

CHAPTER FOUR- ZIMBABWEAN GOSPEL MUSIC AS AN EXPRESSION OF GENDER RELATIONS

4. 0 Introduction

Documentation, commentary or any exposition of gospel music in Zimbabwe as an expression of gender relations requires some definition of sex as the starting point. This results from the fact that gender denotes practices by people selected according to sex. The definition of sex is treated by Green (1997) as simple to begin with, just involving biological determinants but becoming problematic where that definition ends, giving rise to the beginning of historic constructions, that is a person's participation in social and cultural functions as a human being in a given existential context.

The biological characteristics determining masculinity or femininity have nothing to do with being a musician or determining one's capabilities or lack of them as most of such attributes are either learnt, training- acquired or naturally bestowed talents whose endowment transcends biological determinants of sexuality. While biology points at sexuality with the definite and specific occurrence of male and female or occasionally hermaphrodite characteristics as three biological states of sexuality, gender transcends that because it brings to the fore a person's age, status and social functions in the society they are part of. It is imperative to cite Green for an insightful reflection of the discourse on gender to enable a balanced articulation of its

contrasting aspects, “In contrast to biological sex, gender is a culture-specific, inconsistent and variable precept that has more to do with social roles, age and status than with biology”, (1997:56)

The above definitions and meaning of gender in contrast with sexuality have been a pre-occupation and focus of this chapter in order to provide groundwork upon which this study strives to examine and estimate how Zimbabwean gospel music has exhibited itself as a forum for gender expression. Taking a survey of gospel musical activities from the time when evangelisation was brought into indigenous Zimbabwean societies and its development into gospel music to date enables this.

Gender relations, religion and music before colonisation in Zimbabwe

There is need to take into account Zimbabwean society’s attitude, consciousness and socio-cultural disposition to music in general before the advent of gospel music, which came with colonization in the 1890s. It is undisputable fact in Zimbabwean history that colonial subjugation of the indigenous population was enhanced by persistent acculturation of natives with the Bible providing a powerful front in a ‘war’ to wipe out the African tradition, which most sections of non-Christian colonial masters regarded as savage, barbaric, heathen and in dire need of the redemptive engagement of

the gospel. It is in the missionary churches that were strewn all over the country with colonization that the inception of gospel music in Zimbabwe must be traced.

Before the white man came to Zimbabwe, music was an integral part of both the cultural and social life of the people. Elderly women in menopausal stage of female adulthood sang and danced at Zimbabwean traditional religious rites such as 'retrieving' a dead family head from 'death' into the homestead to keep watch over the family and defend it from evil as a powerful ancestor spirit. This practice is done a year after a man who died and left a wife/ wives or children and family was buried, thus revealing consciousness of life after death. This practice shows that religious music was already in existence in Zimbabwean indigenous society before gospel music took root.

In Zimbabwean indigenous societies women play musical instruments like hand rattles, *mbira*, drum and leg rattles at traditional ceremonies where they also sing and dance together with men. Women spirit mediums function as the bridge between the dead and the living. Through the medium the spirit of a 'departed' forefather communicates to the progeny a range of imperatives from settling of family scores if there are aggrieved parties, protection of the family and foreknowledge of impending calamities to intercession with senior ancestor spirits and God for rains and supernatural benevolence.

The spirit medium in Zimbabwe is a living human through whom the spirit of the dead speaks when the specific spirit is invoked. The relevance of this example in this discussion of gender and gospel music in Zimbabwe arises from the fact that a woman can be a medium of either a male or female spirit. Gender is not an issue during religious ceremonies in most traditional African societies. The issue of gender came about with the European way of life through modern education and economic practices.

It is the Western woman who was oppressed and relegated strictly to household chores and supposedly God given subservience to the male counterpart dogmatized in the Biblical story of a woman being created from a man's rib. With industrial revolution opening new opportunities for the women's own advancement, men accommodated them only as far as they would not be of much threat to their forewarned male domination of the feminine kind. However the white man relented to have their women attain prominence and visibility elsewhere, like in Africa where colonization had been established. According to Nzewi and Galane this western woman, "... started to export and impose the social, cultural and gender problems plaguing the West on Africa's secure mental civilization and cultural practices" (2005: 71). Nzewi and Galane argue that gender was not a problem in Africa until the advent of colonisation.

`Olafsdottir remarks,

The history of western music has emphasised on the lives and works of 'great' composers, who apparently were all male. We have been bound to believe that women did neither compose nor participate in any musical activities whatsoever throughout the history of music, (1994:1)

The above reflects gender sensibilities in Western music circles that can lead to the misrepresentation of the reality, when one gender is left out or excluded deliberately. This supports the argument by Nzewi and Galane (2005) that the problem of gender in music was imported from the West. Another western scholar, Koskoff (1987) further points out that in the western perspective, music in the hands of humans has the power to expand or limit how individuals view themselves and how they operate. Music enables an individual to control others and also enables individuals to challenge authority. In the past western women who performed music in public were said to be challenging the authority of their husbands and were said to be 'out of control.'¹

In grappling with the question of gender relations in the Zimbabwean society, it should be noted that some gender tendencies were derived from traditional religious music. Other tendencies were derived from a legacy of colonization and acculturation. In Zimbabwean pre-colonial traditional religion prominent musical instruments played were drums, *mbira*, hand and leg rattles. A variety

¹ Koskoff, 1987. Women and Music- Cross-cultural Perspectives

of songs accompanied the playing of these musical instruments by both men and women. The ability to play them depended on the spirit who was in possession of the medium. The living person who would be possessed by the spirit of an ancestor through whom the living seek rapport with the supreme being (Mwari/God) is not viewed as directly demonstrating the skills to play the musical instruments.

The skills and dexterity are attributed to the ancestral spirit who works through them. A premise could be postulated that in indigenous religious logic the person performing the music is not the physical human agent undertaking the performance but a spiritual ancestor acting in him/her. A conclusion can be safely established that in indigenous religious philosophy the whole question of gender and capability as a physiological equation is not applicable. It would surely be absurd to conceptualise a male or female spiritual body and the question whether the spiritual entity now manifesting its existence in the after-world through the medium is a male or female becomes immaterial.

Zimbabwean indigenous religious belief and knowledge systems do not accord women a subordinate role to men. This proposition can be substantiated by historical facts from events that took place at the height of Shona and Ndebele resistance wars against British colonisation in the 1890's. Mbuya

Nehanda² was a Shona woman spirit medium that led freedom fighters in the first Chimurenga³ war against the British settlers providing spiritual support and guidance with the fighters deriving protection against their enemies from her. She led the indigenous people in that war to resist white settlers. The war songs sung in her praise and to seek guidance from her were passed on to the second Chimurenga war which resulted in Zimbabwe attaining independence in 1980. Until today Nehanda is regarded as a legendary freedom fighter that the white settlers eventually killed by hanging when they finally defeated and routed the resistance movement to completely subjugate the Shona/Ndelebe people of Zimbabwe. Nehanda, according to Mbiti (1991), was a proficient Mbira music player whose role in the first Chimurenga reveals how music, religion and politics are intertwined in indigenous culture.

Indigenous Zimbabwean culture contrasts interestingly with other cultures regarding the role of women and men in music performance. All around the world several cultures have divided men and women to occupy two distinct social spheres, identified as private and public (Post 1994:36; Green 1997; 13). Men are placed in the public sphere while women are placed in the private sphere, which is restricted to the domain of the household. According to Post (1994:36) in the Western culture, apart from household restriction, women would also participate in music and activities surrounding marriage,

² Nehanda was a female spirit medium who fought white settlers around 1890

³ War of liberation against white colonialists.

birth and death. The two spheres determine the nature of the activities they do in everyday life which, for women involve the creation, expression, and performance of religious music in the various cultures worldwide.

Gender and Zimbabwean gospel music

Most of the indigenous evangelists the white missionaries trained as evangelists were mainly men called 'Brothers' and 'Fathers' in Roman catholic churches. In Dutch Reformed Church, Methodist, Anglican, Church of Christ missionary Christian colleges they were called Pastors, Chaplains and Deacons. These positions of leadership in church structures excluded women who are relegated to a position in church, which can best be described as mere flock.

The inheritance of western gender tendencies that sideline women from prominent leadership roles is of interest to the development of gospel music in Zimbabwean churches as well as to the music industry in the country. The essential elements that make gospel music a unique genre of musical expression includes that it spreads the word of God with Jesus at the centre in anticipation of the apocalyptic age; promotes righteousness in people's lives, and gender equality before God. Categories accorded to gospel music range from songs to praise God, songs to strengthen believers' faith, songs and hymns for occasions like births, weddings and deaths. Post (1994) observes

that many cultures include women in musical performances featured in these events.

Attention will be paid to the themes of their songs, the categories of gospel music they fall into, as well as reception by the public and the music industry. How gospel music is received has to be determined by defining the recipient of the music in the respective groups. In this case both female and male gospel individual artists and groups exert a cementing effect to relationships between believers of different religious denominations as belief in Christ and the common faith supersedes ethnic and racial divisions among the Zimbabwean society

The thrust of this study is to examine the historical, socio-cultural and religious scope of gospel music that occurs in Zimbabwe. It also aims to expose how gender issues can be viewed from different angles by different social groups. Female singers are viewed through pre-conceived expectations. Green describes this tendency as, “gendered... patriarchal definitions of femininity... gendered connotations of singing,” (1997: 50). In Zimbabwean female gospel singers’ case it is apparent that they are subject to patriarchal tendencies.

Women took leading roles in church choirs during the early stages when the lyrics of church songs were translated from European language to local languages. They impressed themselves on the performance of gospel music although they remained reluctant to perform on musical instruments. That women do not play musical instruments cannot be blamed on men.

On the contrary, there has been collusion as well as resistance on the part of both men and women. In musical patriarchy, collusion involves women's consent to the terms of the restrictions placed upon their musical practice (Green 1997: 57)

According to Green, the meaning of music is inherently borne in the recipient's perception of the femininity or masculinity of the performer's ability to play a musical instrument. This means that if a female gospel artiste were to play a guitar, the meaning of that music would be accompanied by the recipient's perception that it is played by a woman. If it were a man playing the same instrument the effect would be to affirm his masculinity. Female gospel music artists in Zimbabwe have, to a considerably large extent, succeeded to reverse and almost completely upturn the trend to accord them a subservient role in church functions by taking a leading role in church choirs first before establishing themselves as reputable artists in their own right in the country's music industry.

There are some female gospel music performers who play percussion instruments like the tambourine that have no keys or that have no definite pitch. Percussion is cited by Green (1997) as an example of musical

instruments from the Western culture, which is acceptable for women to play owing to the demure posture with which the player can manage to handle the keys just like the piano, which is also patriarchally deemed modest for women to play. By restricting selves to playing these instruments in Zimbabwean gospel music performance, the female musicians unconsciously or unwittingly confirm their own colonially induced cultural and religious disorientation. The gender relations these female Zimbabwean gospel artistes in Zimbabwe express revolve on parameters imposed by the Western socio-cultural tradition.

Recipients of the music which is performed by female Zimbabwean gospel artists revealing colonially inherited Western tendencies, include conservative white descendants of colonialists and indigenous Zimbabweans. The society brings in new delineations (musical meaning from socio-cultural perceptions). Those perceptions are historically constructed judgments that recipients or audience of a musical performance, or expression of gospel music in this case, come up with.

Zimbabwean gospel music expression or performance is not spared controversy and debate as far as gender is concerned. There are several cases of female gospel musicians who have risen to stardom shoulders above male counterparts. Examples of females who gained remarkable popularity in

Zimbabwean gospel music history ahead of male gospel artists, are Jackie Madondo, Olivia Charamba, Fungisayi Mashavave, Ivy Kombo, and Shingisai Siluma.

One of the several gestures of a donation to charity by Fungisayi is reported in the Herald of 15th November 1995. Fungisayi's music exerts an impact deserving peculiar attention in terms of the acclaim recipients of her music demonstrate to reflect that they love her music. The gesture of donating to the needy is consistent with some African beliefs that women are seen as spiritual beings that provide the family with material and spiritual needs. It could be argued that Fungisayi transcends the inherited Western religious prejudices whereby the "... woman was disenfranchised and relegated to a lower rank politically, religiously, economically and socially without even the consolation of controlling family power" (Nzewi and Galane in Walton and Muller 2005:71).

How Zimbabwean gospel artists are viewed by the media and public

This study also sets out to show how the public views male and female gospel singers on one hand, and how both the print and electronic media depict them on the other. While the previous paragraph has described a positively acceptable, accommodative and progressive relationship between Fungisayi, the media and her audience (which includes top ranking political personalities

and the public at large) the opposite is true of other reports before and after performing at a ZANU PF function. The *Sunday Mail* of 6th May 2003 has a comment from a member of the public to the editor that reads, "My sisters, Ivy Kombo and Fungisayi Zvakavapano bear in your minds that you are Christians. As for you, Ivy, I don't have to remind you that you are someone's wife so behave yourself." The comment came after a show where the two female artists were accused of being indecently dressed. One observes that the attacks are gender related.

Another female gospel singer, Jackie Madondo, also found herself under scrutiny by the media and the public. Any gospel musician is viewed by the public as different from secular musicians. This is because gospel music is an integral part of a religious faith the singer is supposed to stand for, practise and believe in the tenets. Any social conduct bereft of observance of Christian statutes invites criticism, contempt and ridicule from both the public (Christian and general) and the media. The *Herald* newspaper of 13th November 2005 on Jackie Madondo says, "One was tempted to give her as an example of a role model, but alas, there she was pregnant outside marriage."

Letwin Berebende is another female gospel musician who has been at the centre of controversy with the media, other musicians and the public in general. Manyeruke, one of the founding fathers of Zimbabwean gospel

music, expressed disdain and disapproval of Berebende's costume on performances and the fusing of 'kwasas- kwasas' musical beat into her gospel music compositions. Kwasas- kwasas is a Congolese secular genre, which is cogently executed with sexually suggestive dance. Manyeruke's criticism of the female gospel musician is corroborated in a report from *Herald* in which some fans are reported to have questioned her use of tunes of Bongo Maffin who plays reggae, kwaito and house music, deemed non-Christian (4th December, 2004). The negative perceptions of Berebende's gospel music performance as controversial does not end there; it extends on to her securing the services of once France- based world acclaimed rhumba star, Kanda Bongoman as her producer of gospel music the beat of which is fundamentally rhumba and kwasas- kwasas.

Berebende defends her association with Kanda Bongoman whom she claims in an article in the *Herald* (13th April, 2006) is also a Christian. She does not see anything wrong in learning from his vast experience in their collaboration of him being her producer. The public tends to express mixed feelings when confronted with the question about whether it is right or wrong for Berebende as a gospel musician to infuse 'rhumba', reggae, and kwaito or rock rhythms in her music. Musakwa and Mahendere Brothers also use rhumba and sungura in their gospel music but the media and the public apparently deemed that

acceptable. This could imply that female artists are more prone to scrutiny than their male counterparts.

Gospel musicians make choices on how they endeavour to reach out to the recipients of their music. Christianity being at the core of their musical vocation, determines parameters of themes, costumes and dance content of their performance. In this study it has been observed that there is need to find out the extent to which gender may influence the choices musicians make and determine how musicians are perceived especially since Fungisayi (a female artiste) and Musakwa (a male artiste) choose popular secular rhythms like sungura to win both Christian and non- Christian fans.

Zimbabwean female gospel artists organised a music show commemorating the achievement of 'gospel mothers', which deliberately excluded male musicians. The gospel show included Olivia Charamba, Ivy Kombo, Fungisayi Zvakavapano, and Joyce Simeti among a horde of other female gospel music artists. This incident was reported in the Sunday Mail of the 31st May, 2006 in which the gendered intention of the performance was loud and clear "... All these women have done so much for the music industry and as much as we will be celebrating with them as mothers..." There is no show that was held to celebrate 'Fathers' Day'.

Zimbabwean gospel music as an expression of gender relations doubtlessly draws lines between male and female gospel music artists. Male gospel artists stand out prominently as having been contributing on a greater scale in the development of gospel music when compared to women. Sengwayo, Manyeruke and Chataika were the first gospel artists in Zimbabwe who led their respective bands in which women band members were backing vocalists. While Manyeruke, Chataika and several male band members played musical instruments in those bands, women members did not. They only played hand rattles that entail little skill to perform while providing backing vocals.

It is when women rise to notable prominence in any contemporary social activity that they are subjected to scrutiny by the public as well as the media to verify and establish if they execute that activity within socially acceptable parameters expected of women behaviour. This is where the contemporary controversy of gender begins. It is the people/ society, that hold the barometer for the measurement of acceptable or unacceptable behaviour of gospel musicians irrespective of their sex. That the musician is female would then call for additional criteria of the perception on consideration of female imaging. That obviously gives rise to a gendered perception and judgement, which some scholars trace to cultural, historical constructions that the likes of Green (1997) term patriarchal prejudices.

Generally debate continues to rage in Zimbabwe on what is acceptable from gospel artists. This is evident in an article in the Herald of 15th January, 2007 where a gospel music analyst remarks, "The moral debate arising from conflicting views vis-à-vis the religious dispensation regarding music and dance is far from over". In this regard there is no gender bias as the genre chosen by both male and female gospel artists' is not based on sexuality. An observation has already been made earlier on that acquisition of popularity with fans and the prospects of boosting sales of their music for personal financial benefits seem to determine individual gospel musician's choice based on current trends of the fans' musical tastes.

Print media has done a lot to criticise female gospel musicians when they deviate from assumed norms of Christian perception of womanhood as well as to celebrate their success. A variety of profiles of female Zimbabwean gospel musicians have been published. In the Herald of the 15th of March 2007 an unnamed Entertainment reporter writes on an upcoming gospel musician arguing that gender affects achievement in music. The article says,

Florence Majiri Mututwa said women should not be afraid to try their luck in the music industry...They tend to hide themselves in the comfort of their homes. If you attend funerals and church service you hear beautiful songs but none of them are willing to try recording their music.

Tawonezvi in Herald (01/05/2005) reflects on female gospel musicians' progress and apparently positive impact on Zimbabwean society as a whole.

“... with the coming in of women, many people are slowly turning to the music shows being flooded by fans... female artists have carved a niche for themselves in the genre”.

As this study reviews the extent to which gender affects the performance of gospel music in a social context, individual singers’ interaction with society is always the starting point to adequately address the topical issue. What society says about individual musicians and the musicians’ response to such criticism constitute what the researcher perceives to be the interaction between musicians and the society/public. The media is the medium for monitoring interaction. Male gospel artists have had their private lives published by media in cases of fraud and violence as noted in previous chapters but the reports were not gender perceived.

Ivy Kombo, later got embroiled in a controversy emanating from the paternity of her daughter whose father was in dispute. It turned out that the father of her child is her music producer and church pastor, Kasingakori. Initially rumours had circulated claiming that Moyo, Ivy’s first husband was the father and some speculated that Vuyo Mokoena, a South African singer had fathered Sammy –Joe. All these scandalous events are public knowledge to Zimbabwean society as media agencies such as the press, radio, television and Internet laid the facts bare for public consumption. “Pastor Admire Kasi

has admitted Ivy Kombo's daughter, Sammy- Joe is HIS child and begged for forgiveness from those hurt by his lies."⁴

These events put women gospel artists in bad light as society expects role model behaviour from them especially considering that gospel music should come from personalities who must be representative of the ideals of Christian way of life that shuns unchastity and unconventional social conduct. In this regard, female gospel artists tend to attract stricter public scrutiny with regard to issues of moral conduct. In response to the criticisms, Ivy Kombo released a song in which she stated that the child was hers (Sammy Joe). 'Sammy Joe is my child' when literally translated, implying categorically that the maternity of a child should be respected.

This chapter responds to the third research question: **The extent to which gospel music reflects unequal gender opportunities in Zimbabwe.**

Data collected through gospel music concerts, analysis of gospel music columns in Zimbabwean newspapers and interviews with male and female musicians indicates that there are unequal gender opportunities in Zimbabwean gospel music. Observation of gospel music concerts revealed that very few female musicians, if any, play musical instruments. They were observed to be lead or backing singers as well as dancers while their male

⁴ New Zimbabwe.com

counterparts majored in instrument playing, singing and dancing.⁵ Three female artists who opted to remain anonymous blamed their failure to play musical instruments on their male counterparts and church leaders who excluded them by not giving them enough support to become instrumentalists. The females were said to be slow in practical dexterity than the males. It was also established through interviews with church leaders that most of them preferred working with males in their church bands, thus, segregating females. Pastor Mhofu of Harare indicated that it was a sensitive issue working with females lest church leaders end up being implicated in affairs with church women. He also pointed out that most parents would not let girls come for practice sessions, some of which end late at night, hence their partial exclusion.⁶

Females are at times exposed to sexual abuse in the music industry as enticement. A pastor remarked that, "some women are sexually abused by their promoters and producers or business people who may pledge financial assistance with recording contracts and other services in the music industry."⁷ This opinion seems to hold water since it has been observed that one or two female gospel artists like Ivy destroyed her marriage to Moyo because of an adulterous affair with her producer, Pastor Kasi.⁸ It was further noted that on

⁵ Observation of Ngaavongwe Explosion, 2007 and Nguva Yakwana 2007

⁶ Interview with pastor Mhofu, 23 January, 2008

⁷ Interview with pastor Amina, January 22nd, 2008

⁸ New Zimbabwe.com

the other hand, male gospel artists also fall prey to loose women who are always willing to be associated with celebrities. Marriages of both female and male gospel artists have suffered as a result of bad publicity but females seem to be more affected since the borrowed perception of gender puts males in the public places compared to the females whose place is said to be in the home.

Summary

This general historical overview of the discourse of gender helps to assess the validity of a conclusion this study postulates regarding the development of gospel music in Zimbabwe. A musician's dexterity on an instrument and attitude towards group performance are aspects of historical constructions which tend to be defined by biological expectations. It is on a backcloth of that unresolved debate on gender that this chapter has shown how gender impacts on male and female gospel artists in Zimbabwe regarding performance and acceptability.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO ECONOMIC CLIMATE THAT SHAPES CONTENT, FORM AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE OF GOSPEL MUSIC IN ZIMBABWE.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores, analyses and discusses Zimbabwean gospel song themes from 1980 up to 2007 in relation to the Zimbabwean political and socio- economic situations in the country. This chapter responds to the fourth sub research question.

The power of music as an economic and socio-political tool is great. Kaemmar (1993) points out that music can easily become a useful weapon due to its ability to mobilize people. Pongweni (1982) also argues that music is like a barometer, which measures people's moods. Jones (1992) echoes similar sentiments when she says that African music is in most cases related to current events and usually carries political messages.

According to Zindi (2003) themes of early Zimbabwean gospel music had to do with celebrating and praising God for the attainment of independence. There was a lot of hope in the 1980s since the newly elected black government promised Zimbabweans better living conditions. It was towards the end of the 80s that Zimbabweans realized that they were faced by many hardships that were political, economic and social. The late 80s marked a turning point in Zimbabwe's history as the ruling party ZANU-PF was rocked by corruption and scandals

involving motor vehicles. According to Zindi (2003) several government officials were netted with some losing their jobs and others their lives. It is during this period that gospel musicians expressed the prevailing circumstances that they found themselves in, in their music. As people became increasingly frustrated with the government's failure to deliver, both secular and gospel music took centre stage in expressing disillusion.

In order to clearly articulate the close link between gospel music and political and socio-economic developments in Zimbabwe, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first section examines the socio-economic and political developments in Zimbabwe from the late 1980s and through the 1990s and the development of reformist gospel music during this period. The second section looks at the emergence and development of radical gospel music in 21st Century Zimbabwe in relation to the socio-economic and political developments of the period. Each section is divided into two parts: the first one deals with socio-economic and political developments in the country and the second one looking at related developments in gospel music.

5.1 Socio- Economic and Political Developments in Zimbabwe, 1980- 1999

Mid to late 1980s was a period of political tension in Matebeleland, a province that was normalizing after coming from a war that was largely aggravated by the animosity between the ruling ZANU PF and the main opposition ZAPU, led by

Joshua Nkomo. ZAPU's major support base was Matebeleland, a region largely inhabited by the Ndebele people. The ruling party sought to destroy ZAPU and its Ndebele constituency after accusing them of supporting the dissidents: armed men on the loose in Matebeleland and parts of Midlands from early 1980s. ZANU-PF also accused ZAPU of hoarding arms after a huge cache was discovered at a ZAPU farm in 1983 (Nkomo 2001) The ruling party deployed a crack- force, the Fifth Brigade or Gukurahundi, to Matebeleland during the period 1983- 1985. The force systematically targeted the Ndebele people, most of whom supported ZAPU. It has been estimated that 40 000 people, mainly Ndebele, were killed (ZAPU PF 2007). This violence forced Nkomo to sign the Unity Accord with ZANU PF on 22 December 1987. The civil war certainly disrupted any development plans for Matebeleland and even after peace had been restored, many Ndebele people accused the government of deliberately neglecting the province. A case often cited by people from the region is the Zambezi Water Project. This plan was drafted in the 1980s to draw water from the Zambezi River to the drought prone region of Matebeleland. The project failed to take off and remains a mirage.

The politics of the 1990s were characterized by widespread violence and intimidation, especially during election times. During the run up to the March 1990 parliamentary and presidential elections, for example, the ZANU PF Youth League and Women's League intimidated opposition supporters. Police and Youth League often teamed up to attack and harass opposition supporters (Laakso

2002). The electronic media also delivered intimidation and threats. One television commercial warned the electorate that life would come with voting for ZANU PF and death would be the consequence of voting for the opposition Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). Another advertisement showed the situation of a car crash followed by a terrifying voice warning that this was not the only way to die, but the other one was voting for ZUM (Ncube 1991).

The worst incident of the 1990 elections was perhaps the attempted murder of Patrick Kombayi, a ZUM candidate for Gweru who was expected to win the seat held by Vice President Simon Muzenda. Kombayi was shot in broad daylight in Gweru and the assailants were identified as Kizito Chivamba, a ZANU- PF Youth League member, and Elias Kanengoni, a Central Intelligence Organisation head for Midlands province (Tekere 2006). They were tried and sentenced to seven years each, only for them to be pardoned by president Mugabe in 1994. Presidential pardons were also extended to several ruling party youths imprisoned for acts of violence during run up to the 1990 elections (Makumbe and Campagnon 2000).

Widespread intimidation and violence also characterized the 1995 parliamentary and the 1996 presidential elections. Many people, particularly the illiterate, were intimidated into believing that ZANU PF could detect those who voted for the opposition. In Luveve and Makokoba in Bulawayo, ruling party activists

threatened to go round beating people if ZANU- PF lost the elections. In a public speech in the Honde Valley on 13 January 1995 Kumbirai Kangai, ZANU- PF chairman for Manicaland, threatened civil servants with dismissal if they supported the opposition (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000).

One reason why ZANU PF became increasingly intolerant and combative towards the opposition is that the general population had, from the late 1980s, begun expressing disillusionment with the ruling party over unfulfilled promises. High-level corruption cases rocked the nation. The government had to institute two commissions of inquiry in March and August 1989 in response to public outcry that senior government officials were acquiring vehicles from Willowvale Motor Industries and Dahmer without following proper government procedures and selling them exorbitantly far in excess of the regulated prices. Unofficial trade practices became rampant as new motor vehicles were sold to second or third parties in order to make more profit thereby violating price regulations. This scandal was unearthed during 1988 at a time when the country was facing a serious shortage of motor vehicles due to the decline in foreign currency amounts availed by the government for the purchase of vehicle spares and kits. Corruptive tendencies crept in as influential personalities violated waiting lists for vehicle purchases. The Sandura Commission of March 1989 netted government ministers: Maurice Nyagumbo, who went on to commit suicide in embarrassment;

Calistus Ndlovu, Dzingai Mutumbuka, Enos Nkala as well as senior government officials such as Jacob Mudenda (Sandura Commission Report March 1989).

Corruption became widespread in Zimbabwe for which the public sector and parastatals became notorious. In February 1999, the government had to suspend the entire management of the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe, a parastatal, after discovering the embezzlement of about Z\$ 1.5 billion over a five-year period. During the same month, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority, another parastatal, declared itself insolvent having lost Z\$ 10 million through internal theft (Meredith 2002).

The majority of the Zimbabweans were enraged in 1998 when the president, without consulting parliament or cabinet, decided to send troops to the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in support of the regime of Laurent Kabila at a time when the country was bankrupt with most people living in abject poverty. The deployment started with 3 000 troops and ended up with 11 000, with the support of warplanes and military vehicles. The cost of maintaining the troops was estimated at US\$ 1 million per day. Some senior government officials benefited from the military involvement. The army commander, Vitalis Zvinavashe, for example, won a tender to transport supplies to the DRC (Meredith 2002). Meanwhile Zimbabwe ran short of foreign currency. This resulted in chronic shortages of many basic commodities that could only be

procured abroad. Consequently, power cuts and fuel shortages became the order of the day from 1999.

The socio-economic hardships the nation was facing triggered public protests and labour militancy. With a new leadership from 1988 in Morgan Tsvangirai as Secretary General and Gibson Sibanda as President, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) organized an anti-Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) demonstration in urban areas on 13 June 1992. The demonstration was brutally suppressed by the police. There were also 'IMF riots' by unorganized youths, most of them unemployed, in Harare during 1993 and 1995 (Bond and Manyama 2002).

Labour militancy was most pronounced in 1997: 'the year of the strike' (Saunders 2001: 148), during which 232 separate industrial actions took place (Kanyenze 2004). Most strikes were violently dispersed by the police using tear-gas, dogs and beatings, an example being the ZCTU organized strike in most cities on 9 December 1997 (Saunders 2001). There were several work stoppages throughout 1998 and most of them were triggered by rising prices of basic commodities. The price of maize-meal had risen by 36% in October 1997 and by a further 24% in December. In January 1998 the price of rice and cooking oil more than doubled (Meredith 2002). In October 1998 the government decided to raise the cost of fuel by 67% and that of basic commodities by up to 40% (Saunders 2001).

It was largely due to the prevalence of public protests and labour militancy that in November 1998 the government, through the Presidential Powers, (Temporary Measures Act) banned worker stay-aways and made provision for hefty fines and long prison terms for such offences. The legal instrument resembled the colonial Industrial Conciliation Act and Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) in banning industrial action as well as suppressing the freedom of assembly and expression. In January 1999, 150 lawyers and human rights activists demonstrated outside parliament demanding an end to state torture and the repealing of LOMA. The strikers were ruthlessly dispersed by the riot police with tear- gas, dogs and batons (Meredith 2002).

The conditions of rising poverty and despair experienced by the majority of the population during the 1990s and increasing government repression drove the ZCTU to play a pivotal role in the formation of the MDC in 1999 after realizing that the socio-economic hardships the country was facing needed a political solution. With the formation of the MDC, the stage was now set for a battle with ZANU- PF over political space in 21st Century Zimbabwe.

The period 1988-1999 was characterized by socio- economic hardships mainly resulting from Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), government inefficiency, HIV/AIDS, high-level corruption and natural disasters such as

droughts. In addition, increasing State repression also typified this period. Disillusionment during this period was usually manifested by public protests and industrial action. Musicians were also part of this struggle; gospel musicians closely followed events and urged the government to pass reforms that would address the plight of Zimbabweans.

5.2 The Development of Reformist Gospel Music in Zimbabwe 1980- 1999

Reformist protest gospel music emerged during the late 1980s as the nation began to take stock of the gains of the liberation struggle. The song texts reflect protest in a mild form and this could be because the conditions of living had not gone totally bad as yet. It developed in response to the general disenchantment and despair within the society at large. Music is indeed a mirror of society when it comes to expressing people's aspirations. This was clearly reflected when a number of secular and gospel musicians joined the general public in expressing concern at the political and socio-economic hardships. It was largely due to the high level of political violence and corruption that the general populace, with the support of some members of the music fraternity, began to openly express sentiments of frustration and betrayal.

Gospel music of the late 1980s and the 1990s was largely reformist since it encouraged the political leadership to manage the economy and society efficiently; address the malpractices of the ruling elite, especially corruption; and

to improve the general standard of living in the country. Reformist gospel music of the late 1980s and the 1990s therefore mainly agitated for socio-economic reform without challenging the political hegemony of ZANU PF. Freedom Sengwayo after the Gukurahundi war that threatened to wipe out the Ndebele tribe composed a song called 'Ndinoda Mapapiro' (I want wings), which wishes that one could have wings to fly to another land where peace and harmony reigned and where different peoples lived and stayed as one. He sang about a country (Zimbabwe) in whose rivers flowed human blood making it unsuitable for human habitation. The musician relocated to South Africa soon afterwards. He sang:

*Mazuva angu ave mashoma
Ekugara munyika ino
Ndinosuwa musha wababa
Wandichanogara nengirozi
Nyika ino ave matongo
Haichisiri musha kwawo
Ndinokumbira mapapiro
Emangwanani ndibhururuke*

My days are numbered
Days of staying in this country
I long for my Father's home
Where I will stay with angels
This country is now in ruins
It is no longer a good home
I kindly ask for wings
Early morning, so that I can fly

*Nhaika baba, ndiitirei nyasha
Ndipei mampapiro ekuti ndibhururuke
Nyika ino yave rukova runoerera ropa revanhu
Ndipei mapapiro emangwanani ndibhururuke*

Oh God, have mercy on me
Give me wings to fly
This country is a river where human blood flows

Give me morning wings so that I can fly away

Some songs directly attacked state sponsored violence on the opposition, a group named Called To Worship composed a song based on the events during the run-up to the 1990 general elections. The content of the song is centred on issues of harassment of opposition officials and supporters. Part of the song goes:

*Nyika yashanduka
Runyararo torushuwa Mwari
Ndiani angatiratidza nzira?
Hapana chatingaite
Hapana kana Mwari musipo*

This country has changed
We long for peace
Who can show us the way?
There is nothing we can do
Nothing, if you are not with us God.

In the 1990s, some artists expressed the genuine concerns of many people in Matebeleland that most government sponsored projects were not reaching the province. As noted earlier, the Gukurahundi massacres from 1983 to 1985 had eliminated any opportunities of development in the province during this period. When peace was finally restored by the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, Matebeleland lagged behind in terms of development. What further frustrated the general population in Matebeleland was that most government development plans for the province, such as the Zambezi Water Project, were never implemented. Lovemore 'Majaivana' Tshuma, an artist from Matebeleland, took it upon himself to express this disgruntlement through gospel music.

In 'Isono sami' (My sin) Lovemore Tshuma expresses bitterness at being discriminated against by fellow citizens in their country of birth. In this song, he complains of being regarded as illegitimate in his country no matter what good he does. Generally he calls for equality and equity in the distribution of national resources when he sings:

*Isono sami, Isono sami
Yikuba Lizwangendaba
Ngihlabele kanjani
Ngigide kanjani
Abangifuni ngoba ngilizwangendaba
Abangikhiphi emaphepheni mina
Ngoba ngilizwangendaba*

My sin, my sin
Is to be a foreigner in my country
No matter how well I sing
No matter how well I dance
They don't want me because I am a foreigner
They don't publish my works in the papers
Because I am a foreigner in my country

Leonard Zhakata's hit 'Mugove' (my portion of wealth) for example, castigated the corrupt and dishonest tendencies of high ranking officials in this song. Zhakata lamented that high level corruption was filtering down to the ordinary people:

*Ndokumbira mugove wangu ndichiri kurarama
Tenzi, tarisai ndosakadzwa sechipfeko nevane mari
Ndisina changuwo, ndinongodzvanyirirwa,
Ndichingodzvanyirirwa, ndichingofondotswa
Moyo wangu unorwadza kuti nguva dzose
Ndinongodzvanyirirwa sei Tenzi*

I ask for my share whilst I am still alive
Lord, look, I'm being abused by those who have money
I don't have anything, I'm oppressed
I'm oppressed and exposed to hard labour

My heart bleeds because all the time
I'm oppressed, why my Lord?

The government was further discredited during the 1990s when it implemented the World Bank and International Monitoring Fund, IMF Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which caused severe socio-economic hardships among the majority of Zimbabweans. The nation was rocked by price increases, industrial closures, job retrenchments, and salary cuts. Poverty crept in and most people found it increasingly difficult to afford the cost of basic commodities, education and health. Gospel music became the voice of the voiceless by expressing frustration with the government for betraying the ideals of the liberation struggle. Fungisayi Zvakavapano Mashavave expresses the economic hardships in her song titled *Kurarama Inyasha* where she laments the ever-rising cost of bread. She expresses that no one may have a solution to this problem except God, the Father. Part of the song goes:

*Ndaona nyika ichinetseka
Vanhu nhasi vari kubvunza
Chingwa nhasi zvachakwira
Ko mangwana torarama sei?
Ini pano ndine mhinduro
Vanogona Ishe vanogona*

I have seen that the country has problems
Today, people are asking:
Today the price of bread has gone up
How shall we survive tomorrow?
I have an answer, today
God is able, he is able

The tribulations of Zimbabweans from the late 1980s until the late 1990s were summed up by Charamba's song 'Sunday Service'. Charamba bemoans the turmoil in the country with corruption being rampant and the AIDS/HIV pandemic wrecking havoc. He sings:

*Mwari tumirai shoko munondo unobaya
Zvitadzo zvenyika, Ishe tumirai shoko
Mwari ndikafunga kwatave kuenda
Mazuva edu Mwari baba ndochema
Ishe ndikafunga koenda nyika
Makore edu, Mwari ishe ndochema*

God send your word the sword that stabs
The world's sins, Lord send your word
God, if I think of where we are going
Our days, Father God I cry
Lord, if I think of where the country is going
Our years, Lord God I cry

*Mwarika kugarisana takonewa
Munyika medu Mwari ishe tichazovei
Iko kutendeka takarasa kare Mwari
Vana mai nababa maoko atsvuka ropa vari kubayana
Vanakomana vedu vapanduka, migwagwa haichafambika
Dzose dzave mhandu, Tichazovei Ishe?*

God, we have failed to stay in harmony
In our country, God what are we going to be?
We lost our faith long ago
Hands of fathers and mothers are red with blood stains
Our sons have rebelled, roads are no longer safe
All are thugs, what shall we be Lord?

5.3 Socio- Economic and Political Developments in Zimbabwe, 2000-2007

Life in the 21st Century Zimbabwe was characterized by unbearable socio-economic and political problems. The government had abandoned ESAP but socio-economic problems worsened. The economy faced imminent collapse; the

IMF estimated that during the period 2001-2006, the Zimbabwean economy shrunk by 40% (Chimhete 2005). Inflation figures rose by day. Unemployment soared and so did prices of basic commodities. Foreign currency shortages resulted in reduced suppliers of basic necessities that have to be imported such as fuel and electricity. Education and health care became unaffordable for most ordinary Zimbabweans. As the population became more disgruntled and restive, the ZANU PF government became more ruthless than ever before as it sought to mute dissenting voices.

The land redistribution exercise, launched on 26 February 2000, contributed considerably to aggravating Zimbabwe's socio-economic problems. By 18 March 2000, four hundred commercial farms had been seized. The figure rose to 500 farms by June 2000. In 2002 the ruling party seized more commercial farms under a very violent land resettlement scheme known as the "Third Chimurenga." In this programme, the number of commercial farms to be confiscated was set at about 3000 and this meant that more than 400 000 farm workers were going to lose their jobs (Meredith 2002).

The government's land policy, largely motivated by the political expediency, had disastrous social-economic repercussions. The displacement of commercial farmers led to serious food shortage because most of the so called 'new farmers' lacked either the technical know-how or simply the enthusiasm to farm. Some

also lacked the necessary resources for commercial farming. As a result basic foods such as maize meal and sugar were constantly in short supply during this period. In 2002 about 50% of Zimbabweans were in the state of starvation (Meredith 2002). In addition, workers on most seized farms lost their jobs as the majority of the incoming 'new farmers' brought in their relatives as workers. The government's land reform programme was to a great extent ill conceived because of the harm it did to the economy.

Foreign currency shortages that had surfaced during the late 1990s were aggravated by the land redistribution exercise in the sense that many commercial farmers had been engaged in the export agriculture and their displacements worsened the country's foreign exchange situation. The shortage of foreign currency resulted in the scarcity of vital commodities that had to be imported. The fuel shortages that had started in 1999 worsened, so were electrical power outages. Drugs became scarce at a time when the HIV-AIDS pandemic was depleting the population.

Poverty became the norm rather than the exception among the majority of Zimbabweans. The country's inflation rate remained the highest in the world throughout this period. In January 2004, inflation was at 623% (*Herald*, 25 June 2006) and went down to 133% in January 2005. It began to rise from 265.1% in August 2005, then to 359.8% in September 2005 (Chiriga 2005) and 782% in

March 2006 (Chimhete 2005). Money became virtually valueless as Dongozi observed in the *Standard* of March 2006:

...citizens now carry large amounts of money as the local currency becomes increasingly worthless. Wallets, which have traditionally been used to carry bank notes, have already ceased to be of much use except for carrying identity cards, credit cards and Automated Teller machine (ATM) cards. Women buying handbags now opt for the bigger variety to enable them to carry several kilograms of the Zimbabwean dollar now derisively referred to as "stationery"...

Students of history have read about the pre- Second World War depressions, which hit USA and Europe during which money was carried in wheelbarrows and suitcases just to buy a single loaf of bread. Zimbabwe is hurtling towards a similar situation as the economy continues its free fall, (Dongozi in *Standard*, 26 March 2006:9).

Industrial closures resulted in more people roaming the streets. In 2005 unemployment was way past 80% (Women's Coalition 2005). Barely 8% of the adult population was employed by the formal sector (Mukaro 2005). Consequently, around four million people, out of an estimated population of 12 million people were in informal employment by 2005 (Saburi 2005). In 2006, unemployment remained well above 80% and people living below the poverty datum line were believed to be not less than 90% of the population (Tekere 2006). There is no doubt that the Zimbabwean economy during this period was in an advanced state of decomposition.

Public disgruntlement and labour militancy intensified as conditions deteriorated in all aspects of life. In March 2003, for example, calls for "mass action" by the

MDC saw “the biggest anti- government urban protest in years” with most supporters staying away from work for two days to show their displeasure with ZANU-PF regime. Most shops and businesses closed in all major urban centers (Hammar and Ratopoulos 2003). The government reacted brutally: 500 opposition officials and supporters were arrested, more than 1 000 people were driven from their homes and 250 admitted to hospital (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003).

The political scene during the period 2000-2006 was characterized by extreme state sponsored violence and intimidation especially during times immediately before and after elections. In 2000, Mugabe himself even boasted of having “a degree in violence” (Meredith 2002: 233). Most elections were held amid allegations by the opposition, civil groups and several international organizations of massive rigging. The state increasingly became repressive to the extent of plagiarizing colonial statutes in an attempt to taper democratic space. The state used oppressive rules and laws to silence people in the same way the colonialists had done.

The run up to the June 2000 parliamentary elections was tainted by widespread violence, mostly state- engineered. Border Gezi, the governor of Mashonaland East, declared that his province was “a one-party state” and banned the independent *Daily News* newspaper and MDC election material from circulating in

the province (Hill 2003). ZANU-PF terror on opposition supporters forced some 10 000 Zimbabweans to flee towns during the run-up the 2000 elections (Feltoe 2004). During this period, there were more than 36 murders among the 5000 reported cases of the state driven violence and intimidation (Bond and Manyanya 2002). According to the Amani Trust which covered the incidents of political violence from mid-February 2000 until the elections in June, about 35 000 politically motivated criminal acts took place and ZANU PF supporters were responsible for 91.2% of them (Feltoe 2004). A peace march in Harare organized by civil groups, churches, lawyers and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was waylaid by a group of the so- called war veterans and other ZANU PF supporters who assaulted demonstrators and passersby alike. Instead of arresting the perpetrators of the violence, the police fired teargas into the fleeing crowd (Meredith 2002). The 2000 parliamentary elections were “the most violent in the country’s history” and violence before and after the elections claimed more than 120 lives, mostly at the hands of ZANU- PF (Hill 2003: 239).

Violence and intimidation remained the staple of the ruling party’s mobilization strategies in preparation for the March 2000 presidential elections. The army was brought in to retrain ex-combatants as part of a regular force to deal with the opposition. Gangs of ex- combatants and other ruling party supporters operating from the ZANU PF headquarters in Harare besieged various urban workplaces. The invaded places included a bakery, a transport firm, a departmental store

head office, a children's home, a soccer club, a training center, a safari company and a dental surgery. They also raided a private hospital in Harare, Avenues Clinic, "where fifteen operations were underway" (Meredith 2002: 212). By 2001, the number of businesses raided had reached 300 (Meredith 2002).

Colonial statutes were also taken on board and modified to maintain ZANU PF hegemony. The colonial LOMA was substituted by Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of January 2002, which outlawed meetings of more than two people without police clearance four days in advance. It also outlawed criticism of the president, and provided for long jail terms for being critical of the police, army and the economy, (Masunungure 2004). Despite having sought police clearance in advance, most opposition rallies were scuttled by the police. The police disrupted an MDC rally that had been scheduled for 20 January 2002 at White City stadium in Bulawayo. This was also the fate of another MDC rally in Masvingo on 20 February 2002, (Hill 2003)

Violence persisted during the countdown to the March 2005 parliamentary elections. The Human Rights Non Governmental Forum notes that between January and September 2004, 12 people were killed in circumstances of politically motivated violence, 202 unlawfully arrested, 7491 tortured and 329 assaulted (Chimhete 2005). By March 2005, at least 10 aspiring MDC candidates had been arrested in various parts of the country (Dongozi 2005).

The ruling party, to mobilize supporters and at the same time famish the opposition, also used food aid. Speaking during the run up to the March 2005 parliamentary elections at a time when 50% of Zimbabwe's population of about 12 million was in a state of starvation, Didymus Mutasa, a senior ZANU-PF politician warned: "We would be better off with only six million people, with our own people who support the liberation struggle" (Meredith 2002).

Unprecedented post election violence took place in the form of 'Operation Murambatsvina' from May 2005 as the state sought to punish the urban electorate for supporting the MDC. The operation was an attempt by ZANU- PF to destabilize the MDC's urban support base by removing people from towns. The demolition of informal residential areas and business premises in most urban centers that ensued aggravated the plight of the already pauperized Zimbabweans. A survey carried out in 26 wards of Harare's high-density suburbs by Action Aid International and the Combined Harare Residents Association revealed that 79% of those interviewed had lost their source of livelihood as a result of the operation (*Standard* 14 August 2005). Civil groups working in Zimbabwe estimated that over one million people were displaced by the operation country-wide (*Voice of America Studio Seven* 31 October 2005). This qualifies Operation Murambatsvina as "one of the biggest human displacements of any

urban settlement in Zimbabwe's history outside a natural disaster" (*Zimbabwe Independent* 3 June 2005: 5).

State sponsored violence also took place ahead of the November 2005 senate elections. In October 2005, for example, the army waged a terror campaign in Harare's Budiro suburb beating up 15 people. Most of the victims reported being beaten for supporting the MDC (*Zimbabwe Independent* 28 October 2005). On 9 November 2005 Bright Matonga, the Deputy Minister of Information, bragged during a telephone interview that ZANU-PF were "masters of violence" (Voice of America Studio Seven 9 November 2005).

In taking stock of the main aspects of the socio- economic and political life of the majority of Zimbabweans during the period 2000- 2006, one will easily identify the following tribulations: increasing state oppression; physical, social, institutional and psychological violence, much of it state engineered; mounting poverty mainly caused by inflation, price hikes, unemployment and some ill-conceived government policies; shortage of basic necessities; power cuts; and fuel shortages. Education and health care became luxuries for most Zimbabweans and general suffering became the norm rather than the exception. These are some of the issues that dominated the content of radical gospel music during this period.

5.4 The Emergence and Development of Radical Gospel Music in Zimbabwe 2000- 2007.

Radical gospel music took shape from around 2000 as the ZANU PF regime became more repressive in the face of serious economic and political challenges. This was a more confrontational type of gospel music that was also more revolutionary in terms of song text. The ruling party increasingly became combative in retaliation to mounting protest from worker organizations, civil groups and opposition parties against chronic hardships and government inefficiency. Gospel music underwent a shift in approach: musicians gradually began to demand radical socio economic and political changes. The country's socio economic problems came to be attributed to political failure. It came to be realized that reforms could best be attained if the political system was overhauled. Radical gospel musicians gradually departed from a reformist stance to propose a radical approach of confrontation, defiance, insubordination and political revolution. Radical gospel music reflected the despair among various sections of the population and began to advocate for regime change, among other options. Hosiah Chipanga expressed the need for regime change in a song called 'Daniel' where he likens Zimbabwe to the biblical Daniel who was thrown into a den of lions. He points out that for Zimbabwe to be rescued, people have to vote out the present government. He sings:

*Daniel mugomba reshumba
Zimbabwe mugomba reshumba
Vasikana simukai muvhote
Zimbabwe mugomba reshumba
Vakomana simukai muvhote*

*Zimbabwe mugomba reshumba
Vana mai simukai muvhote
Zimbabwe mugomba reshumba
Vana baba simukai muvhote
Zimbabwe mugomba reshumba
Mose mose simukai muvhote*

Daniel in a den of lions
Zimbabwe in a den of lions
Girls stand up and vote
Daniel in a den of lions
Zimbabwe in a den of lions
Boys stand up and vote
Daniel in a den of lions
Zimbabwe in a den of lions
Mothers stand up and vote
Daniel in a den of lions
Zimbabwe in a den of lions
Fathers stand up and vote
Daniel in a den of lions
Zimbabwe in a den of lions
Lets all stand up and vote

Radical gospel music emerged in 21st Century Zimbabwe (2000- 2007) as the country's socio economic hardships worsened and state repression intensified. It clearly reflected the dominant thinking of the time that the nation's problems needed drastic changes and above all, regime change. Much of the gospel music during this period therefore became an important political resource which conscientised and mobilized the people against the ZANU-PF government. There were however other forms of radical gospel music, which did not necessarily advocate for regime change, but pressurized government to institute drastic policy shifts. Charamba in the song 'Komborerai' expresses the wish that his children be spared from corruption and other evils when he sings:

*Komborerai vana vangu Baba komborerai
Tungamirai vana vangu, Baba tungamirai
Baba varopafadzeiwo vana vangu
Havagoni kufamba voga imi musipo
Apo vanopinda nepavanobuda muvarangarire
Mukarega kufamba navo vana vangu
Havana wekufamba naye*

Bless my children, Father, bless them
Guide my children, Father, lead them
Bless my children, Father
They cannot walk alone in your absence
Bless them when they go out and as they come in
If you do not walk with them
They will have no one to show them the way

*Handidi kuti vapone nezvipo zvuumbavha, handidi baba
Handidi kuti vapone nezvipo zveufefe, handimbodi, baba
Handidi kuti vagamuchire zvipo zvekuroya, handidi baba
Handidi kuti vasimukire nekutsika vamwe, handidi, baba*

I do not want them to rely on being thieves, No Father
I do not want them to survive on adultery, No Father
I do not want them to receive gifts of witchcraft, No Father
I do not want them to prosper through the downfall of others

Like its predecessor, reformist gospel music, radical gospel music also highlighted the deteriorating socio economic and political conditions in the country. It should however be noted that radical gospel music went further by emphasizing the cause of the suffering. It identified the state as the major culprit; the state and its institutions were therefore critiqued more often than not. Radical gospel music exposed the major socio- economic challenges during this period including fuel shortage, HIV/AIDS, foreign currency problems, inflation and the ever-declining standards of living. Musicians blasted the state for reducing social spending. Mercy Mutsvene composed a song that laments the hardships of life in Zimbabwe. She sings:



*Nyika ino inorema
Nyika ine minzwa
Nyika ine rufu
Oh Ishe tibvumbamirei*

This country is difficult to live in
The country is full of thorns
The country is full of death
Oh Lord, protect and shield us

In addition to expressing the general deterioration of standards in the political, social and economic life of most Zimbabweans, radical gospel music also concentrated on the intensification of state repression and the tapering of democratic space in Zimbabwe. In 'Kundiso' (Perseverance), Zhakata bemoaned the existense of tough laws in independent Zimbabwe. The song relates how someone is frustrated by what is taking place in Zimbabwe. He laments:

*Kana iri iyo raramiro yacho
Marwadziro mupfungwa nemumweya
Handingagaroridza tsamwa
Ndoshuva zororo remwoyo
Tenzi ndipeiwo kundiso
Zvandiremera, ndasimudza maoko
Ndapeta muswe, ndazvidukupisa*

If it is the way of life
It pains the soul and spirit
I cannot always sulk
I wish for peace at heart
Lord, give me victory
It is hard for me, I have raised my hands in surrender
I have tucked in my tail, I have humbled myself.

Several families lost breadwinners and some families broke up due to the deadly disease, AIDS/HIV. Spouses would accuse one another of having brought the disease into the family. Several artists expressed the pain and grief caused by

AIDS. Mtukudzi in a song called 'Tiregerereiwo' (Forgive us) pleads to God to have mercy and relieve humankind of the disease. He remarks:

*Tiregerereiwo Mambo takatadza
Raramo nhasi hatichaigona
Raramo nhasi yakwidza kumakata
Nzira yotofamba mukwidza
Kumateru yonanga kumakuva
Tiregerereiwo Mambo takatadza*

Forgive us Lord, we sinned
We cannot survive now
Life today is an uphill task
We are walking on a steep road
The road leads to the graveyard

Also on AIDS, Charamba explains that the only solution is knowing Jesus. The song explains that even if someone is faithful and fears evil, they could still get AIDS from an unfaithful spouse. The song also has gender implications in that when a man gets infected by AIDS/HIV, the wife is blamed. He sings:

*Mhinduro iripo mukoma
Mhinduro ndiJesu weNazareta
Nyarara kuchema mukoma
Inga zvatoitika
Kuna vanababa vakatendeka
Vanobatwa nedenda irori, mhoswa ndeyamai
Mhinduro iripo, Mhiduro NdiJesu wenazareta*

The solution is there my brother
The solution is Jesus of Nazareth
Do not cry my brother
It has already happened
To a faithful man
When he catches the disease, the wife is to blame
The solution is there, the solution is Jesus of Nazareth.

Hosiah Chipanga in his album *Pharaoh*, narrates the beauty of Zimbabwe and explains how the chief spirits of Nehanda and Kaguvi made diamonds and gold

plentiful in the country. He likens Mugabe to the biblical Pharaoh who is hard hearted and is said to arrest anyone who tries to dig out the diamonds. He is said to want all the riches to himself. He sings:

*Tinotenda Nehanda akatipa zvingoda
Totenda Chaminuka akatipa zvimukute
Dambudzo rasara ndiPharaoh
Kuti tinonge zvatapiwa navadzimu
Pharaoh otisunga, toenda kujeri*

We thank Nehanda for giving us diamonds
We thank Chaminuka for giving us gold
The stumbling block is Pharaoh
If we pick what our ancestors have given us
Pharaoh arrests us and sends us to jail

The rise in unemployment and poverty led Olivia Charamba to compose a song titled, 'Africa Bethesda' in which she says Africa as a continent is rich in both human and material resources yet Africans still believe that they were created to be workers. She says the song was derived from John 5 verses 2 up to 9 where she likens Africa to a crippled man at the pool of Bethesda, (Herald, 24 July, 2006). She believes Africa has been in this position for too long and that it is time for her to rise and dive into the pool for deliverance, Zimbabwe included. Part of the song reads:

*Africa wanonoka ipapo
Une simba rakawanda
Une pfuma yakawanda
Une njere dzakawanda
Une zvipa zvakawanda
Africa nyika yangu
Tinochema nayo*

Africa you have been on one spot for too long
You have a lot of power



You have a lot of riches
You have a lot of intelligence
You have many talents
Africa my homeland
We cry for you

Violence has existed since ZANU came into power but the extent of the political violence has worsened. This led MDC choir through Paul Madzore to compose a gospel song pleading to the Lord for mercy. Most opposition supporters were either beaten or killed and the National Youth leader, Nelson Chamisa was badly injured by ZANU people. They want to be rescued from the violent ZANU which kills people. The song goes:

*Ndiyamureiwo pandimire pakaoma baba
Zvenyika ino zvandinetsa baba
Ndiyamureiwo pandimire pakaoma
Chamisa uye vamupondaponda
MaZANU aya andishungurudza
Ndiyamureiwo pandimire pakaoma baba*

Help me I am in a difficult situation, Lord
Matters of this country vex me
Help me I am in a difficult situation, Lord
They beat up Chamisa and left him for dead
ZANU worries and frustrates me
Help me I am in a difficult situation, Lord

Another gospel band, Vabati VaJehova also composed two songs that lament political violence, corruption and poverty. Both songs plead with God to intervene and have mercy on Zimbabwe. The second song remarks that God is the only one with answers to the problems that Zimbabweans face. The first song says:

*Vakomana ngaticheme
KunaMwari vaite nyasha
Vasikana ngaticheme
KunaMwari vaite nyasha*



*Vanababa ngaticheme
Kuna Mwari vaite nyasha
Titi nhai Mwariwe tiitirei nyasha
Tiregere kuparara*

Boys let us cry
To God for mercy
Girls let us cry
To God for mercy
Fathers let us cry
To God for mercy
Let's say 'Oh God have mercy'
So that we won't perish

The second lament by the same group goes:

*Vana vaMwari ngatitaure nababa
Vanhu venyika ino ngatitaure nababa
Vana veZimbabwe ngatitaure nababa
Nzara inopera ngatitaure nababa
Hondo inopera ngatitaure nababa*

Children of God lets talk to Father
People of Zimbabwe lets talk to Father
Children of Zimbabwe lets talk to Father
Hunger will disappear, lets talk to Father
War will end, lets talk to Father

Several gospel artists still have hope for a better Zimbabwe despite the troubles already mentioned. Although the artists express frustrations, they are assuring the Zimbabweans that without battle, there won't be victory. They express that when things come to the worst, it means that the solution is just around the corner. The song implies that the sun has set for Zimbabweans but they should not despair but wait for 'the morning', when joy will be restored. It could be taken to mean that the 'morning' will come with a new government. Shingisai Siluma in 'Mirira mangwanani' says:

*Kana zuva rodoka
Pokuhwanda wapashaya*



*Woti, 'Mwari mandirasa'
Mirira mangwanani
Vanodyara vachichema
Vanokohwa vachifara
Mirira mangwanani
Mufaro uchauya
Mirira mangwanani*

When the sun goes down
You have nowhere to hide
You say, 'God you have forsaken me'
Wait for the morning
Those who plant in tears
Harvest in celebration
Wait for the morning
Joy will come
Wait for the morning

Another gospel artist who encourages Zimbabweans that victory and a better life is to come soon is Pastor Gwanzura, who is popularly known as Pastor 'G'. In the song 'Zvichanaka' he explains that if the sun sets, it does not mean that it will not rise again and that if one experiences problems for several years they should be assured that things will be alright when the right time comes. Gwanzura encourages people that the social, political and economic situations in Zimbabwe will soon improve when he remarks:

*Tariro nenyasha
Zvinobvawo kuna Mwari
Ukaona makore owanda
Ziva kuti zvichanaka
Ukaona zuva ropota
Hazvireve kuti harichadzoke
Ziva kuti zvichanaka*

Hope and grace
They come from God
If you see years increasing
Know that things will be alright
If you see the sun going down
It does not mean it will not rise again

Know that things will be alright

Amanda Sagonda also feels that there is still hope for Zimbabwe despite the suffering that the people have gone through for a long time. She remarks that God knows the suffering Zimbabweans are going through in the song 'Mwari vanoziwa' (God knows) which says:

*Imi munoti Mwari havazive here?
Kuchema kwenyu, Mwari havazivi?
Zimbabwe zvino yoti, 'Mwari matisiya'
Zvishuwo zvenyu, munoti Mwari havazvize?*

Do you think that God does not know?
Your cries, Does God not know?
Zimbabwe now says, 'God you have forsaken us'
Your wishes, Does God not know?

Prince Mafukidze, another gospel artist who sings in English promises Zimbabweans a better future and encourages them not to lose hope. The song points out that all things are possible, therefore, Zimbabweans should look forward to a bright future. He sings:

Be strong, hold on and,
Don't look back
You shall overcome
You gonna make it
All things are possible

This chapter responds to the fourth research question which seeks to establish:

The degree to which the prevailing political as well as the socio-economic climate influenced creativity in Zimbabwean gospel music.

From the interview responses and from the analysis of gospel song texts, it is apparent that the political and socio-economic climate influenced creativity in Zimbabwean gospel music. Zimbabweans have been frustrated by corrupt tendencies of government leaders, violence from the ruling ZANU PF and general poverty, and they have sought refuge in gospel music.¹

Some artists through gospel themes and song texts even managed to advocate for total regime change.² The themes of gospel music have gone to a radical extent, where artists no longer seem to fear the government, and boldly expose its evil deeds. In the particular song called 'Daniel', Hosiah Chipanga encourages people to vote for the opposition so as to save the situation currently in Zimbabwe. In another song discussed earlier on, he likens Mugabe, Zimbabwe's president to the biblical Pharaoh who was hard hearted.

Data collected from gospel song text analysis shows that socio-economic problems such as AIDS/HIV and poverty shaped the content of a lot of gospel music in Zimbabwe. Musicians like Oliver Mtukudzi and Charles Charamba composed several songs each pleading to God to save Zimbabwe from the Aids pandemic.³ They acknowledge to God that people have sinned but ask for forgiveness lest the whole nation perishes.⁴ Some of the song texts also reflect

¹ Interview with church members, 12th and 19th December 2007

² Hosiah Chipanga 2007, in a song called 'Daniel'

³ Songs by Mtukudzi on AIDS/HIV: Hear me Lord (1994), Tarirai (1994), Tiregerereiwo (2000)

⁴ Songs by Charles Charamba on AIDS/HIV Nokusaziva (2000), Komborerai (2004), Mhinduro (1999)

that Zimbabweans are living in poverty, and sorrow but 'joy will come in the morning'.⁵

5.5 Summary

A society's condition can easily be diagnosed by studying its gospel music. Gospel music has proved to be an effective monitor and commentator for people's conditions of living. Gospel music constitutes a barometer of the mood prevailing in society. Where authorities turn a deaf ear to the concerns of the people, music queries the bureaucracy by becoming the voice of the voiceless.

The ability of gospel music to articulate popular grievances and challenge unpopular government policies has made it a vital political and social resource. As a useful /political weapon, gospel music has demonstrated capabilities of urging governments on the way to handle the wishes of the majority. Where political leaders remained arrogant and adamantly anti people, gospel musicians have managed to sustain people as a conscientising voice for political change. It is in recognition of this very important capability of music in general and gospel music in particular, that is, the ability to mobilize, that the ZANU PF government invited Jamaican reggae musician, Bob Marley, to perform during Zimbabwe's Independence celebrations in 1980, (Zindi 2003).

⁵ Song by Shingisai Siluma, *Mufaro uchauya*