast and mould a missional ecclesiology of the twenty first century Christian propagation. With the challenges faced at the mission stations, and the general changing and dynamic globalized world, it is time not only for the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, but churches altogether to break from the Christendom mission approach and adopt authentic ways of being church, ways which take into account the context of the South (challenges of poverty, social justice, climate issues), opportunities (rich world view, philosophy of ubuntu) and spirituality and frame appropriate missional ecclesiology. This is in keeping with the unavoidable historical canvas upon which this research was naturally anchored, the trajectory which mission has traversed in time in terms of its philosophical development and underinning has been proffered.

The church is learning to centre mission in the *missio Dei* as well as in the context of the margins, where issues of contextual evangelism, social justice, poverty and climate change demand immediate relavant missional praxis. There are avenues available in the mission conversation that the Methodist Church can adopt in the context of its shifting context. The African situation is providing an important arena in which new ways of being church can be explored, ways that are transformative, life giving and dignity building.

8.2 Limitations

This study is focussed on the Mission in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and Epworth Mission station in particular. It is peculiar in as far as revealing the dynamics of the practice of mission in

the colonial era, particularly the 19th century mission thinking as it bears on Epworth Mission and its adjacent environs. Obviously, the researcher could benefit from widening research to include other mission stations, outside Harare, and in other regions lsuch as Matebeleland who could have brought different perspectives to the subject.

Generalisation is therefore limited to the fact that Zimbabwe and the Methodist church have their unique experiences which may not have given rise similar results elsewhere. This study is therefore specific to Epworth and Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, and its own unique circumstances. Based on the discussions above, the findings and conclusions, the study has best answered these questions, and through the lense of David Bosch's paradigm shift the Methodist church is at a critical point and has an opportunity to adapt its mission approach to the challenges facing Zimbabwean society using a range of missional approaches which are rooted in *misso Dei.*

8.3. Recommendations

8.3.1 Recommendations for further study

This study focussed on Epworth. There is need for further research on the mission station from the perspective of other regions and cultures, other than Harare and Mashonaland such as for example how the mission station evolved in Matebeleland. Furthermore, there is also need to examine how other churches did their mission and find out what reactions were like and how they are adapting to the changing contexts. Based on this study, there is a gap in terms of how mission station can transform into developmental initiatives for many poor people who live in these spaces and for the sake of the church.

8.3.2. Recommendations for the church

Church alignment to *missio Dei*

The future of mission lies in the proper alignment and repositioning of the church and its mission strategy in line with changing times. Hendriks, quoting Brian McLaren remarked that, if you have a new world, you need a new church (Hendriks 2012:3). The re orientation of mission from a Christendom, institutional western model to a *missio Dei*, where the driver of mission is God, and mission moves away from the hands of the church to the control and guidance of the Trinity. The current Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and its structure is modelled after the Christendom model. It is predominantly institutional, attractional and exclusive. It is based on a specific code and it

seeks to ensure the structure is maintained. This makes it difficult for the church to respond speedily and relevantly to the challenges being faced in the current context. The church's task is therefore that of obedience and service to the *missio Dei* and not maintenance of its own structures and institution at the expense of missional existence. The Church's role is that of a pilgrim community and organism seeking continually to identify with God's activity. The church must seek to incarnate and be a missional service to the community holistically in a manner that enhances fullness of life in humility and in reliance to the Holy Spirit.

A holistic missional engagement of the church with all its stakeholders such as the community, the government should include participatory evangelism, addressing issues of social justice, attend to poverty holistically, taking into account both global sources of poverty, debt, climate change, and national corruption. Poverty alleviation should put issues of climate change and economic justice and globalisation in context, where much of the poverty of the world stems from in terms of unfair trade practices. Through advocacy, the church must attend to ensuring communities are able to access basic needs like health education, housing, water and sanitation. A missional church should be involved in developmental issues of society, capacitating individuals and households, to be able to not only to earn their dignified living, but live a dignified life, be able to vote for the people they want as their representatives. A missional orientation includes ecumenical engagement and working together with other churches and para-church organisations towards the common objective of the kingdom.

The Church's orientation towards an African worldview

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe should seek to align its theological and missional orientation to the African worldview. Mission in Africa should recognise a shift of the church density from West to the South. As earlier on observed, a geographical shift in prevalence of the church has implications for a cultural shift that affects the thought processes, theology and religious practices of Christianity. Thought processes that take note of the South should lead to an expansion and incorporation of the African worldview, seek to understand it deeper and taking full advantage of it.

Two important African worldview aspects which must not be overlooked are power encounters and prosperity gospel. As observed, most missionaries taught Christianity as the answer to the

ultimate and eternal questions of life, and science, based on reason as the answer to the most problems of this world. They had little or no place in their world for the invisible spiritual world, earthly spirits, witchcraft, divination, and magic of this world, and found it hard to take people's beliefs in these seriously. Such an ignorance of African spirituality left African Christians stranded. This is supported by Hendriks who argues that liturgy in most mainline churches used to be directed from the pulpit, in total ignorance of the African spirituality which is involving and participatory, and mass prayer changed that with audience becoming participants. In Zimbabwe this caused a lot of conflict in the church as members struggled between living the new life based on Western Christianity on the other hand and keeping in touch with their traditional spirit worldview. A further issue relates to prosperity gospel.

With so much poverty in Africa, there is a huge temptation to give a hopeful gospel that promises prosperity in terms of health and wealth, but the African situation especially, is at a point where people need hope in the midst of poverty and oppression. The prosperity gospel is unfortunately, not all the gospel, there is need for teachings on accountability, stewardship, and responsible living. This balance presents a yawning gap within mission practice in Africa. The church should emphasise a balanced gospel to mitigate the gross abuse of people by both the prosperity gospel pastors and impostors. Engaging in African world view may imply learning from African Initiated Churches, in terms of their spirituality and sustenance, taking note of the exigences. Some of this African world view is yet to be fully understood and appreciated. Further research is required in developing what those key features and distinguishing marks are truly African. #

Leadership and Theologico-Missional training: Embedding a serious Missional ethos

Repositioning of the church towards a relevant missional praxis, requires leadership. Building missional leadership capacity is the work of theological and lay training. The challenge however, is that in many theological seminaries missional education has been neglected. As observed earlier (Ott 2001:78), mission education is going through crisis at three levels, the tension between the academic competencies in research, reflection and writing and the practical demands of the pastoral task, second, the tension between academic performance and the spiritual life of the students and third, the tension between those curricula and programmes which are mandated by the school mission and those curricula and programmes which are driven by the market. Mission

education has thus not been at the centre of theological education, in Ott's words, mission has been limited to 'devotion and passion'. In essence mission has not been taken seriously in most theological institution, but for the church to be missional, theological education must at its very best missional, enhance the church's missional reflection and praxis.

A contextual missional theological training must put mission and *misso Dei* at the centre of its curricula. Training must produce missional leadership that helps the church move from Christendom centred institution to an authentic missional praxis that responds appropriately to the issues at stake, today. The kind of both ministerial and lay leaders needed are those who are dynamic and responsive to the changing context of the world, leaders who exhibit a glocal orientation, who keep the world in view and particular context within scope. Kaulemu quoting Pope John Paul II's *Ecclesia in Africa* remarked, Christians who occupy positions of responsibility are to be carefully prepared for political, economic, and social tasks by means of a solid formation in the church's social doctrine, so that in their places they will be faithful witnesses to the Gospel, (Kaulemu 2010:52). It has been observed also that most theological seminaries in Africa are product of a Western Christendom model, carrying its DNA structure in its bones and fibre (Hendriks 2012:2). Such a theological orientation is not able to serve the growing church in Africa, as it is limited and archaic. Theological training must help deconstruct the Christendom model of church and mission and help ministers and leaders to address current challenges that face African society in a relevant way. Training must help the church produce appropriate leadership that is equipped to address issues of relevant evangelism, social justice, poverty and developmental needs, both globally and locally. Theological and leadership formation must be mentor driven, practical and disciple oriented.

8.4. Conclusion

Thias Kgatla observed critically that it is human to want to help those who are perceived to be in need of help, but it is always difficult to start correctly (Kgatla 2019). This research shows further that it is not only the start that is often incorrect but also the motives and implementation processes of the helping means as well as the ending that is often problematic. Mission stations were such missionary attempts to transform converts' lives, through Christianity and education and new ways of life (civilisation), as this thesis has shown. Mission was not only started poorly, it was carried

out without proper reflection and also ended poorly, leaving a lot of issues needing attention, hence the the raging crisis. It is true that missionaries were driven by a strong desire to serve humanity genuinely and bring about material and social changes which would improve its quality of life (Frescura 2015:66), however, the manner in which they did it, the motives accompanying their work and the methods, were imbedded in ideologies of political conquest and economic interests that led to unintended consequences. Instead of achieving its intended ends, the mission station approach gave rise to a number of other challenges as discussed in the preceding chapters. These challenges manifested during the missionary era, but they became wide spread with the end of colonialism and the advent of independence in Zimbabwe. The new changes in political, religious and social constitution of society exposed the church to new and unexpected dynamics. These problems include, contestation of land, conflicts over land tenure, the future of children of tenants and their need for land, invasion of church land and/or misuse, the lack of the church capacity to handle issues in farms without government's support, the question of identity of former mission residents. Added to these challenges are the whole host of developmental challenges facing mission stations, like Epworth. These challenges have been the reason for the establishment of commissions on church mission farms, the 1996 Commission Chaired by Rev Griffiths Malaba (MCA 1996) and the recent one chaired by Dr Herbert Murerwa (Farms Commission 2018). However, as observed earlier, the church has focused on piecemealaspects of these challenges, neglecting the wider issues and implications of a mission setup as a whole.

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10. APPENDICES

A: Letter of Endosement by the Church

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE
CONNEXIONAL OFFICE

Wesley House
17 Selous Avenue
Box Cy 71, Causeway
HARARE, Zimbabwe
Tel: +263-04-250523
Cell: 0712 360660
Email: methodist@mczconnexional.co.zw
Website: www.methodistchurchinzimbabwe.org

31 May 2018

The University of Pretoria
Department of Science of Religion and Missiology

Permission to Conduct Research within the Methodist church in Zimbabwe members and institutions and accessing of Documents in the Archive

This letter serves to confirm that Revd Richman Ncube (u13404212) has been granted permission to conduct research within the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe on the title: ***Mission station in Crisis: The Case of Epworth Mission of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe***. Revd Ncube is permitted to approach members of the Methodist church for purposes of conducting interviews. He is permitted to also approach its Churches and institutions and also to retrieve information from archives held by the church for the purposes of the research.
He is expected to give us feedback at the conclusion of his research.

For further information do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

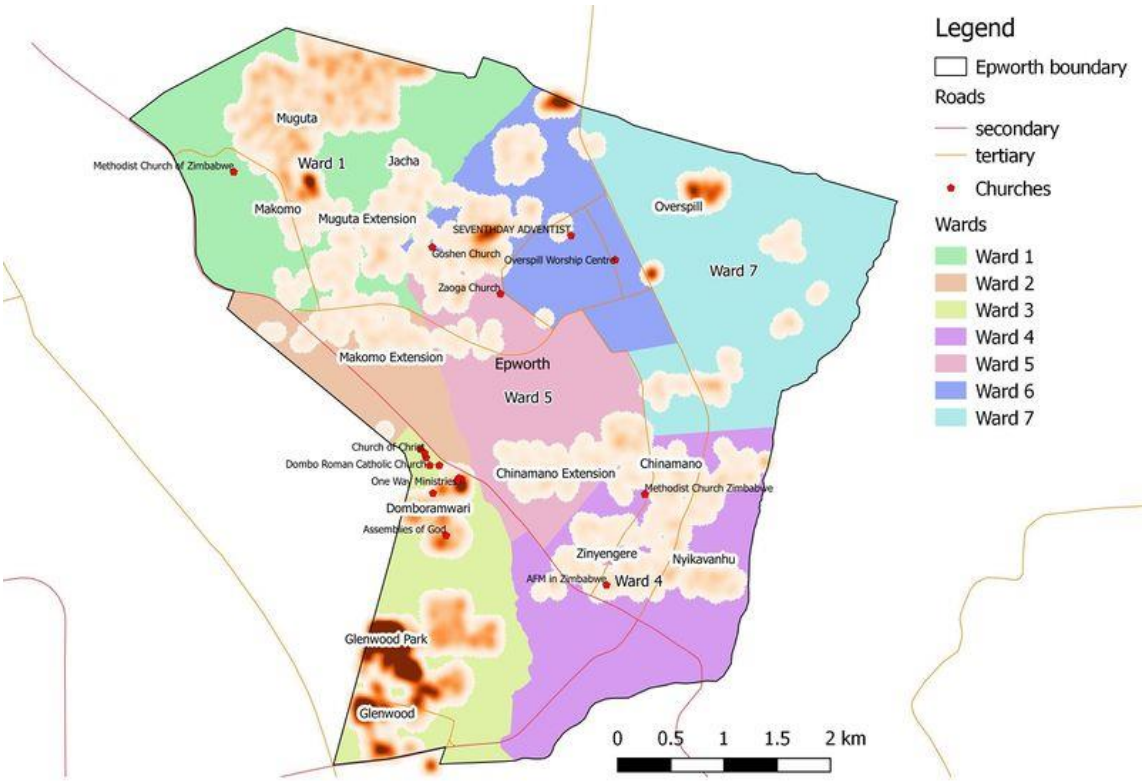
In His Grip

Revd. Dr. J. Dube
General Secretary

METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE
31 MAY 2018
WESLEY HOUSE
17 SELOUS AVENUE HARARE
SIGNATURE

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" Matthew 6 vs 10

B: Map of Epworth



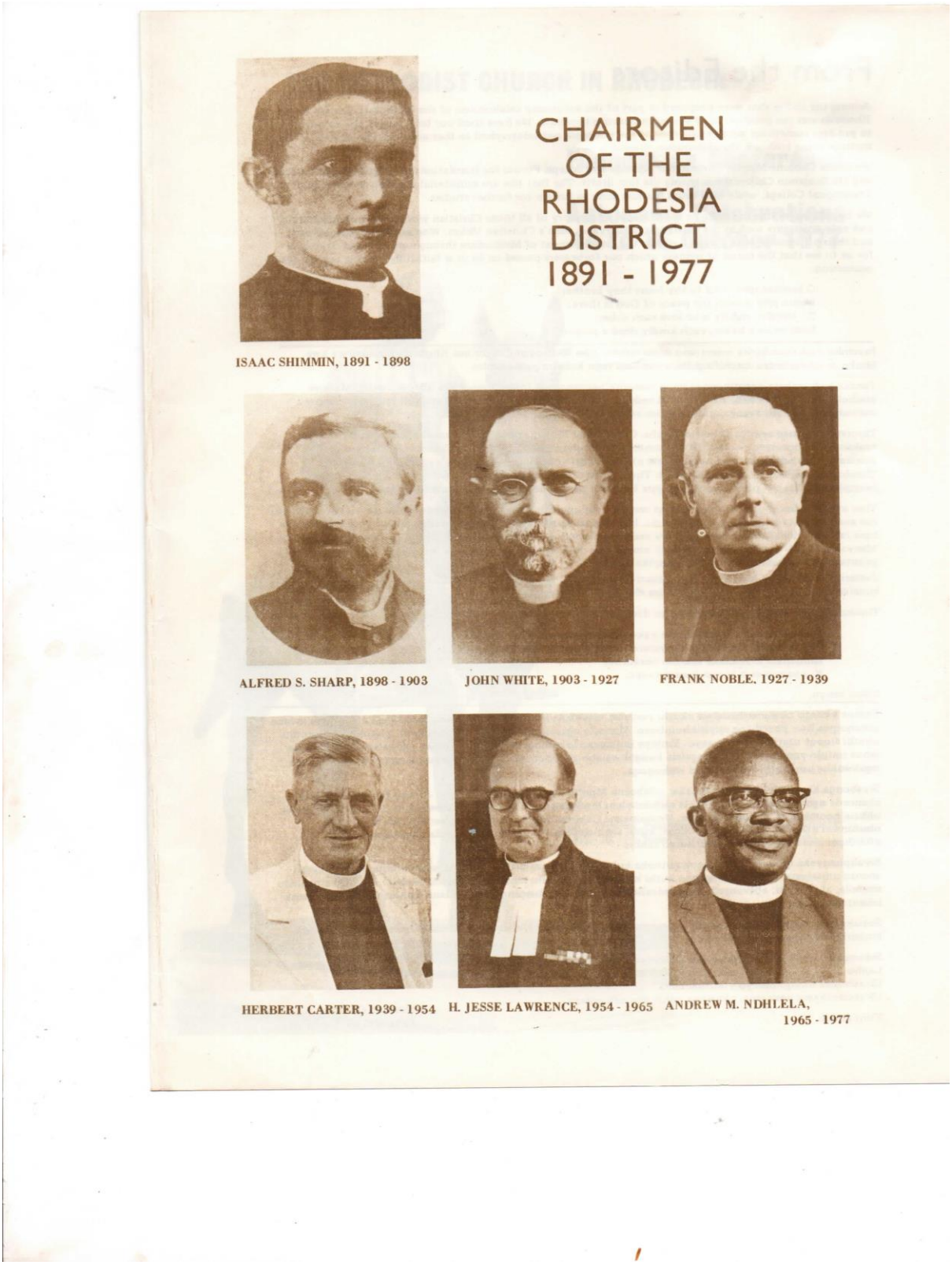
C: Pictures of Epworth Methodist Church

Epworth Gate

Epworth Old Churh

Epworth New Church

D: Chairmen of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe from 1891-1977



E: Permit to Reside on Epworth Mission Farm

Appendix D.

The Methodist Missionary Society

Permit to Reside on Epworth Mission Farms

Whereas the METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY (hereinafter referred to as "The Lessor") is the registered owner of EPWORTH (including Adelaide and Glenwood) FARM, situate in the District of Salisbury, in extent 4,340 morgen

AND WHEREAS in terms of Section 23 of the Land Apportionment Act (Chap. 240) the Native Land Board has approved of the Lessors allotting residential sites not exceeding 300 in number to rent paying tenants subject to terms and conditions more fully set forth in an Agreement of Lease already entered into between the Methodist Missionary Society and.....

.....

AND WHEREAS the Lessee.....

desires to give accommodation upon the site leased to him to..... an adult, unmarried member of the Lessee's family,

NOW THEREFORE THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSETH

1. That the Lessor permits the residence of.....upon the site leased by.....

2. That this Agreement shall be for a period of twelve months commencing on the first day of.....19..... and terminating on the first day of..... 19..... and shall continue thereafter from year to year unless terminated in the manner hereinafter provided for:

   (a) The Lessor, or his Agent, may terminate for any breach of or non-compliance with the conditions of this Agreement by giving three months' notice to the Lessee.

   (b) For any breach of the conditions numbered 7 and 8 or for other sufficient reasons, the Lessor, or his Agent, shall have the right summarily to determine this Agreement.

   (c) Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving to the other twelve months' notice at any time.

   (d) This permit shall become null and void upon the marriage of the person to whom it is issued.

   (e) All notices of termination shall be given to either party by the other through the Native Commissioner, Salisbury.

3. The rental to be paid to the Lessor shall be.....

4. The resident shall, when called upon by the Lessor, or his Agent, work without payment for a period of 14 days per annum for the purpose of opening up and maintaining paths, roads, latrines, wells or the construction and maintenance work necessary for the protection of land liable to erosion within the residential area, or he shall provide, or pay for a substitute if, by reason of his employment, he is unable to give this service.

5. The resident shall take such precautions as are required by the Lessor or his Agent to prevent grass fires on the Mission Land by means of fireguards or burnt strip or otherwise, and shall make every endeavour to extinguish grass fires which break out on or enter the said land from outside.

:

Whereas the METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY (hereinafter referred to as "The Lessor") is the registered owner of EPWORTH (including Adelaide and Glenwood) FARM, situate in the District of Salisbury, in extent 4,340 morgen

AND WHEREAS in terms of Section 23 of the Land Apportionment Act (Chap. 240) the Native Land Board has approved of the Lessors allotting residential sites not exceeding 300 in number to rent paying tenants subject to terms and conditions more fully set forth in an Agreement of Lease already entered into between the Methodist Missionary Society and.....

.....

AND WHEREAS the Lessee.....

desires to give accommodation upon the site leased to him to..... an adult, unmarried member of the Lessee's family,

NOW THEREFORE THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSETH

1. That the Lessor permits the residence of.....upon the site leased by.....

2. That this Agreement shall be for a period of twelve months commencing on the first day of.....19..... and terminating on the first day of..... 19..... and shall continue thereafter from year to year unless terminated in the manner hereinafter provided for:

   (a) The Lessor, or his Agent, may terminate for any breach of or non-compliance with the conditions of this Agreement by giving three months' notice to the Lessee.

   (b) For any breach of the conditions numbered 7 and 8 or for other sufficient reasons, the Lessor, or his Agent, shall have the right summarily to determine this Agreement.

   (c) Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving to the other twelve months' notice at any time.

   (d) This permit shall become null and void upon the marriage of the person to whom it is issued.

   (e) All notices of termination shall be given to either party by the other through the Native Commissioner, Salisbury.

3. The rental to be paid to the Lessor shall be.....

4. The resident shall, when called upon by the Lessor, or his Agent, work without payment for a period of 14 days per annum for the purpose of opening up and maintaining paths, roads, latrines, wells or the construction and maintenance work necessary for the protection of land liable to erosion within the residential area, or he shall provide, or pay for a substitute if, by reason of his employment, he is unable to give this service.

5. The resident shall take such precautions as are required by the Lessor or his Agent to prevent grass fires on the Mission Land by means of fireguards or burnt strip or otherwise, and shall make every endeavour to extinguish grass fires which break out on or enter the said land from outside.

6. The resident shall, when called upon by the Lessor or his Agent, assist in the destruction of locust hoppers when they may be found on the Mission Land.

7. The resident shall not make, or bring on to the Mission Land, any Kaffir Beer or other intoxicating drink.

8. The resident shall not be permitted to enter into a polygamous marriage or cohabit with any person without marriage.

9. The resident shall not undertake any non-essential work on Sunday.

10. The resident shall not hunt or trap game of any kind on the Mission Land or keep any dogs without permission.

SIGNED by the Lessor at..... this ..... day

of ..... 19.....

.....
For The Methodist Missionary Society.

AS WITNESSES:—

1.....

2.....

SIGNED by the Resident at ..... this ..... day

of ..... 19..... .....

AS WITNESSES:—

1.....

2.....

AND I, ..., Lessee of the site mentioned in this Permit of Residence, agree to the conditions of the same.

.....

I, ..., in my capacity as Native Commissioner for the District of....., do hereby certify that the foregoing Permit of Residence was duly read over by me to the above-named Resident and explained to him, and that he declared that he fully understood the same and agreed to the terms and conditions.

..... 19..... .....
Native Commissioner.

I, ..., in my capacity as Native Commissioner for the District of....., do hereby certify that the notice to terminate the foregoing Permit of Residence on.....was duly given by the Lessee/Lessor through me on.....

.....
Native Commissioner.

..... this ..... day

of .....19.....

.....
For The Methodist Missionary Society.

AS WITNESSES:—

1.....

2.....

SIGNED by the Resident at ..... this ..... day

of .....19.....

.....

AS WITNESSES:—

1.....

2.....

AND I, ..., Lessee of the site mentioned in this Permit of Residence, agree to the conditions of the same.

.....

I, ..., in my capacity as Native Commissioner for the District of....., do hereby certify that the foregoing Permit of Residence was duly read over by me to the above-named Resident and explained to him, and that he declared that he fully understood the same and agreed to the terms and conditions.

.....19.....

.....
Native Commissioner.

I, ..., in my capacity as Native Commissioner for the District of....., do hereby certify that the notice to terminate the foregoing Permit of Residence on.....was duly given by the Lessee/Lessor through me on.....

.....
Native Commissioner.

Bardwell 84173