

**THE RELEVANCE OF THE CALVINISTIC
UNDERSTANDING OF ORDINATION WITHIN THE
CURRENT ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT**

BY

XOLANI MASEKO

13402677

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

In the subject

Church History and Church Polity

(Department of Systematic and Historical Theology)

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR: PROF. W.A. DREYER

April 2021

ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the relevance of a Calvinistic understanding of ordination to the current ecclesial climate in Zimbabwe. A special focus is on reformed churches, especially those who espouse Calvin as their theological ancestor. Herein lies the reason for the title of this thesis. The thesis highlights the continued significance of Calvin within the reformed churches (UCCSA and UPCSA) in Zimbabwe. More specifically, the research focused on Calvin's views of the church offices and ordination, and how this is still relevant to the reformed churches in Zimbabwe.

This research lies in the field of Church Polity. In Church Polity, ecclesiology is of fundamental importance. Ecclesiology forms the basis of all Church Polity. The methodology chosen for this research could be described as practical-ecclesiological, because much attention is given to the practical situation of reformed churches in Zimbabwe, especially in terms of ordained ministry and the role of church members. Practical-ecclesiological methodology assumes the interrelatedness of theory and praxis. It is a rather unique multi-disciplinary approach in the field of church polity, but quite suitable to serve as a road-map to investigate the research question. The practical-ecclesiological methodology includes historical, empirical, hermeneutical and strategic perspectives. As a result, the research question is expounded from different angles.

The point of departure behind this thesis, is that the views of Calvin are still relevant in the contemporary reformed churches, even though the research found that some renewal needs to be implemented in reformed ecclesiology, ministry and church polity in order to ensure missional relevance. One significant element that was demonstrated in this research, is that Church Polity should be treated as a 'practical' theological subject, similar to Practical Theology.

The inspiration behind the choice of UCCSA and the UPCSA denominations in the investigation is that both share similar heritage in terms of doctrine

inherited from Calvin, even though their governance structures are different, and they are currently engaged in some consultation towards forming a united church. Though the thesis is specifically focussed at the contemporary reformed churches in Zimbabwe, other church denominations will find the discussions and findings herein very significant for the church across denominational and traditional boundaries. The thesis closes with a conclusion that provides the seal on the recommendations contained in the strategic way-forward.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis: 'The relevance of Calvinistic understanding of ordination within the current Zimbabwean context' is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. Furthermore, I have not previously submitted it in its entirety or in part to any university for a degree.



Signed:

Date: 31/08/2020

Xolani Maseko



Signed

Date 7 September 2020

Prof. W.A. Dreyer (Supervisor)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the completion of this thesis and pursuing these studies, I am very much indebted to my wife Belinda, my children Nkanyiso, Thabiso and Natasha who have endured many times without me taken away by academic demands. I love you.

To my supervisor, Professor Wim Dreyer, you are my mentor and role model. Thank you very much. I could not have asked for a better mentor.

The UCCSA and UPCSA for allowing me access to your archives and consenting to my research on your members I say thank you.

Lastly to Bellevue Congregational Church, thank you for affording me time and support to pursue my further studies. I am indebted to you.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late grandparents: Nsimbi Mbazo and Lakhe Mbazo, who brought me up with love and warmth. May their dear souls rest in eternal peace.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UCCSA – United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

UPCSA – Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

COD – Church Order of Dort

CUC – Church Unity Commission

LMS – London Missionary Society

ABM – American Board of Foreign Missions

SRMC – Sothern Rhodesia Missionary Conference

ZCC – Zimbabwe Council of Churches

RCC – Roman Catholic Church

ZHCD – Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations

EFZ – Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

ZCBC – Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference

AICs – African Initiated Churches

WCC – World Council of Churches

CWM – Council for the World Mission

AFM – Apostolic Faith Mission

ACC – African Apostolic Church

ZCC – Zion Christian Church

ZAOGA – Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa

BEM – Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 10 |
| Area of Investigation | 10 |
| Calvin and Polity | 11 |
| Actuality of the research | 12 |
| Hypothesis | 13 |
| Objectives | 14 |
| Methodology | 14 |
| Historical Perspective | 15 |
| Hermeneutical Perspective | 16 |
| Empirical Perspective | 16 |
| Strategic Perspective | 18 |
| Literature Review | 19 |
| Primary Sources | 20 |
| Ecclesiology and Church Polity | 21 |
| Sources regarding the reformed churches in Zimbabwe. | 23 |
| Church polity: Methodological considerations | 24 |
| Preliminary chapter outline | 30 |
| 2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (CALVIN) | 31 |
| Introduction..... | 31 |
| Medieval Roman Catholic Church | 31 |
| The Radical Reformation (Anabaptists) | 36 |
| Perspectives from Reformed Confessions | 42 |
| The priesthood of all believers..... | 49 |
| Calvin’s ecclesiology | 52 |
| Calvin’s concept of ‘office’ and ‘ministry’ | 62 |
| Calvin’s views on ordination | 70 |
| 3. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (ZIMBAWE) | 77 |
| Introduction..... | 77 |
| Early mission in Zimbabwe | 78 |
| Reformed heritage | 79 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| African Initiated Churches (AIC) | 81 |
| Missionary Ministry and the Context | 84 |
| Strategic Approach of Missionaries | 85 |
| Pentecostal Churches | 87 |
| The view of ordained ministry | 89 |
| Current Pentecostalism and emerging churches | 90 |
| Is Zimbabwe postmodern? | 93 |
| Ecumenism in Zimbabwe | 97 |
| 4. HERMENEUTICAL PERSPECTIVE | 102 |
| Ministry | 102 |
| The priesthood of all believers | 111 |
| Ordination | 117 |
| The Relationship of ministry and mission | 128 |
| 5. EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE | 133 |
| Research Data Analysis | 133 |
| Understanding ministry | 138 |
| Education of ministers | 140 |
| Offices and ordination | 141 |
| Ordination and transference of grace | 142 |
| Laying on of hands | 143 |
| Ecclesiology inspires Polity | 144 |
| Broader church context | 145 |
| UCCSA and UPCS: Archival documents | 147 |
| Induction and ordination in UCCSA and UPCS | 148 |
| Zimbabwe Ministerial Committee Report (1) | 150 |
| Zimbabwe Synod Ministerial Committee Report (2) | 152 |
| UCCSA Zimbabwe Synod Ministerial Committee | 153 |
| UCCSA Minutes of the Training Committee (ATMC) | 155 |
| 6. STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE | 159 |
| Introduction | 159 |
| Theological training of ministers | 159 |
| Rethinking the 'Priesthood of all believers' | 162 |
| Ordination and concept of 'authority' | 167 |
| Balancing academic education and charisma | 170 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Review of the sacramental debate of ordination | 174 |
| Extensive discipleship and teaching of polity | 176 |
| The missional church and leadership..... | 178 |
| Strategy around ecumenism | 180 |
| Reforming the practice of ordained ministry..... | 182 |
| Postmodernity..... | 183 |
| Validity of ordained ministry in the light of Covid-19..... | 185 |
| Calvinistic ordination and African Context..... | 188 |
| Strategies specific to UCCSA and UPCSA..... | 192 |
| Ten Propositions:..... | 194 |
| Concluding Statement on Strategies..... | 198 |
| 7. CONCLUSION | 200 |
| Introduction..... | 200 |
| Historical Perspective..... | 202 |
| Ecclesial context of Zimbabwe | 209 |
| Hermeneutical Perspective | 211 |
| Empirical Perspective | 215 |
| Research Findings..... | 217 |
| Relevance of Calvin’s Ideas on ordination | 218 |
| Strategic Perspective..... | 224 |
| 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 230 |

1. INTRODUCTION

Area of Investigation

This thesis is in the area of Church Polity. The focus of the research is the relevance of a Calvin's understanding of ordination and ordained ministry within the Zimbabwean context.

The research is of specific interest to the Zimbabwean churches from the reformed tradition, where formal ordination by the church is still required for entry into ministry. This follows very much the traditional reformed understanding of ministry and ordination; hence they are referred to in this thesis as Calvinistic. In many non-reformed churches, the formal act of ordination is not regarded highly and much more emphasis is placed on individuals' 'special gifts' and might even become self-appointed bishops, priests or prophets. More generally, the general priesthood of all believers also questions the position and role of ordained clergy.

It is true that reformed churches are still learning a lot from key reformers like Luther, Zwingli, Bucer, and Calvin. Notwithstanding this fact, the research in this thesis is limited to the contribution Calvin made to ordained ministry and ecclesial offices. Calvin laid the foundation of reformed views on ordination during the 16th century reformation of the church in Geneva. Many of the principles present in current church orders of reformed churches may be related to Calvin. What would be the relevance and imperatives of the Calvin's understanding of ordination to the 21st century church in Zimbabwe? The research will investigate some reformed churches in Zimbabwe, to see how much of Calvin's influence is found in them and if they still benefit from such an understanding of ecclesiology, ordained ministry and polity.

Another reason for the focus on Calvin and the Calvinistic tradition, has to do with the commemoration and celebration of Reformation 500 (1517 – 2017) as well as the Synod of Dort (1618/1619 - 2019). Most of the research

for this thesis was done during these commemorations. Inevitably the question arose: How relevant is the Reformation, Calvin, Calvinism and the reformed tradition in Africa, especially in a post-colonial context?

So, the fundamental question which confronts reformed churches and theologians at the start of the 21st century, is how relevant reformed principles still are. Since Karl Barth challenged the church with the slogan *ecclesia semper reformanda* (Barth 1947), the question is whether reformed ecclesiology and principles of church governance are still applicable, how relevant are these principles within the African context or how could they be 'reformed' to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The reformed tradition knows that there is 'more truth and light yet to break forth' from the Word of God as John Robinson said in Stow (1996:118). This implies a continuous and progressive reformation.

Some of the questions which will be asked, are (1) how Calvin understood the offices of the church; (2) the calling of ministers by the church; and (3) the importance of official ordination in the church. His theological views of ordination will be considered in terms of their influence and development within the reformed tradition. These principles were articulated by various documents of the reformed tradition, such as the *Heidelberg Catechism*, *Belgic Confession* and the *Canons of Dort*.

Calvin and Polity

According to Koffeman (2009:10), ecclesiology is indispensable for the study of church polity. When it comes to reformed ecclesiology and church polity, John Calvin is the first person who comes into focus. Pieter Coertzen (2004:25) quotes Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (4.11.1), saying, "no city or town can function without a magistrate and polity, so also God's church...needs a spiritual policy". Calvin sees polity as a spiritual matter. It is arguably correct that for John Calvin church polity is a spiritual matter just as much as it is a church government issue. Calvin produced a church order for the church in Geneva in 1536, Church Ordinances in 1541, and a revision

of the Ordinances during 1561. It is against this background that it has been argued that, when the relationship between church and order is considered in the reformed tradition, John Calvin is the obvious person to start with, because it was essentially his theology and ministry in Geneva that gave direction to reformed thought. It was because of this realisation that Calvin became a key part of this research.

This research was also influenced by the reformed churches in Zimbabwe, with a special focus on the UCCSA and UPCSA. These two churches are not just Calvinistic in general, but they celebrate Calvin as their ancestor. They rely on him for most of their theology. For example, in a discussion of the polity of the UCCSA Briggs (1996:62) quotes Calvin's Commentary on 1 Corinthians 5:15 where he says: "Whoever, after committing a crime, humbly confesses his fault and entreats the church to forgive him, is absolved not only by men, but God himself..." Here it is church discipline that is under scrutiny. Briggs (1996:136) also quotes Calvin when he defines the sacraments, saying that the sacraments have a restorative function on believers. The UPCSA, in terms of government, sacraments and confessions, also inherited its polity from Calvin. The connection between Calvin, reformed church polity and the reformed churches in Zimbabwe is quite evident, but it will be investigated further in this thesis.

Actuality of the research

The research in this thesis is of specific interest to the reformed churches in current Zimbabwe. The understanding of ordained ministry, as influenced by John Calvin and the synod of Dort, will be applied to the context of contemporary Zimbabwe.

Churches in Zimbabwe seem to function independently from each other. This independence does not necessarily imply difference in doctrine. Another reality challenging churches in Zimbabwe, is the vast number of self-appointed bishops starting their own churches, contrary to reformed ecclesiology and church polity where the ordination of ministers follows

systematic procedures spelled out in the various church orders, ensuring the orderly functioning of the church.

The other specifics of the problem at hand or research questions which need to be considered are:

- Is the teaching of Calvin and reformed theology still relevant in contextual ministry and how does this contribute to ecumenical discourse?
- Is the cultural relativism and challenges of this postmodern world in any way eroding these traditions such as ordination?
- Is the difference of opinion on ordained ministry contributing to the disintegration of churches and growing independentism, even within the same ecclesial tradition?
- Is the Bible still the guiding light to such theological discourses such as ordained ministry?
- What are the implications of this understanding of ordination in the light of lay ministry in the context of the priesthood of all believers?

Hypothesis

This research is based on the assumption that the reformed tradition is still relevant in Africa, in terms of our understanding of the offices of the church and ordination, despite the current postcolonial discourse. Reformed teaching could *inter alia* be learned through the study of Calvin's ideas and their developments as well as studying the ecclesial practice and polity of the reformed churches through employing the broad and multi-disciplinary practical ecclesiological method.

Objectives

- To understand the articulation and development of Calvin's theology in relation to the reformed tradition in the area of the ordained ministry within the 16th and 17th century context.
- To interpret the Bible on the subject of the ordained ministry.
- To re-assess reformed understanding of the ordained ministry within a post-modern Zimbabwean culture.
- To carry out an investigative survey of selected churches from the reformed tradition as well as one pentecostal church in Zimbabwe, on the issue of ordained ministry.
- To establish practical implications for contemporary church in Zimbabwe, especially in terms of church polity and ecclesial practice.

Methodology

The research in this thesis falls within the theological discipline of Church Polity, within the Department of Systematic and Historical Theology of the University of Pretoria.

This thesis will endeavour to make use of a unique methodological approach which is rather uncommon in the field of Church Polity¹. The methodology could be described as a *practical-ecclesiological approach* to Church Polity. This approach is multi-disciplinary in nature and works on the interface between theory and praxis. Data is extracted for examination through ecclesial documents and everyday practice. In this thesis for the greater part, the method developed by Heitink (2007), Osmer (2008) and Dreyer

¹ Where 'Church Polity' is capitalised, it refers to the theological discipline; if not, it refers to 'church polity' in general, as in church governance.

(2011) in terms of a practical ecclesiology will be further developed in terms of Church Polity. It departs from the assumption that Church Polity (like Practical Theology) needs to consider ecclesial praxis as well as theoretical and theological issues.

The chosen methodology, although not generally used, opens up possibilities to engage with theory and praxis in a coherent and systematic way. In accordance with the chosen methodology, the stated objectives will be explored from different perspectives or looking at the subject matter through different lenses. These perspectives are the following|:

Historical Perspective

From a historical perspective, the research takes into consideration the contribution of Calvin within the context of the 16th century Reformation. Historical analysis will help to understand some basic principles of Calvin's ecclesiology, so that we can then relate it to the present context to see its relevance, and determine how his theological ideas can be remodelled to best serve the current ecclesial climate. Historical analysis is an essential tool in describing typical reformed system stories, forms of ministry and polity. It also helps to learn from the past in order to grapple with the future. Since this thesis is preoccupied with the relevance of Calvin's ecclesiology for contemporary church polity and ministry, the historical perspective is an essential part of the research.

Historical analysis depends on accurate interpretation of primary and secondary sources. Sources relevant to John Calvin and the church order composed by the Synod of Dort, will be analysed and discussed. This section will also include an analysis of relevant ecclesial documents pertaining to Calvin's influence on the reformed churches in Zimbabwe. There is considerable literature on the polity of the reformed churches in Zimbabwe, but there seems to be little consensus due to diverse elements

of tradition. This constitutes a research gap which will be addressed in this thesis.

Hermeneutical Perspective

The hermeneutical perspective will speak to the question: '*What should be happening in terms of the Bible and reformed confessions?*' One of the central theological concepts of the 16th century reformation was '*sola scriptura*'. The Bible and confessions will be examined critically to lay a solid base for the understanding of contemporary reformed ecclesiology, ministry and polity.

This hermeneutical perspective enables the research to answer questions pertaining to the relation between the Bible and church polity. The reformers made extensive use of scripture in establishing principles for ministry and church polity. It was no different with Calvin. As such, Calvin's use of Scripture (both Old and New Testament) need to be examined to trace his understanding of the practice of ordination and ecclesial offices.

Since the research is carried out with reference to the Calvinistic churches in Zimbabwe, the ministerial practices of the UCCSA and the UPCSA will also be tested against scripture. The aim is to enrich our biblical understanding of the ecclesial offices and ordination.

Empirical Perspective

From an empirical perspective, the question is: '*What is happening in the reformed churches in Zimbabwe?*' To get to a proper understanding of what is happening in churches, contextual analysis needs to be done, for example demographic distribution and socio-political issues. Church denominations will be analysed and the role played by ordained ministry will be described and compared. This section will present material in a descriptive and comparative manner.

According to Richard Osmer in his *'Practical Theology. An Introduction'* (2008:35), the empirical task is a descriptive one and it helps to understand ecclesial praxis in a more objective way. He further says (2008:50), that empirical research has to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods, so as to fully understand "the meanings that inform human action and diversity of life worlds", and to provide an enough scientific ground for theological conclusions (in this case regarding church polity and ordination).

In pursuit of better knowledge of the real-life situation in churches, interviews and questionnaires will be used in order to come up with solid conclusions concerning ordained ministry in the reformed tradition. The interviews and questionnaires will centre on the four following questions:

- the understanding of ordained ministry,
- the knowledge of key elements of reformed understanding of ministry and ordination in current ecclesial practice,
- areas of confusion or limited understanding related to the practice of ordination, the practice of ministry, and
- the relevance of ordained ministry in light of current contextual issues.

Permission was received from the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), and Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) to do interviews and distribute questionnaires to specific congregations. The choice of these two churches was informed by their proposed unification, a vision which was articulated in a memorandum of understanding, signed in Durban 2017. Of late, commissions have been set to spearhead the work of this union. One commission is on 'Doctrine and Liturgy' and the other on the 'Constitution'. Work done by these commissions will overlap dealing with issues of ecclesiology and church polity. Whether this project or initiative will succeed, will depend on the quality of the discussions and proposals in areas such as ecclesiology and

church polity. Also, a lot will depend on the commitment and willingness by the two churches to give up some ideological positions and take some new ones for the sake of obedience to Christ who wishes ‘that they may all be one’ (John 17:21).

The UCCSA and UPCSA have enjoyed fraternal exchanges and engagements for some time. They are all member churches to the Council for World Mission (CWM), a successor organisation to the London Missionary Society (LMS). They are both members of the Church Unity Commission (CUC). In South Africa they already have United Churches who share the same ministers, material resources and polity. These churches are examples to what the United Church may become if the full unity is realised. Their envisaged unity can increase coverage and impact of doing mission in Southern Africa where these two denominations operate. At the heart of theological debates between these two churches, are issues that trace their origins to Calvin, whom both churches espouse as their ancestor in issues of doctrine.

For a balanced empirical perspective, the findings from the UCCSA and UPCSA will be compared with that of 5 African Initiated Churches (AICs), and 5 Pentecostal churches from Zimbabwe, on the subject of ministry and ordination.

Strategic Perspective

It is important not to get stuck in the history of the reformed tradition, but rather look to the future – both in terms of principle and practice. Based on the results of the research, a strategy will be developed relevant to the church’s mission and ministry in Zimbabwe. This strategy must address questions of authority and relevance to the contemporary religious world and how it could be articulated in church orders.

The task of this section will be to consider all findings and propose changes to the polity of relevant churches. It will prioritise important steps to promote the relevance of reformed churches in the current religious context, which is changing rapidly due to the currents of Postmodernity. Jesus talked about calculating the cost when starting a project (Luke 14:25-33). The call to ministry and mission is still the same, but the context has changed. It may have been in line with this realisation that Koffeman (2015) produced his book entitled '*In order to serve. An ecumenical introduction to Church Polity.*'

Literature Review

The relevance of reformed theology is a topical one in current scholarship, especially in the wake of the Reformation 500 commemoration. There is seeming absence of current debate in as far as ordination is concerned and especially so with regards to a Calvinistic understanding. The literature available in the early 21st century was focussed more on the ordination of women. These works include Macy (2008) and Knoll & Bollin (2018). This dissertation follows the conviction that scholarship and reality in the 21st century has accepted women ordination to be legitimate.

Willumon (2016) remains a current contribution in terms of reformed church's reflections on the functional understanding of ministry. A contribution that has a dominant voice in scholarship in the subject of ordination remains Dozeman (2008) that seeks to provide a historical and a theological background to ordination. It however has a narrow focus to the Pentateuch as the basis for the New Testament understanding and is limited in terms of ecclesial context of the 21st century. This again is not specifically devoted to the Calvinistic understanding of the subject.

In pursuit of the question of relevance, it would seem there is a research gap regarding the Zimbabwean context. This review will highlight the relevant literature under three sub-headings: (1) Primary and Secondary sources regarding Calvin; (2) Ecclesiology and Church Polity sources; and (3) sources on the church in Zimbabwe.

Primary Sources

Calvin's Bible Commentaries

Calvin's Bible Commentaries (especially those on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon) provide useful information on Calvin's understanding of ministry and ordination. For instance, in 1 Timothy 5:22, he talks about not rushing to lay hands on any one. The books of Beveridge (1949), Owen (1950) Dillenberger (1975) and Pringle (2006) will be used in this regard.

Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis*

Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* will be used extensively in this thesis, because it contains important views on the subject of ordination and ecclesial offices. For Calvin, any view that the minister as having a sacramental role is idolatry. Already this is significant for this thesis because there are some who argue that with ordination there is a transference of some special grace or status. Calvin argues (Inst. 4.3.1):

“Now we must speak of the order in which the Lord has been pleased that his church should be governed. For though it is right that he alone should be should rule and reign in the church, that he should preside and be conspicuous in it, and that its government should be exercised and administered solely by his word; yet he does not dwell among us in visible presence, so as to declare his will to us by his own lips, he in this (as we have said) uses the ministry of men, by making them as it were, his substitutes, not by transferring his right and honour to them, but doing his own work by their lips, just as an artificer uses a tool for any purpose.”

Calvin's ecclesiology is also important. He devoted Book 4 of the *Institutes* to ecclesiology. This impacts his view of church order which is understood as polity. So much of this document and other documents will be used in this thesis to broaden our understanding of Calvin regarding offices and

ordination and their relevance in the context of Zimbabwe. He speaks about the church as a mother (Inst.4.1.4):

“Let us learn, from her single title of Mother, how useful, nay, how necessary the knowledge of her is, since there is no other means of entering into life unless she conceive us in the womb and give us birth, unless she nourish us at her breasts, and, in short, keep us under her charge and government, until, divested of mortal flesh, we become like the angels (Mt. 22:30). For our weakness does not permit us to leave the school until we have spent our whole lives as scholars. Moreover, beyond the pale of the Church no forgiveness of sins, no salvation, can be hoped for, as Isaiah and Joel testify (Isa. 37:32; Joel 2:32) ... By these words the paternal favour of God and the special evidence of spiritual life are confined to his peculiar people, and hence the abandonment of the Church is always fatal.”

This argument will be used in this thesis so as to learn of how Calvin's ecclesiology inspired what kind of ministry and polity. This is important when it comes to the significance of Calvin's ecclesiology and his concept of ministry and offices in the light of post modernity. On the definition of ordination and its relationship to the offices within the subject of ecclesiology, Calvin asserts that ordination is the end process of the call (Inst. 4. 3. 16). He describes it as a symbol of commending people to ministry and the rite of entry into the offices of church government. He argues for the laying on of hands but strongly advises against notions of superstition.

Ecclesiology and Church Polity

One of the important resources in terms of Church Polity, is the work of the Dutch scholar, prof. Leo Koffeman. Koffeman could be regarded as the pre-eminent Protestant scholar in the field of Church Polity. Central in Koffeman's approach to Church Polity is ecclesiology. For Koffeman,

Church Polity refers to the life of the church. Koffeman argues that, “the Calvinistic reformation has a long tradition of applying *sola scriptura* to church polity issues, as well as to other issues of faith.” Church Polity also has to do with confessions, church resolutions and ecclesial praxis. This approach of Koffeman supports the view of this thesis, that Church Polity could be studied from a practical-ecclesiological perspective.

Koffeman makes a profound argument that “...we are deeply aware of the need for a more interdisciplinary and hermeneutical approach of theological research, within and beyond the well-known area of theology” (2014:22). This adds weight to the argument that Church Polity is a practical-ecclesiological matter. His ecumenical approach to Church Polity becomes clear (2014: 113) when he speaks about the relationship of the ordained ministry and laity in respect of what the World Council of Churches’ document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) calls the prophetic priesthood. God’s people are all called. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and their role in polity versus that of the ordained ministry will be discussed in the context of reformed churches, with a special focus to the Calvinistic churches in Zimbabwe. This an important resource for consultation on polity as will be done in this thesis. It is these insights that are useful to this thesis because ecumenical ministry and polity is not only a necessity but an imperative, especially in the discussion of the relevance of the ordained ministry in the 21st century.

In terms of ecclesiology, the work of Prof. Jurgen Moltmann (1993), ‘*The Church in the Power of the Spirit*’, is an important resource. It presents us with an understanding and definition of the church as the “community of the incarnate God and exalted man Jesus Christ”. This is used in this thesis, arguing for a contextual and missional church. Moltmann (1993: 5) argues that, “Christ is the church’s foundation, its power, its hope. As the reformed confessional writings show, that the reason why the reformation subjected all human rules and statutes in religion and the church to the yardstick of the gospel of Christ.” This is a very important perspective in this thesis, which

brings to memory that as the church contextualises her doctrine and polity, she must remain true to the gospel of Christ as her true foundation.

Sources regarding the reformed churches in Zimbabwe.

There are many documents which speak of the church in Zimbabwe. However, there are scant sources when it comes to ministry development and ordination, especially in the postmodern context.

In terms of the history of missions in Zimbabwe, the work of Clinton (1959) is important. This book chronicles the arrival of the first ever London Missionary Society (LMS) mission station in the then Southern Rhodesia, the inception of the church and the development of ministry leading and the ordination of African ministers. This history will be used in this thesis as the genesis of all church ministry and related developments in Zimbabwe. The LMS was Calvinistic in theology. This book will be used to trace the development of the church and ministry in Zimbabwe.

Other important resources on Zimbabwean church history are Jules (1987), Creary (2011), Togasarei (2016). For instance, Togasarei argues that, in Pentecostalism there is a phenomenon which he calls 'individual centred ministry'. It is an area of interest for this thesis, because it is in such a context that there is prevalence of self-ordained ministers and self-appointed bishops. The hermeneutical understanding will benefit from this historical reality to clarify the biblical position on such practices.

In the work of Carson (2005), it is argued that Zimbabwean Christianity is caught up in the flux of Postmodernism. It is an important perspective for this research, because the 'emerging church' is considered to be a feature in current context. Carson argues that the emerging church believes that the contemporary culture has changed therefore the church must change if it is to be relevant. It again highlights the question of the relevance of traditional

reformed doctrine and ecclesial practice, not only in a postcolonial but also in a postmodern Zimbabwe.

Church polity: Methodological considerations

This thesis is focused on ordained ministry. As such, the research is located in the field of Church Polity. It also relates to the church in its mission and governance of the church.

To carry out well-structured on ordained ministry in reformed churches, this thesis identified a practical-ecclesiological approach as an appropriate methodology in the field of Church Polity. This approach is quite new. For example, Koffeman (2014: 13) locates Church Polity within Systematic Theology. However, when Koffeman (2014:22) reflects on the ‘theological encyclopaedia’, he argues against a traditional approach to Church Polity which separates Biblical Theology, Church History, Systematic Theology and Missiology in research. He calls for a new approach to Church Polity, that is “a more interdisciplinary and hermeneutical approach of theological research, within and beyond the well-known area of theology.”

The argument for a new, interdisciplinary approach to Church Polity which is also orientated towards ‘practical’ issues, justifies an approach which could be described as a ‘practical ecclesiology’. A practical ecclesiology works on the interface between Ecclesiology and Church Polity as related theological disciplines; with the need of churches to develop a relevant and contextual church order which could serve the needs of ministry and mission. Wim Dreyer, in his *‘Missional Ecclesiology as basis for a new Church Order: A case Study’* (2013), argues (based on Koffeman 2009:16-21) that there is a direct interdependence of ecclesiology, church polity and ministry. The nature of the church relates directly to the mission of the church. Ecclesiology as theological discipline is more academic and theoretical; ministry has to do with the everyday life of the church and orientated towards ecclesial praxis. Church Polity stands with one leg in theory, and with the other leg in the practical situation of churches. Dreyer

(2013: 4) formulates this interdependence of theory and praxis as follows: “The way we understand the church defines our church polity, which in turn influences the congregational praxis and ministry. Even more, the way we understand God reflects in the way we understand the church and its calling in this world.” This interrelatedness and interdependence of theory and praxis, also in the field of Church Polity, means that a practical-ecclesiological approach is best suited for research as in this thesis.

The dawn of the 21st century brought a lot of change, not only in society in general but also in the church. Churches are constantly challenged by questions pertaining to the nature and mission of the church. The changes include heightened ecumenical consciousness and imperatives; heightened awareness of the missional calling of the church and emerging forms of church; as well as challenges posed by rampant consumerism, political radicalism, pandemics and ecological crises.

The other issue theology must respond to, is the reality of a post-Christendom society. Since Emperor Constantine promulgated the Edict of Milan in February 313 AD, the church had a prominent place in society. It shaped cultures and nations through the centuries. The Constantinian church is far gone, and it seems as if the church is progressively relegated to the periphery of society. Darrel L. Guder (2010: 1) wrote that, Constantinian Christendom “...resulted in the shaping and definition of western cultures as “Christian,” symbolized by the parish church at the centre of every village, town, and city... Christendom have been legally “established.” The European situation was transplanted to Africa through the work of European colonial authorities and Western missionaries. The infrastructure and culture of European Christianity had a lasting influence and impact on the church in Africa. The reality of a post-Christendom church is as much a reality in Africa as it is in Europe. Therefore, this calls for a new way of doing church that will service the needs of people. Here again we see that Church Polity is a theoretical and practical discipline.

The changes brought about by postmodernity prompted Leo J Koffeman and Johannes Smit (2014) to publish a book with the title '*Protestant Church Polity in Changing Contexts*'. Reading the various contributions, one sees the need to consider practical ecclesiology as a possible methodology for Church Polity, because it is a multi-disciplinary approach that interacts between the day to day life of the church and ecclesiology. It uses hermeneutical, historical, empirical and strategic perspectives to determine the needs of the church in a given context, while maintaining fidelity to reformed theology. Du Plooy (2014: 19), in '*Changing Contexts*', defines Church Polity as "the theological science which studies and formulates – in the light of the written word of God and normative response of the confession to the word of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit – the justice of God and, consequently, the reign of Christ in the church, and makes all these available to serve and build the church. It is an ongoing process." This is a comprehensive and workable definition of Church Polity. It includes elements such as reformed theology, biblical interpretation, reformed confessions, church governance as it relates to an ever changing context. It is therefore argued that, such a complex subject requires a multidisciplinary methodology where theory and praxis could meet.

From another perspective, Hill (2016:1) describes Church Polity as an 'applied ecclesiology'. He argues that, its purpose is to "regulate the functioning of the community of faith". This is realised by God through scripture (*jus divinum*); by the church through its internal mechanism of government and by the state through secular legislation (each being a form of *jus humanum*).

This definition of Church Polity as 'applied ecclesiology' demands particular attention. It is implied (Hill 2016: 2) that church polity is a practical ecclesiology. He also refers to publications of the WCC Faith and Order Commission, which did not "explicitly consider church law, order and polity in its ecclesiology, whether as a help or hindrance." Church Polity and

ecclesiology, in theory and practice, are indispensable in terms of proper church governance and ministry.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the form and structure of any given denomination follow its particular ecclesiology. For example, Kärkkäinen (2002: 95) tells us that in eastern orthodox ecclesiology ‘communion’ is a central theme. In eastern orthodox ecclesiology and polity, the bishop is seen as the image (icon) of Christ, meaning that every member of that local church must be one with the bishop to achieve real communion with Christ. It also means that only a man could be ordained as a presbyter, because Jesus was a man. Here we see the example of ecclesiology dictating to church polity with specific reference to ordination.

Another example: In Pentecostal ecclesiology the church is seen as an eschatological reality under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Küng 1986:126). In this ecclesiology the church structure is dominated by the theme of participation by all, since in the local church all members have a particular gift from the Spirit. Church offices are not held in high esteem, but rather the *charisma* received from the Spirit. Again, it demonstrates how the understanding of God and church translates into a practical expression of faith, ministry and the functioning of the church.

We can never lose sight of the practical implications of Church Polity. Niemandt (2015: 2) formulates this in one short sentence: “The church governs what it does and does what it is.” Good governance and purposeful ministry is inspired by the nature of the church. Augustine spoke of the church which is both visible and invisible. Du Plooy (in Koffeman 2014: 8) is of the opinion that this should be kept in mind when we consider church governance. He is wary of scholars like Bouwman (1928:1-10) and Bakker (1992:13-19) who argue that church polity is concerned solely with the visible church. He argues that Church Polity “is concerned with the church as such, and not only with the church as an institute. Although church polity focusses essentially on the foundations – proclaiming the gospel, administering sacraments and exercising discipline – so as to equip

believers for service in the community, the view that the church polity is concerned with an institute is too narrow and restrictive.” Practical ecclesiology deals with both the visible and invisible church.

Wim Dreyer (in Koffeman and Smit 2014) argues for a shift in ecclesiology, from an inward looking, maintenance driven ecclesiology to an ecclesiology which is intentionally missional. His argument is that any change in ecclesiology necessitates change in polity and ministry, as well as a change in the way Church Polity is studied. Following this line of argumentation, this thesis proposes a practical-ecclesiological approach.

Koffeman (2014:263) also discusses the affinity of Church Polity to legal science and jurisprudence. As a church ‘law’, Long (2001:152) argues that, it is not an end in itself: “To view polity as law is not necessarily adequate to understanding all of polity’s functions or significance. Just as the households are more than a set of rules, but consists of relationships involving trust and support, so ecclesial communities are served by polities that are more than procedural directives for maintaining proper order. Polities offer, not only rules for procedure, but models of interaction and fidelity. It may be fruitful to think of polities as languages that facilitate interactions among group members.” Good relationships and proper order promotes the wellbeing of the church. It is of immense practical importance. Even from a juridical perspective, a practical-ecclesiological approach makes sense.

Coertzen (2004:1-4) calls church polity the “unavoidable law” in the church. It facilitates good order in church. To demonstrate the need for a practical ecclesiology, we can look at one example. Ordination is both a doctrine and an act in the church. As a doctrine, it does have sources as that of Calvin and of the medieval Roman Catholic Church. Historical inquiry will do well as a method of understanding this doctrine. On the other side, as an ordinance within church tradition, one needs to understand the ‘how’ and the ‘what’ questions which form key components of a qualitative research are. They feed experiences of the worshipping community which in turn leads to praxis. It is from this background that we see the limitations of the

historical enquiry in understanding the relevance and imperatives of the practice of ordination in the contemporary context. Practical ecclesiology becomes the preferred methodology for Church Polity for its attempt to bridge the gap between confessions, or beliefs and experience.

Andrew Smith (2016), in his PhD thesis, makes a strong case for a ‘Practical Theological Ecclesiology’. Analysis of his work reveals a similarity to the approach used in this thesis ‘practical ecclesiology’. The thesis proceeds from the assumption that academic scholarship has left a gap between theology (theory) and praxis. In the same document (2016:13), he groups Church Polity under ‘practical theology’. This thesis takes this realisation further by maintaining Church Polity as an independent theological discipline, but firmly placed in the sphere of ecclesial praxis. Practical ecclesiology then, is the ideal methodology to use. It is inspired by the realisation that when theory and praxis are separated, academia loses its connection with the reality of faith communities.

Koffeman (2015:4) argues that, “the New Testament does not offer one church order model – be it episcopal, or presbyterial–synodical, or congregational – but rather a variety that depends on historical and contextual factors as well as practical needs. It is therefore imperative for scholars to employ a method of polity that will answer historical, contextual and practical issues of polity.” All these areas of polity are extensively dealt with when we employ practical ecclesiology. Koffeman (2015:3) also talks about renewal within the reformed tradition, saying that “renewal is possible and can be necessary also in the area of structures and offices...” The subject of ‘ordination’ is a polity issue within the concept of offices and ministry of the church. Renewal of polity is very important to ensure that the church practice and ministry remains relevant and credible within the ever changing and varied contexts especially in this post-modern era. It is against this understanding that this thesis will employ practical ecclesiology to assess the credibility and possible renewal of the practice of ordination within the reformed tradition in the contemporary times.

In the past, Church Polity had been studied from a foundational perspective. We need a post-foundational approach to address the dichotomy between theory and praxis. In my opinion, a practical-ecclesiological approach could fulfil the need for a balanced approach to Church Polity.

Preliminary chapter outline

A practical-ecclesiological approach to Church Polity was used to develop the structure of this thesis, under the following headings:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Methodological considerations - Church Polity as practical ecclesiology

Chapter 2: Historical Perspective (Calvin)

Development of Calvin's ecclesiology, offices and ordination

Chapter 3: Historical Perspective (Zimbabwe)

Historical Developments in Zimbabwean Church

Chapter 4: Hermeneutical Perspective

What should be happening in terms of Scripture / Confessions / Polity

Chapter 5: Empirical Perspective

Contextual analysis

Chapter 6: Strategic Perspective

A way forward for ordained ministry

Chapter 7: Conclusion

2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (CALVIN)

Introduction

The question of Calvin's view of ordination and its development in the history of reformed churches is the focus of this thesis. The influence of Calvin's theology pivotal and foundational in terms of the question under review. This chapter will investigate Calvin's understanding of church, ministry and ordination against the background of the 16th century Reformation. The question of relevance will also be addressed.

Calvin's ecclesiology, polity and his views on ordination should be understood against the backdrop of the medieval Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The sacramental theology of the RCC on the one hand, and the extremism of the Anabaptists on the other hand, forced Calvin to articulate his views clearly and sometimes aggressively. In his Commentary on the Psalms he refers to the Anabaptists as "rebels, who with their decisions and erroneous teachings destroy not only religion but also political order" (see Lavater 2014: 327).

Medieval Roman Catholic Church

Since the Early Church, the significance of ordination grew as the role and importance of the church expanded. On account of ordination, the clergy were thought to differ essentially and not just functionally from the laity. The high status of clergy became instrumental in the exercise of power and control over the laity. It was against such notions of ecclesial power and importance, that reformers like Calvin raised their protest. Calvin made the point that the distinction between ordained ministry and ordinary church members is not in terms of status (*officium*), but in terms of function and service (*ministerium*). There is a functional difference, and not an essential difference between ordained clergy and laity (Hinson 1981:485).

In pursuit of the context of Calvin's reformed view of ordination, one has to appreciate the mysticism which pervaded medieval Europe. Together with Canon Law, it kept the populace under control. Fanning (2009:21) says that through Canon Law, a mystical expectation of clergy and fear of the divine suppressed the people. This carried on until Humanism appeared on the scene. Mysticism was centred around spiritual experience and awareness to attain salvation. This mystical aspect of medieval religion becomes visible in the doctrine of the *character indelebilis* (Reid et al. 1999:653). According to Catholic teaching, the sacraments of baptism and ordination convey an indelible spiritual character. It was believed that with ordination some mystical powers are transferred to the clergy, through the laying on of hands.

Mysticism influenced all aspects of medieval faith, especially the sacraments of baptism, Eucharist and ordination, strengthening the sacramental theology of the Roman Catholic Church. All theology was built upon this perspective. According to Volts (1997:155) "the average Christian looked for the reassurance of religion especially at the central events of life." For example, the sick person would be given sacrament of Holy Communion so that if they die, they may be right with God. In the wedding there was a sacrament of Holy Communion within the liturgy. When a person dies, the priest will perform a mass on his behalf. To sum it up, an ordained priest will take centre stage during the main events of each individual's life. Sacraments were seen as the rites through which the grace of God and divine presence was communicated to the believers. The seven sacraments were inclusive of ordination, but with some room for flexibility. Augustine was of the opinion that sacraments are 'visible signs of an invisible grace' (Volts 1997:155). For the Franciscans, the sacraments are symbols, whose efficacy God enables through a creative act in the soul. Thomas Aquinas was of the opinion that the sacraments contain and transfer grace, a view that continued during and after the Reformation.

For Calvin, this was an ambiguous understanding of a sacrament. He saw the sacraments as external means of grace. They work as a result of the

faith wrought by the Holy Spirit in the heart of a believer. For Calvin there are two sacraments and these are, baptism and Holy Communion. This was a radical departure of reformers from the Roman Catholic Church.

It was believed that “if administered, the sacraments transformed the souls of their participants and conferred sanctifying grace upon the Christian Community” (Reid et al. 1999:653). The first five sacraments are intended to secure the spiritual perfection of every man individually, and the last two are ordained for the governance and increase of the church. Three of these sacraments: baptism, confirmation and ordination are imprinted indelibly upon the soul. This meant that once a person is ordained, there is a lasting change in your life due to sanctifying grace. Even though a priest was undisciplined and censured by the church, they would still mediate grace through sacraments. This gave the person of the clergy much authority in the church and over the laity.

According to Edward (1897:33), this sacramental view of ordination was inherited from Cyprian, who developed a theology of priesthood. For Cyprian, “the bishop was the sacrificing priest. Christ was himself the Ordainer of the Jewish Priesthood. The priests of that time were ‘our predecessors’. The Jewish Priesthood at last became ‘a name and a shade’ on the day Christ was crucified. The reality passed on the Christian Bishop.” What gave the priest the power to perform the sacrifice of Christ during the sacrament of the Eucharist, was ordination. This view was developed extensively in scholastic theology. Priesthood was closely connected to the Eucharist (Rechard1996:13), as well as church governance and unity which was linked to the parish and bishop who could serve the sacrament of the Eucharist due to his ordination. This provides the background to Calvin’s view of ordination. In his Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (Calvin 2009:116), he argues:

“I hence deem it as indisputable, that the Papal priesthood is spurious; for it has been framed in the workshop of men. God nowhere commands a sacrifice to be offered now to him for the expiation of sins;

nowhere does he command priests to be appointed for such a purpose. While the Pope ordains his priests for such a purpose of sacrificing, the Apostle denies that they counted lawful priests, they cannot therefore be such, except by some new privilege they exalt themselves above Christ, for he dared not of himself to take upon the honour, but waited for the command of the father.”

On the criterion of choosing the one to be ordained, it is not clear whether there was any meaningful role the laity played but what is very clear is the role of the clergy. For Volts, (1997:156) “holy orders (ordination) was the rite by which a man entered the priesthood. The route progressed through a series of sub-orders, leading to the diaconate and then ordination...but the final decision on the suitability of the candidate was by the bishop, who alone was allowed to ordain.” It seems contrary to Scripture, for instance Acts 6:6 and 2 Timothy 1:6.

The sacrament of ordination was very significant in regards to the authority of the clergy. This authority came through the apostolic succession. Reid (1999:653) says that the church believed and taught that “Christ had vested authority over the sacraments in St Peter and, through apostolic succession, in the Papal and other ruling officers of the church. The Pope and his prelates thus had authority to promulgate and enforce the Canon Law rules (literally to speak the law) ...” Apostolic succession is passed on through the sacrament of ordination. It was enforced in the church with authority by the clergy on the basis of Canon Law. This resulted in growing legalism in the church. Rules laid heavy on the laity. On the other hand, because of ordination, the priests were the elite and the ruling class in the church. This was the very thing that Calvin would contradict in his theology of sacraments and his views concerning ordination and ministry.

Furthermore, the sacrament of ordination had the purpose of ‘representation’. Through ordination, the clergy became the *Vicarius Christi*, the representative of Christ and also of the church as the body of Christ. According to Davison (2013:87), “through this sacrament, a Christian

becomes a representative of the church in a new and public way...” After all, since the seventh century the RCC taught that the bishops were the successors of the apostles. This gave them power to speak ‘Canon Law’. They carried with them the authority of Christ and they received this through the rite of ordination. As the representatives of Christ on earth, where ever the bishop landed, there the church was even though there was not a single convert. In this way, the bishop became a sign of the church. Calvin was of the opinion that it was only the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacrament that were signs of the church. In (Inst.4.4.2) he argues that, “all therefore to whom the office of teaching was committed, they called presbyters, and in each city these presbyters selected one in their number whom they gave the title of bishop... not so superior in honour and dignity as to have dominion over his colleagues...” Calvin argued against the Roman Catholic Church system of elevating the bishops.

The lack of discipline amongst the clergy who wielded so much authority, was another issue which Calvin addressed when he spoke about ordination. There were so many scandals that in 1552 Pope Adrian VI, in a letter that was read at the Diet of Nuremberg, addressed the gross immorality in the church. He admitted to the abuses in spiritual matters, violations of the commandments by the clergy whom he called the ‘heads of the members’ (Dolan 1964: 12). This was taken seriously by John Calvin, to the point that some reformed scholars would argue that he added discipline as the third mark of the true church. The lack of discipline was also addressed during the Council of Trent (1545-1563) by defining the qualities of the bishop.

For Calvin, ordination was not only an instrument of church order and governance, but also of discipline. Clergy found wanting should be deposed from their office. However, in the RCC they remained in office because of the sacramental nature of ordination, the indelible character of the office and the sanctifying grace a priest received during ordination. It follows that no matter how much a priest may sin or what evil he may commit, he still had sacramental authority because it was engraved upon their soul during

ordination. According to Cutron (in Fitzgerald 1999:741-747) this was in the mind of Calvin when he developed his theology of the sacrament as well as his views on ordination.

In context of medieval Catholicism, the rite of ordination was an entry into the elite class of the church, divinely endowed with grace that ordinary laity did not have. For example, it offered one access to the Bible and the right to participate in its interpretation and instruction. Lopes (1997:40) is of the opinion that it was a way of burying the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a maze of mystical beliefs: “Calvin rescued some aspects of the Holy Spirit which had been buried in medieval theology of the Roman Catholic Church, such as the relationship between the Word and the Spirit.” Because the Roman Catholic Church regarded scripture as the holy word of God, it shut out the laity from accessing the Bible and left it in the hands of the clergy to interpret it in the name of ‘the church.’ These interpretations, especially those by the councils, were referred to as ‘tradition’. According to Volts, Calvin vehemently repudiated calling it “an insult to the Holy Spirit and an abuse of authority by the Roman Catholic Church” (1997:40). To him, the church was founded upon scripture, and not the other way around. The church does not have power or authority over the Bible. The church could not control the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Holy Spirit which works in the church, and the church should be governed by and through the Holy Spirit and God’s Word.

The Radical Reformation (Anabaptists)

Calvin reacted strongly against the ideas of the radical reformers, also in terms of ecclesiology, ministry and ordination. They placed much emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit and the priesthood of all believers. This meant that the ecclesial offices, church government and formal ordination of clergy were often ignored. “Radical reformers” is a generic term referring to many independent groups, which became known as separatists, spiritualists, Anabaptists, etc. Their aim was to return the church to its primitive state and to replicate the church of the apostles, as described in the New Testament.

According to Packull (2004:198-199), as far as these ‘radical reformers’ were concerned, they did not concern themselves too much with developing a comprehensive theological or doctrinal system, to which all the groups adhered to. To use Packull’s words: “Anabaptists were more concerned with orthopraxis than orthodoxy. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to identify a theological core.” They had an existential faith that put the emphasis on discipleship, a simple approach to issues of faith. This was contrary to Calvin’s approach. He wrote extensively on issues of doctrine, ecclesiology and ministry.

Calvin opposed the Anabaptists in many ways. In terms of ecclesiology, the Anabaptists emphasised that the church had one nature, which is the body of Christ. This meant that the church was a fellowship of believers and a pure society that is not under the dominion of sin. The implication of this Donatist concept of ecclesial perfection was a rigorous and strictly applied discipline and way of life, as required of a disciple of Jesus Christ. In this perfect church, as stated by Menno Simmons (in Waltner 1951:5-16), “all who are in Christ are new creatures, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, and members of his body.” This church could be distinguished through preaching of pure doctrine, scriptural ministering of the sacraments, obedience to the Word, confession of sins, faith in God through Christ, and suffering persecution for the sake of the gospel. This notion of ecclesial perfection was refuted by Calvin, who regarded the church (as Augustine) as a *corpus permixtum*.

According to Calvin the ministers were ordained for the ministry of the word and administration of the sacrament. This the Anabaptist took lightly by their emphasis on the Holy Spirit speaking to them directly. One needed not to be ordained to be a church official but just yielding to the Holy Spirit. Thus Calvin:

“Frequently mentions this movement either directly or through implicit suggestions in his *Institutes* and commentaries. The ‘Enthusiasts’ emphasized the didactic ministry of the Spirit, a point

which had been rescued by the Reformers. However, they went beyond them, claiming to be taught directly by the Spirit through new revelations, received through an inner light. They affirmed that the Spirit could not be restricted to written words, for that would lessen his sovereignty. To test the spiritual manifestations would be to dishonour the Spirit. They reached the point of ridiculing those who clung to the scriptures, for they considered them an inferior and temporary form of revelation, and criticized Calvin and the other Reformers for clinging to 'the letter that kills'" (Lopes et.al 1997:43).

Herein we see logic of Calvin's ecclesiology in context as he was fighting his 'foes'.

According to Coetzee (in Vorster & Van der Walt 2017:55-56), the first Anabaptist document was formulated in 1527 by the Swiss Brethren. It was called the Schleitheim Confession², the most representative statement of Anabaptist principles. The seven articles cover the main points of difference between the Anabaptists and the reformers. In the Schleitheim Confession, there are two articles (3 and 5) that are of concern to this discussion. It reads as follows:

“Third. Eucharist or Communion: In the breaking of bread we are of one mind and are agreed [as follows]: All those who wish to break one bread in remembrance of the broken body of Christ, and all who wish to drink of one drink as a remembrance of the shed blood of Christ, shall be united beforehand by baptism in one body of Christ which is the church of God and whose Head is Christ. For as Paul points out we cannot at the same time be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils; we cannot at the same time drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devil. That is, all those who have fellowship with the dead works of darkness have no part in the light

² See translation by J.C. Wenger at <https://courses.washington.edu/hist112/SCHLEITHEIM%20CONFESSION%20OF%20FAITH.htm>

Therefore all who follow the devil and the world have no part with those who are called unto God out of the world. All who lie in evil have no part in the good. Therefore, it is and must be [thus]: Whoever has not been called by one God to one faith, to one baptism, to one Spirit, to one body, with all the children of God's church, cannot be made [into] one bread with them, as indeed must be done if one is truly to break bread according to the command of Christ.”

“Fifth. On pastors in the church of God: The pastor in the church of God shall, as Paul has prescribed, be one who out-and-out has a good report of those who are outside the faith. This office shall be to read, to admonish and teach, to warn, to discipline, to ban in the church, to lead out in prayer for the advancement of all the brethren and sisters, to lift up the bread when it is to be broken, and in all things to see to the care of the body of Christ, in order that it may be built up and developed, and the mouth of the slanderer be stopped. This one moreover shall be supported of the church which has chosen him, wherein he may be in need, so that he who serves the Gospel may live of the Gospel as the Lord has ordained. But if a pastor should do something requiring discipline, he shall not be dealt with except [on the testimony of] two or three witnesses. And when they sin they shall be disciplined before all in order that the others may fear. But should it happen that through the cross this pastor should be banished or led to the Lord [through martyrdom] another shall be ordained in his place in the same hour so that God's little flock and people may not be destroyed.”

In this formulation ‘the breaking of the bread’ is described in very simple language, which downplayed its character as a sacrament. As a memorial meal, any one could preside over the ritual of breaking the bread. Choosing a pastor was also a simple procedure, without any requirement of academic training. The only requirements were that they had to be of good standing, the election must be supported by the congregation and ordination takes

place immediately. Over and against such an ‘informal’ process, stood Calvin’s understanding of calling, training and ordination.

According to Jones (1998:229), the Anabaptists “had little primary interest in sacraments at best, since their main concern was for a strongly ethical and social Christianity, but they believed that the primitive Christians practised baptism as an outward experience and as a testimony of fellowship in the visible church.” It is understandable why the Anabaptists did not emphasise the sacraments because all ceremonies and sacraments, as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church, were seen as tainted with evil. Thus, they practiced rebaptism of mature adults who were willing to embrace Christianity through personal confession of faith, thereby disregarding or nullifying their baptism as infants. They emphasised the conscience of an individual as the sacred part of a Christian that the Holy Spirit constantly used to address and give direction to them.

Jones (1998:229) writes: “In 1525 Grebel baptised Blaurock, a devoted Christian man and of the band of preachers who had accepted the radical attitude. Blaurock thereupon ‘in deep fear of God baptised many others, and a ‘community of brothers’ as they liked to call themselves, began to grow...” It is important to note that Blaurock was an ordained priest in the RCC. He then left the priesthood in the RCC and joined Zwingli in Zürich. He criticised Zwingli for his close connection to the City Council as well as his views on baptism, and eventually distanced himself from Zwingli. Despite not being ordained as an evangelical minister, Blaurock baptised many others.

It shows that in some Anabaptist or radical groups, formal ordination was not a requirement. In pursuit of the priesthood of all believers, most Anabaptists groups argued that “all Christians have the same fundamental rights as the clergy have. There are no classes, no fixed distinctions. The only differences are differences of gift and function” (Jones 1998:230). This argument is very similar to that of Calvin’s when he argues against the indelible infusion of character with ordination. However, where the Anabaptists had a loose structure of church governance, Calvin argued for

a clear structure of church governance by ministers and elders, and for this the rite of ordination was important (Inst.4.3.11). He argued that, “if anyone would be deemed a true minister of the church he must be duly called, and secondly he must answer to his calling; that is to undertake and execute the office assigned to him.” Ordination was the proof of calling and legitimate ministry.

Calvin also differed from the Anabaptists in terms of ecclesiology. In his Commentary on Timothy (n.d. 245-246), he argues against the denigration of ordained ministry by the ‘radicals’, as he refers to them. He comments on 2 Tim 4:1, that there are certain wicked men and imposters (fanatics) who “boast that they no longer need the aid of teachers, because the reading of scripture is abundantly sufficient...but teachers ought to administer it, which is the duty on them”. Not all radical reformers held this opinion, but most did, convinced that true ministry is a Spirit led ministry. In Calvin’s commentaries he tried to correct these views.

For Calvin (Inst.4.3.2) God uses the ministry of men in governing the church and their ministry “is the principal bond by which believers are kept together in one body. He also intimates, that the church cannot be kept safe unless supported by those guards to which the Lord has been pleased to commit its safety...by the ministers to whom he has given grace to discharge it.” Here we see that Calvin was likely trying to rebut the teachings of the radicals whom he accused of denigrating the ecclesial offices; but at the same time he was very wary of clericalism as in Catholicism.

As mentioned before, the Anabaptists formulated their teachings in the Schleitheim Confession in 1527. Article 5 speaks about pastors who should be ordained immediately. If a pastor leaves his flock due to whatever reason, “another one shall be ordained in his place in the same hour so that God’s little flock and people may not be destroyed.” This is much different from Calvin’s thinking. Calvin emphasised that there must be no rush in ordaining someone into ministry. The kind of urgency in ordaining someone in the place of the one who has left does imply a kind of extreme doctrine of

priesthood of all believers where anyone could be ordained at any given moment as a minister. Calvin also argued against their anti-training stance, saying “the Anabaptists flee from trained preachers as if they were ravishing wolves; but for that reason they create their own shepherds in a hurry, thereby creating separation in the church...” (Laveter 2014:357)

Perspectives from Reformed Confessions

In this thesis the scholar has selected two of the reformed confessions for scrutiny namely the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563 and the *Belgic Confession* of 1561. These two Calvinistic / reformed confessions are quite influential in reformed churches in Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular.

Also, in reformed church governance and Church Polity, there are five principles which church assemblies should take into consideration in their deliberation and decision making process. These principles are, ordered from most to least important, the following:

- What does the Bible say?
- What does the Confession say?
- What does the Church Order say?
- What did previous assemblies say?
- What is the tradition in the church?

From this it is clear, that confessions are of great importance in the study of Church Polity. One fundamental question, for instance, is how a church order reflects not only scripture, but also the confessions.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* is a document that is primarily pedagogical in terms of Christian doctrine. Its primary focus is not questions of polity and order, but true faith. It explains the Christian faith and doctrine by asking questions and giving the correct answer. In this format, it seeks to be simple

and does not delve into deep theological issues. Strohm (2014:27) writes on the historical origins of the *Heidelberg Catechism* and states that “it is a document of understanding between Calvinistic-Reformed, Zwinglian and Philippistic tendencies within Protestantism.” It distances itself from Catholicism and differs from Lutheranism in terms of the sacraments. It is important then, in line with the focus of this thesis, to identify questions which articulate a Calvinistic understanding of the church, ministry and ordination.

Question 31 asks: “Why is he called Christ?” It is answered that Christ means anointed. Christ was anointed by God through the Holy Spirit. Christ was anointed to be the prophet who revealed God to us; the only high priest who brought the perfect sacrifice for us and the king who governs over us by his Word and Spirit. This resembles Calvin’s ecclesiology, particularly his understanding of church governance. It is not mere mortals like the Pope and his curia that rule the church, but Christ himself. In his *Institutes* Calvin says:

“Now we must speak of the order by which the Lord willed his church to be governed. He alone should rule and reign in the church as well as have authority and pre-eminence in it, and this authority should be exercised and administered by his word alone. Nevertheless, because he does not dwell among us in visible presence (Matt 26:11), we have said that he uses the ministry of men to declare openly his will to us by mouth, as sort of a delegated work, not by transferring to them his right and honour, but only through their mouths he may do his own work – just as a workman uses a tool to do his work.” (Inst.4.3.1)

The spirit of Calvin’s ecclesiology on church government is reflected in the *Heidelberg Catechism*. This is of major importance to ordination, in that ordination does not make ministers more important than the rest of the church, they are only called to be servants.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* (Question 66) teaches that “sacraments are visible holy signs and seals. They were instituted by God so that by our use

of them, he might make us understand more clearly the promise of the gospel, and seal that promise.” This definition already casts questions on the understanding of sacraments by the RCC. For example, sacraments in Catholicism were understood to possess some mysterious power of grace which they infused into a believer (*gratia infusa*), hence ordination was also understood as infusing or transferring grace to the recipient. The *Heidelberg Catechism* rejects this view by speaking of the sacraments as a sign and seal of God’s covenant with His people. This understanding reflects the influence of Calvin’s theology on the *Heidelberg Catechism*, because he had explained it in similar ways. Learning from Augustine, Calvin in his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (4.13.1) said sacraments are “a testimony of divine grace toward us, confirmed to us by an outward sign, with mutual attestation of our piety towards him.” He argued that, they were aids to nurture our faith just as was the preaching of the gospel. In their nature according to Calvin, they are both signs and seals of the covenant that God has given us. He sees them as “external sign, by which the Lord seals on our consciences his promises of good-will toward us, in order to sustain the weakness of our faith, and we in our turn testify our piety towards him.” (Inst.4.14.1).

Another important aspect of the *Heidelberg Catechism*’s teaching on the sacraments is to be found in Question 68, where it mentions two sacraments, “holy baptism and holy supper”. This is of course a direct contradiction of the RCC doctrine of the sacraments. As early as the 12th century, Peter Lombard mentioned 7 sacraments in his *Sententiae*. After that, various councils of the RCC discussed the number of sacraments (mostly seven). However, the current seven sacraments of the RCC were only instituted during the Council of Trent (1545–63). The seven sacraments included ordination. The reformers, on the other hand, consistently rejected the notion of ordination as a sacrament. It is also the case, of course, with the *Heidelberg Catechism*. Those who are ordained are not important officials, just ministers (servants) who were called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ordination is a simple but official entrance into the service of the church and the ministry of the word and sacraments.

Calvinistic views concerning ministry are much more pronounced in the *Belgic Confession*. The *Belgic Confession* is an amended version of the *Confessio Gallicana*, accepted by the Synod of Paris in 1559. The *Gallic Confession* was based on a 35-article draft of a confession prepared by Calvin. The draft was revised by his pupil Antoine de la Roche Chandieu and sent to the French Synod of reformed Churches. The *Gallic Confession* reflects the structure of Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* as well as Calvin's second Genevan catechism of 1542. Guido des Brès (1522-1567), who was instrumental in the compilation of the *Belgic Confession*, was a student of Calvin (1509-1564) (Strauss 1993:505). The *Belgic Confession* was born in the fire of persecution by the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, it can be said that the *Belgic Confession* contained a precious truth that reformed Christians were prepared to die for. This speaks of how precious these ideas of Calvin and the reformed thought were within the church during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Strauss (1993:502) notes that there is much of Calvin in the *Belgic Confession*. Like Calvin, De Brès specifically names the heresies of the Anabaptists. In the *Belgic Confession* De Brès continued consistently in the direction already indicated by his teacher Calvin. On ecclesiology, Calvin devoted a huge section of the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* in dealing with church government and ministry. Herein he teaches about the offices and ordination. It is worth noting that the *Belgic Confession* upholds this centrality of the doctrine of the church. This is justified by the fact that De Brès addresses the question of the church in six articles out of 37, which is more than any other subject contained in the confession. Articles 27 to 32 address the following tenets of faith:

- The catholic/universal church
- Everyone's duty to join the church
- The marks of the true and false church

- The government of the church
- The officers of the church
- The order and discipline of the church.

The Calvinistic understanding of ministry is articulated in Article 31 of the *Belgic Confession*, where it says: “We believe that ministers of God’s word, elders and deacons ought to be chosen by the lawful election of the church, with prayer and in good order, as stipulated by the word of God.” The first important point raised by the *Belgic Confession* is the idea of ‘lawful election’. The second point is that the church participates in this lawful election. The third point is that this lawful election is in the context of prayer and fasting. These three things are related with the concept of a ‘call’ as taught by Calvin. He talks about the external call where the church participates in the call process of an individual and the church participated in the ordination which seem to be the end aspect in the process of a call. Calvin put this in the following manner:

“It is certain, that when the apostles appointed anyone into the ministry, they used no other ceremony than the laying on of hands. This form was derived, I think, from the custom of the Jews, who, by laying on of hands, in a manner presented to God whatever they wished blessed or consecrated ... lastly, it is to be observed, that it was not the whole people, but pastors, who laid hands on ministers, though it is not certain whether or not several always laid their hands (Inst. 4.3.16).”

One should, however, note the difference between the *Belgic Confession* and Calvin. Calvin accepted four offices, inclusive of the *doctors*. This office is not included in the *Belgic Confession*. All the other aspects of ministry, calling, offices and ecclesiology are similar or identical to Calvin’s views. This attests to the significance, influence and development of Calvin’s ideas in the reformed churches of the 16th century.

The Synod of Dort (1618-1619) produced two important documents, the *Canons of Dort* and the *Church Order of Dort*. The second had a major influence on the development of reformed polity and is still influential in churches all over the world. The Church Order of Dort (COD)³ provides a well-developed system of church governance, based on the principles formulated by Calvin. Article 1 of the COD makes the following statement: “For the maintenance of good order in the Church of Christ it is necessary that there should be: offices; assemblies; supervision of doctrine, sacraments, and ceremonies; and Christian discipline; of which matters the following articles treat in due order.”

In Articles 2 and 3, the COD articulates the synod’s understanding of the offices, identical to Calvin’s teaching. It is stated in the COD that there are four offices of ministers of the word, doctors/professors, elders and deacons. No one is to be admitted into any of these offices, into the ministry of word and sacrament without having been lawfully called into such a vocation (see Calvin Inst.4.3.10). In Calvin’s commentary on 1 Corinthians 9:13-14, he points out that the people who enter into ministry must be ordained just as the priest in the Old Testament were set apart to serve at the altar in presiding over sacrifices (Calvin 2009:24). The aspect of the lawful calling was very important for Calvin. The person had to have an internal calling first, then an external calling in which the church approves the person for some training, then came ordination which was not automatic after training. Calvin states in the *Ecclesiastical Ordinance* (1954:59) that:

“The examination contains two parts of which the first concerns doctrine – ascertain whether the candidate for ordination has a good and holy knowledge of scripture, and also whether he be fit to communicate it edifyingly to the people...the second part concerns the life, to ascertain whether he is of good habits and conducts himself always without reproach.”

³ See complete text of the Church Order of Dort at <https://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/nethord.htm> .

Article 4 of the COD rules on ordination. For the reformed churches of the 16th and 17th centuries, it was an important rite that could not be approached lightly. It needed to be approached with humility and prayer. COD Article 4 reads as follows:

“The lawful calling of those who have not previously been in office, in cities as well as rural districts, consists:

First, in the Election, after previous fasting and prayer, by the Consistory and Deacons, not without (proper correspondence with the Christian magistrates of the respective districts, and) the knowledge or advice of the Classis, where this had been customary up to now.

Secondly, in the Examination, both of doctrine and life, by the Classis, in the presence of all, or some of the delegates of Synod.

Thirdly, in the Approbation and endorsement (by the magistrates and then also) by the members of the Reformed Congregation of that city, if, the name of the Minister having been announced in the churches over a period of fourteen days, no objection arises.

Finally, in the public ordination before the congregation, which shall take place with appropriate stipulations and interrogations, prayer and the laying on of the hands by the ordaining Minister and by other Ministers, if more are present, in accordance with the Form for this purpose. It is understood that the imposition of hands may take place in the Classical assembly to the newly graduated Ministers, being sent to the Churches under the Cross.”

This demonstrates the aim of the COD, which was order and unity in the church, things that were at the heart of Calvin’s ecclesiology (see Inst.

4.3.7). God's demand for order in the church (1 Cor. 14) determines that there should be a lawful calling and ordination of ministers in churches.

The priesthood of all believers

The priesthood of all believers is rarely mentioned by Calvin. The few occasions he speaks about it (for instance Inst. 2.7.1), it is always as an extension of Christ's priesthood. Calvin also briefly mentions the priesthood of believers when he speaks about Peter and the keys of the kingdom (Inst. 3.4.14 and again in 4.7.4 as well as 4.19.28). The priesthood of all believers is not a central piece of Calvin's thinking and he never enters into a detailed discussion of it. Also he did not connect the priesthood of all believers directly to any ecclesial office (including the elders and deacons). For Calvin, the place of the priesthood of all believers are within the everyday life of the Christian (Pont 1989: 453). Calvin's motto was '*Cor meum tibi offero domine prompte et sincere*' (My heart I offer to you promptly and sincerely). His theology was an extension of this, and may be described as an offering to the glory and honour of God. Calvin's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers fits perfectly into this. Every believer, according to Calvin, exists to serve God and declare his praises because he brought them out of darkness to his marvellous light (*ex tenebras lux*, another important motto of Calvinism).

The Roman Catholic Church professes one high priest, who is Jesus Christ. However, the ecclesiastical priesthood participates in the priesthood of Christ. The priest acts in *persona Christi*, meaning that a priest acts in the place of Christ. This implies that the priestly office derives its authority from Christ. This elevated the priests in status above the laity. The reformers rejected this notion. Like Luther, Calvin saw the priests in the Roman Catholic Church as usurping Christ's honour as the only priest and mediator. Hence he says in the *Institutes* (Inst. 4.18.2)

“But Christ being immortal, had not the least occasion to have a vicar substituted for him. Wherefore he was appointed by his Father a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek, that he might eternally

exercise a permanent priesthood. This mystery had been typified long before in Melchizedek, whom Scripture, after once introducing as the priest of the living God, never afterwards mentions, as if he had had no end of life. In this way Christ is said to be a priest after his order. But those who sacrifice daily must necessarily give the charge of their oblations to priests, whom they surrogate as the vicars and successors of Christ. By this subrogation they not only rob Christ of his honour, and take from him the prerogative of an eternal priesthood, but attempt to remove him from the right hand of his Father, where he cannot sit immortal without being an eternal priest. Nor let them allege that their priestlings are not substituted for Christ, as if he were dead, but are only substitutes in that eternal priesthood, which therefore ceases not to exist.”

Calvin argues against the ontological nature of the Roman Catholic Church priesthood. Rather, the participation of all believers as equals in the community of the church is important. This notion could be described as the ‘priesthood of all believers.’ The reformed conviction that every Christian has a calling to serve God in offering priestly sacrifices was articulated by Calvin (Inst. 4.10.6.):

“The last thing to be observed is, that the Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own calling. He knows the boiling restlessness of the human mind, the fickleness with which it is borne hither and thither, its eagerness to hold opposites at one time in its grasp, its ambition. Therefore, lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our folly and rashness, he has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life. And that no one may presume to overstep his proper limits, he has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of callings. Every man’s mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord that he may not be always driven about at random.”

This expresses the priesthood of all believers in the sense that every one of the believers has a calling and a vocation. This implies that, the vocation to ordained ministry is not unique, since everyone has a vocation. To be a farmer, is a vocation given by God and all duties as a farmer should be performed to the glory of God.

Calvin also described the priesthood of all believers in terms of the identity of the believer in relation to the world. Christians have been adopted to become children of God. In his commentary on 1 Peter 2:9, he says “but now, you are royal priests, and indeed, in a more excellent way, because you are, each of you, consecrated in Christ, that you may be associates of his kingdom, and partakers of his priesthood.”⁴ Here he meant that all Christians participates in the priesthood of Christ and not a particular few. All were consecrated in a similar way by Christ. There is therefore no reason for the church to elevate others because of the rite of ordination when Christ consecrated all in a similar way. Ordination will therefore appoint someone into a church office but all are equally important, because of the priesthood of all believers.

The same is seen in his ecclesiology, particularly the office of the elder. In his *Articles concernant l'organisation de l'église et du culte à Genève* of 1537 he argued for the inclusion of the elders in the government of the church, to ensure unity, participation by all and not just the ministers. He argued that, "we have deliberately required of you to be pleased to ordain and elect certain persons of good life and witness from among the faithful in all quarters of the city, having oversight of life and government of each of them" (1954:52). The word 'deliberately' reveals that there was a purpose behind this election of ruling elder. Although Calvin did not make the connection between the elected elder and deacon and the priesthood of all

⁴ See complete text at <https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom45/calcom45.iv.iii.iii.html> (accessed on 30-04-2020)

believers, it can be considered a practical implementation of the priesthood of all believers.

Although Calvin never developed a doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, it becomes visible in an indirect manner in his ecclesiology. Even though he did not deal with it as extensively as Luther did, his theology demonstrates his conviction that all Christians are called to serve God in their everyday lives.

Calvin's ecclesiology

Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* follows a Trinitarian structure. It begins with God and his knowability. This is followed by God the Son and his kingdom. Lastly, the Holy Spirit and the church is discussed. Burger (2013:84) contends that "taking a cue from the structure of the *Institutio Christianae Religionis*, one could argue that the church should not exist to sustain itself, but exalt God (Book One), to serve the kingdom of Christ (Book Two), and to reflect the work of the Holy Spirit embodying Christ's gifts in our lives (Books Three)." An analysis of this assertion results in the conviction that the ecclesiology of Calvin was about the Triune God and not about man.

The last section of the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* is devoted to the church (ecclesiology). For Calvin, the church is important (Inst. 4.1.1). He formulates it as follows:

"But as our ignorance and sloth (I may add, the vanity of our mind) stand in need of external helps, by which faith may be begotten in us, and may increase and make progress until its consummation, God, in accommodation to our infirmity, has added such helps, and secured the effectual preaching of the gospel, by depositing this treasure with the Church. He has appointed pastors and teachers, by whose lips he might edify his people (Eph. 4:11); he has invested them with authority, and, in short, omitted nothing that might conduce to holy consent in

the faith, and to right order. In particular, he has instituted sacraments, which we feel by experience to be most useful helps in fostering and confirming our faith.”

This is a major departure from the Catholic Church that held the church to be a means of grace. In Catholicism the church was not listed amongst the seven sacraments, but it was taught that the church was a sacrament of the kingdom of God (Edward 1897:33-34).

Calvin’s ecclesiology was inspired by his biblical interpretation. He suggested theological foundations of the identity and the authority of the church, based on the Bible. He emphasized that the Holy Spirit does not work without reference to the Bible. He insisted on the ministry of the Word and the Spirit. This is seen in (Inst. 1.9.3) where he says

“For the Lord has so knit together the certainty of his word and his Spirit, that our minds are duly imbued with reverence for the word when the Spirit shining upon it enables us there to behold the face of God; and, on the other hand, we embrace the Spirit with no danger of delusion when we recognise him in his image, that is, in his word. Thus, indeed, it is. God did not produce his word before men for the sake of sudden display, intending to abolish it the moment the Spirit should arrive; but he employed the same Spirit, by whose agency he had administered the word, to complete his work by the efficacious confirmation of the word...”

According to this theological understanding, the Holy Spirit speaks through the ministry of the church. This is because the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments were very essential to his understanding of the church. It however stands to be highlighted that Calvin used this understanding of the inseparability of the Spirit and scripture, criticized both the Libertines and the Roman Catholics. His ecclesiology was very relevant to his context. This realisation has heightened the need to investigate its relevance in the contemporary context.

For Calvin the church is a living organism. “One cannot long pursue the study of Calvin’s doctrine of the church without being struck by his repeated usage of such metaphors as assimilate the church to an organism i.e., to a created, living, and historically evolving reality...it is ‘conceived’ and ‘born’, grows from ‘infancy’ and ‘youth’ to ‘manhood’, appears to die but in fact ‘wonderfully preserved’, and rises again to the newness of life” (Milner 1970:7). In this, we recognise the belief that the church is a living body, infused by the Holy Spirit. By nature, the church is resilient, since she always comes back from some kind of grave to the newness of life. This view is in line with the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18 “and I say to you, that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” This speaks of the *ecclesia triumphans*.

This importance of the church can be seen in Calvin’s commentaries where he writes in respect to church unity saying concerning 1Corinthians 1:13:

“For we must be one body, if we would be kept together under him, [Christ] as our head. If, on the other hand, we are split asunder into different bodies, we start aside from him also. Hence to glory in his name amidst strife and parties is to tear him to pieces: which indeed is impossible, for never will he depart from unity and concord, because ‘He cannot deny himself’ (2 Tim. 2:13)! Paul, therefore, by setting before them this absurdity, designs to lead the Corinthians to perceive that they are estranged from Christ, in as much they are divided, for then only does he reign in us, when we have him as the bond of an inviolably sacred unity” (Calvin 2009:67).

The unity of the church is important to Calvin. To see the church as the body of Christ not only speak of the importance of the church, it speaks of unity, one function of diverse gifts and abilities within the same body. This view of the church is an attack to radicals and schismatic who were tearing the church of Christ. This unity is also neither to be found in an organisational structure, nor in a person like the pope. The unity is in Christ himself, with whom we had become one in his death and resurrection.

This leads to another point of departure from Roman Catholic ecclesiology, namely the Headship of Jesus Christ. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope is the head of the church and the representative of Christ on earth. According to Carroll (1985:450), the Bishop of Rome is regarded as the successor of Peter and the head of the whole church. For Calvin, Jesus Christ is our anointed prophet, priest and king (Inst. 2.10.5) and He alone should preside over the church (Inst. 4.3.1). If Christ alone is supreme over and in the church, it follows that all else are equal before Him despite the office they may occupy.

It is arguable true Calvin is of the opinion that outside the church there is no salvation (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus est* [Edward 1897:33]). The church has the means of grace, not because of the church itself, but because God entrusted the means of grace to it. The means of grace is the ministry of reconciliation through the proclamation of the gospel and the sacraments that is why he describes the church as a mother. In the church we are birthed, nurtured and instructed in the ways of the Lord. He says (Inst. 4.1.4.):

“Let us learn, from her single title of Mother, how useful, nay, how necessary the knowledge of her is, since there is no other means of entering into life unless she conceive us in the womb and give us birth, unless she nourish us at her breasts, and, in short, keep us under her charge and government, until, divested of mortal flesh, we become like the angels (Mt. 22:30). For our weakness does not permit us to leave the school until we have spent our whole lives as scholars. Moreover, beyond the pale of the Church no forgiveness of sins, no salvation, can be hoped for, as Isaiah and Joel testify (Isa. 37:32; Joel 2:32). To their testimony Ezekiel subscribes, when he declares, “They shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel” (Ezek. 3:9); as, on the other hand, those who turn to the cultivation of true piety are said to inscribe their names among the citizens of Jerusalem. For which reason it is said in the

Psalm, “Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance” (Ps. 106:4, 5). By these words the paternal favour of God and the special evidence of spiritual life are confined to his peculiar people, and hence the abandonment of the Church is always fatal.”

For Calvin, the church is not only a New Testament phenomenon. He believed in what can be termed the pre-existent church state. He talks time and again of Abraham as the father of the church. This argument is raised by Milner (1990:8) when he quotes Calvin’s commentary on Genesis 4 verse 25, where he says that “Adam and Eve, with few other of their children were themselves worshippers of God...we may rightly conclude that Seth was an upright and faithful servant of God. And after he begat a son like himself, and rightly constituted a family, the face of the church began distinctly to appear (*extare coepit distincta ecclesia facies*) and that worship of God was set up which might continue posterity.” This he describes as embryonic face of the church.

For Calvin, the foundation of the church is the truth of the gospel. That is why the marks of the true church are the pure preaching and correct administration of the sacraments, according to the scriptures. This argument contradicts the view that the foundation of the church was the pope. Matthew 16:18-19 was held as a key scripture for the primacy of the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church (Carroll 10985:450). Calvin says (Inst.4.2.1):

“This is clearly evinced by the words of Paul when he says, that the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone” (Eph. 2:20). If the Church is founded on the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, by which believers are enjoined to place their salvation in Christ alone, then if that doctrine is destroyed, how can the Church continue to stand? The Church must necessarily fall whenever that sum of religion

which alone can sustain it has given way. Again, if the true Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15), it is certain that there is no Church where lying and falsehood have usurped the ascendancy.”

Calvin had a high view of the church. For him, the church is the kingdom of Christ, in which He reigns by his Word through the ordained ministry (Inst. 4.3.1). Milner (1970:169) says: “Calvin thinks of the Kingdom of God as the church, but not simple so, for it is the manifest intention of God to reduce the whole world to order and subject it to his government.” In this way, the church, through its offices and ministry, has a guiding role through preaching and modelling of a godly life. The offices exist for God and His kingdom.

Calvin, following Augustine, believed and taught that the church has two natures. In Inst. 4.1.2, he argues that, “when in creed we profess to believe the church, reference is made not only to the visible church...but also the elect of God.” Taking cognisance of these natures, the discussion of the ecclesiastical offices and ministry relates to the visible nature of the church. It is in the visible part of the church that we have structures of governance and authority. The invisible church comprises the elect of God and these are subject to God and his eternal decrees that he has made in his wisdom. Scriptures as 2Timothy 2:19 supports Calvin’s ecclesiology in saying ‘God knows those that are his’.

Kärkkäinen (2002:51) is of the opinion that, “for Calvin, the church is primarily a visible community. One motif that helped Calvin to stress the visible side of the church was his growing emphasis on the public appropriation of sacraments, especially of baptism.” Because the visible church is important, Calvin is of the opinion that the church should be well-structured and function in an orderly manner. This part of his ecclesiology was influenced by his background in law. He was therefore interested in church order and clear government, so as to achieve the imperative from such scriptures as: 1 Corinthians 14:33 “for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the Saints” (NIV).

The ‘true church’ concept was very significant in Calvin’s ecclesiology. This is probably because he was convinced that the Roman Catholic Church of his time had deviated from the foundation of the apostles and prophets, where Jesus Christ was the chief cornerstone. He thus argued that, the true church had some marks that can be seen on the visible form. He said in (Inst.4.1.9):

“Hence the form of the Church appears and stands forth conspicuous to our view. Wherever we see the Word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence, since his promise cannot fail, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:20).”

The preaching of the Word of God must be based on sound biblical interpretation. It was very important to him that ministers should have meetings every week to ensure purity of doctrine as well as for prayer, unity and fellowship. This was captured in his *Ordinances* (1541:2).

Calvin argues that Scripture is the only source of ecclesial authority. The church is founded on the Word of God as taught by the apostles. This can be seen in Ephesians 2:20: “...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone” (NIV) (see Inst.1.7.1). In Catholicism, the church with its tradition, offices and councils had the monopoly of safeguarding the scriptures and ensuring correct interpretation. Calvin held that scriptures should be accessible and understandable to everyone. The ordained clergy had a duty to facilitate knowledge of scripture through their ministry of teaching and preaching.

Calvin accepted the formulation of the ecumenical creeds as normative. The church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. These were the marks of the church the RCC confessed. Westphal (1960:91-100) discusses these marks and argues that Calvin did not dispute them, he was only preoccupied with

wanting to prove that the RCC had since deviated from them. Hence, the two *notae ecclesiae* (pure preaching of the word and administration of sacraments) were added in opposition to the RCC, but did not replace the marks of the ecumenical creeds. It means that Calvin's ecclesiology could be regarded as a 'restorative ecclesiology', modelled after the church of the apostolic period.

Calvin rejects the idea that the apostolicity of the church is guaranteed by papal succession. He says in the *Institutes* (Inst. 4.2.2):

“Since this is the state of matters under the Papacy, we can understand how much of the Church there survives. There, instead of the ministry of the word, prevails a perverted government, compounded of lies, a government which partly extinguishes, partly suppresses, the pure light. In place of the Lord's Supper, the foulest sacrilege has entered, the worship of God is deformed by a varied mass of intolerable superstitions; doctrine (without which Christianity exists not) is wholly buried and exploded, the public assemblies are schools of idolatry and impiety...They dwell on the importance which Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and others, attached to this succession... How frivolous and plainly ludicrous these allegations are...It follows, therefore, that the pretence of succession is vain, if posterity do not retain the truth of Christ, which was handed down to them by their fathers, safe and uncorrupted, and continue in it.”

It was mentioned before that Calvin had great respect for the unity of the church, which flows from the one Head of the church, who is Christ. Therefore, it is understandable that he would spend a lot of time and energy on ecclesiology, explaining why the reformation of the church is necessary and what the marks of the true church were. His clear understanding of the unity between Christ and his church; the RCC depicting the reformers as heretics and schismatics; and the internal divisions within the reformed movement required a clear understanding of the nature of the church, based on the ecumenical creeds.

In the *Institutes* (Inst. 4.1.2), Calvin refers to the church as an article of faith:

“When in the Creed we profess to believe the Church, reference is made not only to the visible Church of which we are now treating, but also to all the elect of God, including in the number even those who have departed this life. And, accordingly, the word used is “believe,” because oftentimes no difference can be observed between the children of God and the profane, between his proper flock and the untamed herd. The particle *in* is often interpolated, but without any probable ground...”

Calvin’s ecclesiology is anti-hierarchical. He rejects a structure which has the pope as head of the church. Christ was the only Head of the Catholic Church which is professed in the creeds.

Batlajery (2010:44) states that:

“Calvin still confessed the true Catholic Church as the church, since they had the word and sacrament. But the main issue was not on those facts but more on the claim that it was the pope who was the head of the church and even Christ’s representative on earth, so all should obey him. This kind of ecclesiastical concept was not in accordance with the testimony of the Bible. The right ecclesiology according to Calvin was the *ecclesiology of the people or the kingdom of God* and not the *ecclesiology of the Pope*.”

This has major implications on the offices of the church’s ministry. The offices exist for unity. As such, ministers must focus on the kingdom of God, they may serve in any part of the church seeing it is one in Christ its head. This means that church offices serve the interests of Christ who is the head of the church. Herein there is no room for competitions by ministers and self-glory of individuals. In this ecclesiology, offices may differ but officers/minister are in the same level differing in terms of function within a specific part of the same body.

The church's function was a ministerial one. This is why Calvin (Inst. 4.1.1) would argue that God deposited the ministry of the word and sacraments in the church for our nourishment until we grow in faith. The emphasis on the word and sacrament, is an indication that worship was the arena of humanity's encounter with God. This experience did not happen because of any sacramental role of the church or ministers of the church. The role of the offices and church structures was only ministerial. This is again opposed to Catholicism, which followed the doctrine of priesthood as developed by the medieval church that taught that a priest could perform the sacrifice of Christ and "the office of the bishop is sacred, held individually by the gift of God" (Johns 1985:76).

The ecclesiology of Calvin places high value on ecclesial order. The church must be ordered properly, according to the word of God. Church order relates specifically to ministry and polity, or the governance of the church, as articulated in the *Ordinances* of 1541. In his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (1.5.1) we see his respect for order in creation when he says:

"His essence, indeed, is incomprehensible, utterly transcending all human thought; but on each of his works his glory is engraved in characters so bright, so distinct, and so illustrious, that none, however dull and illiterate, can plead ignorance as their excuse. Hence, with perfect truth, the Psalmist exclaims, "He covereth himself with light as with a garment," (Psalm 104:2); as if he had said, that God for the first time was arrayed in visible attire when, in the creation of the world, he displayed those glorious banners, on which, to whatever side we turn, we behold his perfections visibly portrayed. In the same place, the Psalmist aptly compares the expanded heavens to his royal tent, and says, "He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind," sending forth the winds and lightnings as his swift messengers. And because the glory of his power and wisdom is more refulgent in the firmament, it is frequently designated as his palace..."

For Calvin this order in nature reveals the glory of God. Milner (1970:169) argues that, it is this orderliness that influenced his ecclesiology. The church must display orderliness in how it is structured and governed, because God is a God of order (1Cor14:33). This concept of order will be carried further in his concept of office and ministry.

Calvin's concept of 'office' and 'ministry'

According to Calvin (following Luther), the marks of the true church are the preaching of the pure gospel and administering the sacraments in accordance to the word of God. It is sometimes thought that Calvin added a third mark, ecclesial discipline, but according to Plomp (1969:123-125) that is not correct. The reason for this is clear: If discipline becomes a mark of the church, discipline becomes a question of doctrine and could even lead to a Donatist type church, striving for perfection. However, in his letter to Sadoleto, Calvin does mention that preaching, sacraments and discipline is necessary for the church, but only to be a 'well-organised' church (Plomp 1969: 125). Discipline is not part of the 'esse' (nature) of the church, but to the '*bene esse*' (well-being of the church). This is a subtle distinction Calvin makes, which is often missed.

From the onset, as we seek to understand the concept of office and ministry in Calvin, one must learn what may be called an indispensable place of office in Calvin's ecclesiology. Du Plooy (2014:14) comments about this in Koffeman: "Fundamentally, offices precede the church. Through the preaching Christ summons a congregation for himself and leads his people out of darkness into the light". It is interesting to note that where Calvin writes specifically about the church in his *Institutes*, he starts by referring to Ephesians 4:11f, where we read about office bearers who have to proclaim the gospel (Inst. 4.1.1). He continues to demonstrate this view (2014:16) when he says:

"It is significant for church polity to read in scripture that Christ himself, as the Head of the church, has the authority to administer keys (Is.22:22;

Rev. 3:7). Yet he vests the church with the authority to administer the keys through the ministry (Matt. 16:17-19). Calvin believes that the keys are the proclamation of the gospel and church discipline...and the authority to administer the keys does not represent authority but implies a service performed by the office bearers in the interest of the church” (see. Calvin 1559, 4.2.1, 5-6).

Ministry is thus important in the administration of the keys but this is possible through the function of offices in the church.

According to Calvin ministry not only serves as a fulfilment of the church’s purpose and function, but it is also an avenue by which the Lord perfect his church in every age and context. Van Alten (2017:188) talks about it concerning the election of the seven deacons. He argues in the following manner:

“Calvin views the history of Acts 6 as the creation of deacons.²¹⁰ He calls it an excellent and necessary office in the church (*quum tam praeclarum sit hoc et ecclesiae necessarium munus*) and a holy thing to look after the poor – an opinion that raises the question why the apostles had not instituted it from the beginning and why the Spirit had not advised them to do so. Calvin, however, thinks that the way it transpired in Acts 6 was better, as the circumstances now convinced the people that they could not do without deacons. Otherwise they might have suspected the apostles of shying away from this task and, in addition, the willingness might have lacked to support these chosen men”.

The development of the diaconal ministry was achieved by the Holy Spirit through the church as the situation required such a ministry. God so wished and used the extraordinary office of the apostles to give direction. Now that the office of the apostles has ceased to operate, one may not claim such inspiration and honour for themselves. The scripture is sufficient for direction.

It is remarkable that very early on there was a certain development in Calvinistic ecclesiology, when the *Belgic Confession* (Article 29) differs from Calvin on the marks of the church:

“The church engages in the pure preaching of the gospel; it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them; it practices church discipline for correcting faults. In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and holding Jesus Christ as the only Head. By these marks one can be assured of recognizing the true church...”

There is however no doubt, as indicated before, that ecclesial discipline was important to Calvin, considering the *character indelebilis* and immorality of priests. Hence, the need for elders because to maintain discipline in the church. To set them apart, they had to be presented to the congregation. In such a way Calvin understood the offices as *ministerium* and not *officium* (Van Wyk 1991:70). Calvin had a functional understanding of the offices.

In his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* of 1541, Calvin (1983:71-6) maintains four offices of the church saying “first there are four orders instituted by our Saviour for the government of his church: namely the pastors, then doctors, next the elders (nominated and appointed by the government), fourthly the deacons.” These are to be observed for order and proper governance in the body of Christ. The pastors are called ministers, elders and sometimes bishops in the Bible. They teach, preach and administer sacraments, while not neglecting to look into disciplinary issues together with elders. The doctors or professors teach and preserve purity of doctrine. Sometimes they teach theology at colleges. According to Calvin (1983:71-6) he says “elders supervise every person’s conduct. In a friendly fashion they should warn backsliders and those of disorderly life.” This means that there must always be a system in place for discipline in church so that morality will not deteriorate to levels alarming as was the case in the Catholic Church on the eve of the reformation. Even pastors’ lives are under scrutiny. The deacons are said to be divided into two; those who receive and distribute to the poor

and those who take care of the sick. Here we see that in Calvin the church is for every person, the sick, poor etc. From this, the church must learn to have friendly structures and infrastructure for all kinds of people.

Calvin's ecclesiology (*notae ecclesiae*) forms the basis of his understanding of ministry (preaching and sacraments). His respect for order, love of the church of Christ and an astute legal mind meant that he spent a lot of energy on organising the church, developing a functioning church order and maintaining discipline, all to the well-being of the church. The offices of minister, elder and deacon flows from these convictions. Calvin's structure of ecclesial offices is born from what is necessary to do the work that needs to be done, as such a functional understanding of the offices.

His view of the offices was not without context. He argues in the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* that the papal church pointed to its splendid form and its hierarchy of offices as a sign of being the only true church. He says in the (Inst. 4.10.29):

“We shall not, therefore, give the name of decency to that which only ministers an empty pleasure: such, for example, as is seen in that theatrical display which the Papists exhibit in their public service, where nothing appears but a mask of useless splendour, and luxury without any fruit. But we give the name of decency to that which, suited to the reverence of sacred mysteries, forms a fit exercise for piety, or at least gives an ornament adapted to the action, and is not without fruit, but reminds believers of the great modesty, seriousness, and reverence, with which sacred things ought to be treated. Moreover, ceremonies, in order to be exercises of piety, must lead us directly to Christ. In like manner, we shall not make order consist in that nugatory pomp which gives nothing but evanescent splendour, but in that arrangement which removes all confusion, barbarism, contumacy, all turbulence and dissension”.

The form and external splendour of the church does not equate to its legitimacy, after all the church first existed without form. He cites (Inst.4.1.2) that:

“When in the Creed we profess to believe the Church, reference is made not only to the visible Church of which we are now treating, but also to all the elect of God, including in the number even those who have departed this life. And, accordingly, the word used is “believe,” because oftentimes no difference can be observed between the children of God and the profane, between his proper flock and the untamed herd...For although the sad devastation which everywhere meets our view may proclaim that no Church remains, let us know that the death of Christ produces fruit, and that God wondrously preserves his Church, while placing it as it were in concealment. Thus it was said to Elijah, “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel” (1 Kings 19:18).

This argument by Calvin reveals to us a shift in ecclesiology, from a strong institutional focus to a more organic understanding of the church.

It is from the organic, spiritual nature of the church that offices are derived. It is in this vein that Calvin argues that ecclesial ministry and office is derived from Christ. Concerning Christ, he argues that, “He appointed some to be ‘apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, for the work of ministry, for building the body of Christ...we see how God could in a moment perfect his own, nevertheless desires them to grow up into manhood, solely under the education of the church” (Inst. 4.1.22). It follows from this argument that Calvin sees ‘ministry’ as the reason why ‘offices’ were instituted by Christ. It can also be derived that the one of the purpose of the offices in the church is empowerment of the saints through gifts such as teaching, so that they may grow and mature into manhood that Christ requires in the life of the ministry of the church.

Even though Calvin spoke of his concept of church office as founded on the New Testament, this idea was so significant that in his study of the Old

Testament he also engages with the structure of offices and ministry. This can be seen in his commentary on Jonah, according to information in (1847:11), Calvin speaks about the concept of church government. His commentary on Chapter 1: 1-2, he says “as I have observed here, Jonah seems here indirectly to intimate that, he had been previously called to the offices of teacher; for it is the same as though he said, that he framed this history as part of his ordinary function.” Again in his commentary on Zachariah and Malachi (Calvin 1847:11) he argues that, “the word of God comes to private individuals and it comes also to teachers, who sustain a public character, and become God’s interpreters or messengers.” Herein we see his consistent theological reflection on the offices, from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

In Calvin the offices of the church are very significant in the governance and ordering of it. This can be seen in (Inst.4.3.1) he says:

“Now we must speak of the order by which the Lord willed his church to be governed. He alone should rule and reign in the church as well have authority or pre-eminence in it, and this authority should be exercised and administered by his Word alone. Nevertheless, because he does not dwell among us in visible presence (Matt 26:11), we have said he uses the ministry of men to declare openly his will to us by mouth, as a sort of delegated work, not by transferring to them his right and honour, but only that through their mouths he may do his work – just as a workman uses a tool to do his work.”

In this passage, it is clear that Christ is the one who governs his church, directly through the Word but also indirectly through those who preach the word. Church governance and discipline is above all done through preaching the Word of God. Ministers who are preaching are mere instruments in the hand of Christ. No office or person could ever replace Christ as the only Head of the church, and no authority is higher than that of the Word.

The above listed five offices as in Ephesians 4:11, Calvin believed that “only the last two have ordinary office in the church; the Lord raised up the first three at the beginning of his kingdom, and now and again revives them as the need of times demand” (Inst.4.3.4). Gamble (1992:121) explains that, the first three offices are extraordinary, with the last two being the ordinary offices. The extraordinary have ceased to exist but “may be revived at a special period of crisis”, while the ordinary ones are for the regular ministry. This is to say, the church should be content with the office of pastor and teacher. Gamble (1992:122) argues that, “Calvin recognised in practice that the New Testament, though perpetually normative for doctrine, cannot be the ordinary norm of organisation for the church, in the later ages, must be content with the local ministry of pastors and teachers, since apostles, prophets and evangelists have now ceased unless it should please God to raise them up.” It leads to the conclusion that a church order could never be final or closed, because the New Testament does not present us with a blueprint for church governance, merely some guiding principles.

There is some openness in Calvin’s discussion of the offices. He first talks about the five offices as listed in Ephesians 4:11 “...And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers...” He then proceeds to talk about the two offices of pastor and teacher as ordinary offices in the local church and he says that these must be in conformity with the three of early Catholicism. Lastly, he talks about four offices which are pastor, elder, deacon and doctor/professor as lasting perpetually in the church. In his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* he says “there are four orders of office instituted by our Lord for the government of his church. First, Pastors; then Doctors; next Elders; and fourth Deacons.” This, in some way, reveal the shift from a charismatic movement during the formative years of the church, to the institutional development of the church during early and later Catholicism.

The emphasis on the two last offices that of the pastor and teacher is described by Van Alten (2017:653) as emphasis on the role that runs across all the offices. He argues that:

“Based on Ephesians 4:11 Calvin identifies five offices: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. However, in his commentary on Acts he very often uses the last two – pastors and teachers – not so much to indicate a specific office (or offices), but rather to describe the common task of several different offices. To be true, there are a few instances where pastors and teachers are defined as specific offices and demarcated from other offices, but in general Calvin uses the terms ‘pastors’ and ‘teachers’ in a broad and non-specific sense. In this way he can refer to the apostles as being pastors and teachers, but similarly he can apply these designations to other offices”.

This further strengthens the argument that nowadays there are only two offices that remain, with the extraordinary one ceased to operate in history. If one understands that even in those extraordinary offices such as apostle and prophet were the ministry of pastoring and teaching, it does suffice to have these two ordinary ones in operation.

The purpose of the ecclesial offices is ministry and governance. The minister, who is sometimes called the teaching elder, is responsible for feeding the flock by preaching the word of God and administering sacraments. He has an added responsibility to liaise with the elder in matters of discipline in the church. The second order of office is responsible for theological training and defending the faith doctrine against heresies. This office may be understood as the reflection of the second of the regular local church office in Ephesians 4:11. The elders, together with the pastor, are responsible for governance and discipline. There is a distinction between the ruling elders and teaching elders, not in status but in function. Lastly, the office of deacon is responsible for welfare, to receive and distribute alms to

the poor (Inst.4.3.9). It is worthy pointing that many reformed churches follow this concept of office by Calvin sometimes with minor variations.

It also has to be seen that Calvin does not think of church offices independently from the charisma. If the Lord has called a particular individual for any church office, to it he will furnish them with necessary gift. We can learn this theological view in (Inst.4.3.8) where he argues that:

“But in the Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he enumerates other offices, as powers, gifts of healing, interpretation, government, care of the poor (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28). As to those which were temporary, I say nothing, for it is not worthwhile to dwell upon them. But there are two of perpetual duration—viz. government and care of the poor. By these governors I understand seniors selected from the people to unite with the bishops in pronouncing ensures and exercising discipline. For this is the only meaning which can be given to the passage, “He that ruleth with diligence” (Rom. 12:8). From the beginning, therefore, each church had its senate, composed of pious, grave, and venerable men, in whom was lodged the power of correcting faults. Of this power we shall afterwards speak. Moreover, experience shows that this arrangement was not confined to one age, and therefore we are to regard the office of government as necessary for all ages”.

This implies that the concept of office in Calvin is thoroughly furnished with the necessary grace and power to serve its purpose within the body of Christ. From this teaching the ordained ministry is thus equipped for such a ministry.

Calvin's views on ordination

The understanding of ordination by Calvin was not without context. Superstition was rife within the medieval church. He also had to contend with the extremism of the radical wing of reformation, such as the

Anabaptists. Sacraments were believed to have mystical powers. 'Ordination' was one of the seven sacraments. According to Reid and Witte (1999:653) "sacraments transformed the souls of their participants and conferred sanctifying grace upon the Christian community." It followed that ordination as a sacrament was believed to impart, in a mystical way, upon the ordinate an indelible character.

Lavater (2014:357) is of the opinion that Calvin produced a substantial amount of theological material to correct the views of the Anabaptists and rebels, who with their teaching destroyed religion and order. The Anabaptist rejected the formal appointment of well-trained ministers, very often by governments. One may argue that Calvin's doctrine of ordination is a balanced one, unlike the mystical position of the Roman Catholic Church and the radical positions of the Anabaptists.

The view of Calvin on official ordination does evoke the question whether 'Calvin' was ordained. At the age of twenty-seven, Calvin began his work as Professor of Sacred Letters (McNeill 1967:136). During this time, it is debatable whether he had received his ordination or not. This is because in his understanding of ordination, Calvin, links it with the ministry of a church. He is quoted in (McNeill 1967:37) saying, "I accepted the charge having the authority of lawful vocation". It is most likely that reference to vocation talks about ministry; 'lawful' may be a reference to ordination we understand from his works to be the official placing of one into ministry; and the term 'charge' may be a reference to a church that he was practising his ordained ministry in. This however remains an area of contestation within scholarship as there are no very clear references to his ordination.

The seeming silence concerning the details of Calvin's ordination may be explained in his 'timid, softness and mildness' (Cottret 2000: xi). This aspect of his nature is further highlighted by the fact that he was always at pains to hide his personal life in the cloud of God's glory, so that God alone must be glorified, and not man (Meeter 1957:10). However, the importance he

attached to ordination, is a reason for many to believe that he was himself ordained.

The starting point for Calvin on ordination is that it is not a sacrament. He clearly argues against the notion of a sacrament or that the sacrament of ordination confers grace. He also rejects the view that priests are exercising a sacramental role as sacrilege, because this honour belongs to Christ who is the only High Priest (see Inst. 4.1.6). For him ordination does not confer any grace. There is no superstition in it. In his view the Roman Catholic Church view was erroneous and unscriptural. Such beliefs are contrary to what is biblically true regarding the office of minister of which the 'priest belongs'.

In ordination Christ does not transfer his divine authority to an individual. He argues that "for though it is right that he alone should rule and reign in the church...He in this (as we have said) uses the ministry of men, by making them, as it were his substitutes, not by transferring his right and honour to them, but only doing his work through their lips, just as an artificer was a tool for any purpose" (Inst. 4.3.1). This kind of belief runs against the very grain of the belief in the Roman Catholic Church that the pope is the *vicarius Christi* and that the ordained priest had the authority to confer grace. This again imply that the person of the ordained minister is a servant of Christ just like any other but is appointed for a specific task.

In the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Inst. 4.1.6) Calvin argues that there are no Biblical grounds for the elevation of the pope above other clergy. "Christ holds the office of the High Priest without a deputy" and "moreover, it will be no empty sign if it is restored to its own true origin. For if the Spirit of God establishes nothing without cause in the church, we should feel that this ceremony, since it has proceeded from him, is not useless, provided it is not turned to superstitious abuse" (Inst.4.3.16). The implications are (1) the sacraments are defined as signs and seals of grace; and (2) apart from the superstitious abuse there really is something mystical that happens during the ceremony of ordination. It may seem inconsistent, but it is clear

that Calvin want to avoid the pitfall of an empty rite with no existential meaning. The ‘mystical aspect’ of the sacraments has to do with the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

What then is ordination for Calvin? In his *Commentary on Paul’s Epistle to Galatians* (Calvin 1854:22) he argues that, ordination is a rite by which the church appoints someone into ministry. However, ordination is not just a formal act of the church performed by men. Ordination confirms visually (through the laying of hands) the calling by God, the blessing of God and the entry into ministry. We can deduct from his argument that he views ordination as an official induction into office. This appointment comes with acknowledging or confirmation that indeed God has called the individual for ordained ministry. The rite of ordination is also an act of submission (through kneeling before God and the congregation), subjecting oneself the kingdom of Christ as well as the discipline and doctrine of the church.

Ordination is an act of setting a member of the church apart for ministry. Its purpose is linked to the process by which he prescribes it to be performed. This means that, ordination is an instrument of the church and for the church. He argues that “it is clear that when the apostles admitted any man to the ministry, they used no other ceremony than the laying on of hands” (Inst. 4.3.16). Herein, he sees ordination as setting apart somebody (sanctification) for holy service as was the case in the Old Testament. He argues that it is “useful for the dignity of ministry to be commended to the people by this sort of sign, as also to warn the one ordained that he is no longer a law unto himself but bound in servitude to God and the church” (Inst. 4.3.3). This evokes thoughts of the Old Testament practice of offering a sacrifice were they would lay hands on an animal about to be sacrificed. In this context Calvin may be implying that in ordination, one is now living for Christ and the church, they are no longer living unto themselves. This would indeed mean that ordained ministers are slaves to Christ. In this sense ordained ministers are servants of the church and not masters in the church. This view of the ordained ministry by Calvin is typical of all true

reformed churches' understanding. It fits perfectly well in the words of Christ to his disciples in Matthew 20:28 *“Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life a ransom for sin.”* Ordained ministers must be servants like Christ was.

It is in this understanding of ordination as being set apart for ministry that one may make more sense of Calvin in his Commentary to Romans when he argues for the understanding of ordination as a ‘yoke of humility’ and ‘servanthood’ to the church. He says “let him who is an ordained minister execute his office in ministering; nor let him think, that he has been admitted into degree for himself but for others” (Calvin 1539:400). Ordination is for him indeed a mark of servitude where one commits themselves to humility and the cause of Christ above their interests. Calvin expected that those who take the yoke of ordination must be of high moral calibre as directed in the word of God. In this we see clearly in his tracts relating to reformation (Calvin 1844:142).

It is these views concerning ordination and its centrality in the ecclesiology relating to ministry that there is an interest as to whether Calvin was himself ordained. What makes the question intriguing is the fact that Calvin was appointed by the civil authorities in Geneva as the minister of the word. The question is that does this constitute ordination or not? A clear answer to this question can only lead to more credence to his theological views. If one judges from what he regards as the significance of ordination and his words in (McNeill 1967:136) that “I accepted the charge having the authority of lawful vocation”, it does point to the fact that he may have been ordained. Thus, the argument finds credence in the view by Calvin that ordination is the last part the call process (1844: 656). If this be true, then we see that Calvin’s view on ordination not only came from his convictions of the Bible but also experience which is a fundamental source in theology.

The Roman Catholic Church believed that the bishops as the successors of the apostles they have the right to elect the presbyters. Calvin argued that no one has the right to election arguing that this right has been taken away

from people (Inst.4.5.2). He argued that whoever was laying hands on person for the purpose of ordination, was doing it on behalf of the church. In this he learns from Cyprian that ordination of a priest should not take place without the approval of all those involved. It is clear that for Calvin, ordination is a rite *by the church*, which gives credibility to the person who is ordained. There is no room for self-ordination or self-appointed bishops.

What is evident from the writings of Calvin is that he links his doctrine of ordination with predestination. In the book the 'Cure of Souls consolation for the dying' by Schmidt (1960:5), he says "God declares that he knew Jeremiah before he formed him in the womb. This is not said of the prophet as though other man are unknown to God, but it is to be understood of the prophetic office." He carries the same argument to his commentary on 2Corinthians 2:16. In this scenario, ordination is a confirmation by the church of this predestined appointment by God. It is therefore a humble acceptance of what God in his wisdom has eternally decreed.

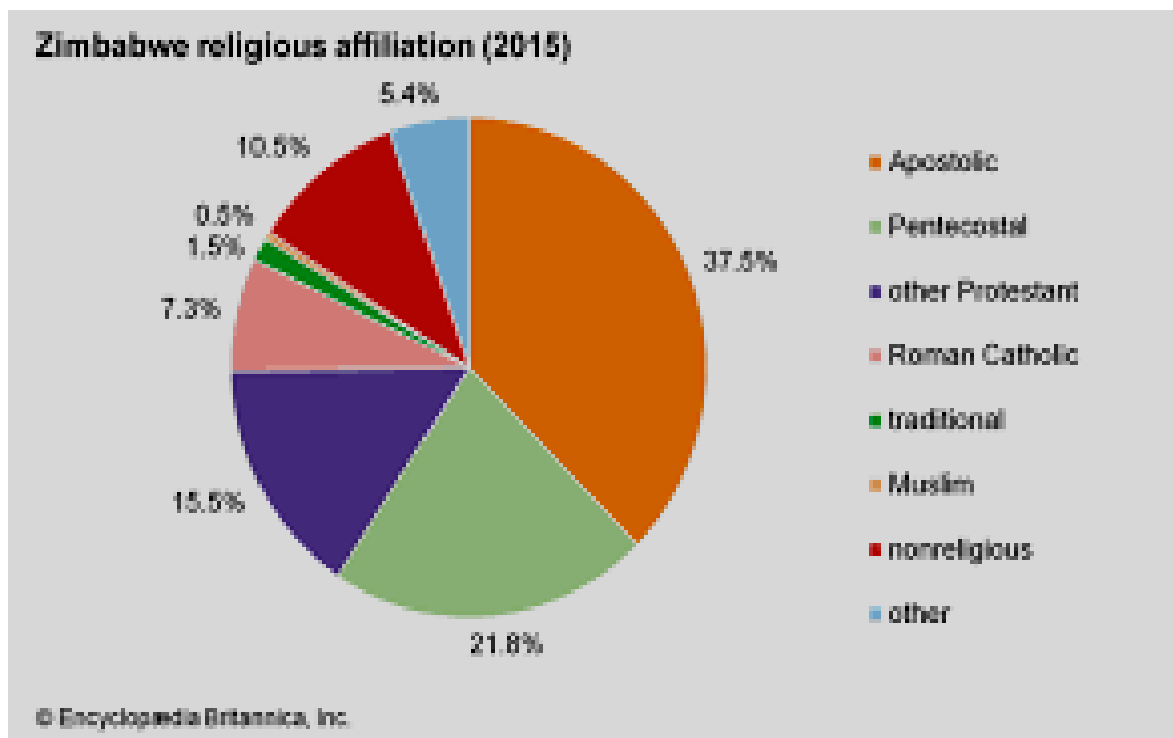
What is fundamental in Calvin is that anyone who receives the yoke of ordination is to be called into ministry. For him, the calling to ministry is in two parts. There is what he calls the internal calling. This happens when an individual discerns the voice or promptings of God towards ministry privately in their heart. The implications of this internal call are have the effects on what the church says concerning that individual. The church then witnesses to the call. This leads to a time of training and examination of the individual before they can be appointed through ordination. For him ordination is the last process of the call. A person is ordained through the laying on of hands by the presbytery or ministers on behalf of the church which is an active participant (Inst.4.3.10). According to Milner (1970:113), Calvin saw this truth of the call process even in the Old Testament. He argues that, Abraham received a secret calling when God took him by himself out of the multitude and called him, giving him direction and promises of blessings. The second call happened when Abraham was called with his entire family. It is therefore

clear that according to Calvin, the call is both a personal and a public phenomenon. This therefore leaves no room for self-appointed ministers.

3. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (ZIMBAWE)

Introduction

In order to understand the state of the church today in Zimbabwe and especially the ordained ministry there is need to dig into the historical development of the church. This chapter will thus pursue the historical understanding of the church through a look into early missions, the beginning of reformed churches, the emergence of the AICs, the Pentecostals and the immerging trends within the church as relating to ministry. Currently there are different church traditions in Zimbabwe as depicted in the following pie chart of 2015.



https://www.google.com/search?q=world-data-religious-affiliation-pie-chart-zimbabwe.jpg&tbm=isch&hl=en&rlz=1C1CHBF_enZW744ZW744&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjO4em9je3qAhUQMRoKHadrBRwQgowBegQIARAS&biw=1686&bih=821 accessed 27/07/2020

The above pie chart presents a statistic of 2015 that reveal the protestant churches of whom the reformed churches in Zimbabwe were 15, 5% of the Christian population compared to the 37, 5% of AICs and 21, 8% of Pentecostals. Even though the situation may have changed in 2020, the implication that the view of ministry in Zimbabwe may be influenced by other traditions other than the reformed Calvinistic remains a high possibility. The main question of this dissertation is to do with the relevance of Calvinistic understanding of ordination as practiced in the reformed churches to this ecclesial climate in contemporary Zimbabwe. This question is more relevant when one considers that the protestant and reformed traditions came earlier than that of AICs and Pentecostals.

In order to investigate and find a strategic way forward for the goal of this dissertation, this chapter brings in the historical perspective of the development of the church and makes an analysis into the reality of post-modernity in Zimbabwe.

Early mission in Zimbabwe

A historical perspective will help us to understand the church in Zimbabwe. This is important because it provides the context in which the reformed churches operate. The history of ministry in Southern Rhodesia, what is currently called Zimbabwe (the name that will be used hereafter) dates back as far as the 17th century when the Roman Catholic missionaries came into contact with the then Munumutapa and Rozvi Empires. They however failed to establish a viable ministry. The first mission station that had a lasting influence, was the London Missionary Society (herein after called LMS), established in 1859 at Inyathi in Matabeleland (Clinton 1959:22). True as this is, it can still be argued that some remnant of the Christian spirit was left after the Roman Catholic missionaries left Zimbabwe. Though they were not very successful, their coming to Zimbabwean soil brought a certain grace that found expression through the missionary labours of the LMS.

Reformed heritage

The missionaries of the LMS came from Europe. Some of them were Congregationalists, some Presbyterian and some were Baptists. From this mixture, in terms of ministry personnel, some ecumenical expression developed. There seem to have been very little doctrinal conflicts amongst the missionaries. During that era, there was no time to find fault amongst the missionary churches because they had to struggle far away from their home. Conflict over doctrinal issues was a luxury they could entertain in Europe, but in Africa there was no time for that. Missionaries were tolerant of each other. In liaison with the colonial government, they distributed the mission areas between themselves.

The strategy for mission by the LMS employed two deliverables, i.e. academic education and evangelism. They trained African members who would be both teachers and evangelists. They were not ordained, but could be seen as the beginnings of domesticating the ministry in Africa, which proved to be a precursor for African ordained ministry. Clinton (1959:64) tells us that in 1896 two teacher-evangelists were appointed. They were “Zhisho Moyo and Matambo who became teacher evangelists at Hope Fountain and Inyathi...These men and others like them helped to build the African Church.” In 1902, after faithful years of teaching and ministry as an evangelist, Zhisho Moyo was ordained into the holy ministry, thereby becoming the first African to be ordained as minister in Zimbabwe. He was followed by Sitjenkwa Hlabangana, who was ordained in 1921, another outstanding African Christian in Zimbabwe (Clinton 1957:67).

The story of the teacher-evangelists that the LMS employed rhyme very well with the ideas of Calvin who influenced the reformed tradition to value education and the formal training of ministers.

The Roman Catholic Church, as alluded above, had contact with Zimbabwe in the early years of Portuguese trade around Africa. They only returned in 1890, when the Pioneer Column of Jesuit missionaries entered the Ndebele

territory under king Lobengula (Zambezia 1980:195). Roman Catholic mission was not quite as successful as the LMS, because they were seen to associate with the imperialists. When the Catholic missionaries started missionary work they focussed on preaching and education just like the LMS. They later ventured into the ministry through health institutions. They took time to accept the ordination of African men. It was only in 1936, that we see the ordination of the first African priest. “Simon Tsuru and Isidore Chikore were first seminarians from Chishawasha to be ordained priests in 1947” (Creary 2011:98). We can see from the history of the RCC and the LMS in Zimbabwe that the ordination of African ministers, came gradually as the church became more and more indigenised. There might have some racial bias for the delay, but the gospel won the day. Discrimination on grounds of race became evident, when Roman Catholic students protested at Chishawasha seminary (Creary 2011:89-98).

In the same period, the Anglican Canon Balfour started with missionary activity in Zimbabwe, and the Lutheran Church also sent missionaries. At that time, it was known as the church of Sweden. It was in 1908 that Mnene Mission station was established. The Lutheran Church’s work in Zimbabwe began with education and preaching. Medical work was included thereby fulfilling the threefold ministry of Christ that is preaching, teaching and healing. The first Lutheran minister was ordained in 1937 (see www.rhodesianstudycircle.org.uk/church_of_sweden_mnene_mission accessed 17-09-2019). The history of the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, as well as other churches, shows that priority was given to mission and ecclesiological questions moved into the background. This seems so different to the current scenario, where denominationalism is exploited for personal gain. The process of ecclesial institutionalisation, almost inevitably, led to a loss of missionary vision and zeal.

Following the arrival of the LMS and its missionary activities, other missionaries from other organisations and churches would later follow. They found a warm reception from the LMS that had already established

themselves. Such hospitality is recorded in *Harvest and Hope* by Briggs and Wing (1970:208) with reference to Methodist ministers who came to Bulawayo in 1901 “John Aldridge came over with a number of his people and received an enthusiastic response from the Congregationalists who now worshipped in the court house.” This may be seen as a clear expression of the ecumenical thrust of ministry to be the missionaries and thus, there was no time for competition and conflict over doctrinal matters such as ministry and ordination. Everyone was in a way focussed on the mission activity.

African Initiated Churches (AIC)

From classical studies on African Initiated Churches, as done by Barrett (1968:1-7), Sundkler (1961:13-64), Turner (1967: xiv) and Oosthuizen (1986:1-20), O. Kealotswe concludes that the rise of the AICs could be explained in terms of traditional beliefs which were integrated into Western expressions of Christianity. The other reasons were the paternalism of the missionaries which disadvantaged many African-emerging Christian leaders. In many areas missionaries became agents of colonialism, which created distrust and a vacuum which could be filled by ATR and AICs.

Despite some negativity, a deep yearning for religious experience developed within the context of African culture. Missionaries contextualised the gospel message within the African culture and this yearning for religious experience. This is described by Briggs & Wing (1970:202):

“Not, of course, that it was all sunshine in those years (for that is never Africa’s way with her weather or her society); the team in Rhodesia had their problems as well. In many areas there was a marked resurgence of paganism: drunkenness...nor were the old customs of polygamy yielding without a struggle. In addition, as the first generation converts gave place to the second, the temptation grew stronger to regard the Christian faith and practice in a more formal manner.”

This reveals that there had been some dissatisfaction with Christian missionaries and resistance to some of their dictates. This surely resulted in the emergency of a brand of Christianity that expresses itself in the culture of the African person.

According to Ruzivo (in Chitando et.al, 2014:17) “most AICs are initiated by charismatic leaders. The unity of the church in the initial stages of the founder’s life revolves around him/her. The leader embodies the office of the prophet, the priest, the baptizer, the healer, the king and the Judge.” This commentary by Ruzivo, gives us an insight into the historical event surrounding the establishment of an AIC but it also gives us a theological ‘launchpad.’ The theological aspect is the cultic figure, regarded by many as a type of ‘messiah’ or a means of grace to his / her followers. Such a person would be role model and the genesis of charisma which flows to other ‘would-be ministers.’

The emergence of AICs could be dated around the 1930s, whereas the missionary churches began their work in 1859 in Zimbabwe. The first AIC was founded by “Johane Marange who founded the African Apostolic Church of Johane Marange in 1932...” (Chitando et.al, 2014:19). When he died in 1963 he did not name a successor, which resulted in a battle for leadership which has dragged on up to the present moment. This church was an expression of the love of God in an African culture. Our interest in this church is to see the development regarding ministry and official ordination. According to Ruzivo:

“Johane did not appoint anyone to succeed him. This is because his sons and relatives would have killed each other for leadership and inheritance of estate...In the inheritance ceremony, Abel was conferred with the name of Johane, he was also given Johane’s staff, thereby making him the first high priest of the church. The other two staffs were given Makebo and Judah and this placed them in the second and third position of power in the hierarchy of the church.”

In many AICs, as shown in the Johane Marange Apostolic Church, the role of the leader or bishop is linked to an individual, and by extension, to his family. In such cases the position is not about ministry, serving the needs of the people or even an ecclesial office, but it is all about a position of power. By extension, in cases where ordination does take place, it is all about assigning a very powerful and lucrative position to somebody.

The other notable AIC is the Zion Christian Church. It was established in the 1930s after the African Apostolic Church of Johane Marange was founded. It was founded by Samuel Mutendi. He was baptised in South Africa by Engenas Lekganyane (Zion Apostolic Faith Mission). Like many founders of the AICs, he had a background of worship and spirituality from the Dutch Reformed Church. He claimed to see visions and established his own church (Jules Rosette 1987:15-35). He emphasised fasting and hard work to gain prosperity. He was charismatic leader who was renowned for his miraculous healings, a thing that they found lacking in the missionary churches. As a result, people questioned any ordination if a person who wants to be ordained does not present visible proof of charisma and miracles.

Another example of an AIC, is the African Apostolic Church (AAC). This group was a later development of Christianity in Zimbabwe, even though it was still part of the protest movement against mainline churches. It was initiated by Paul Mwazha who was disenchanted with the Methodist Church where he was a very active member (Jules Rosette 1987:49). In the Methodist Church he was a teacher–evangelist. He was not satisfied with faith practices in the Methodist Church. After praying hard and seeing visions, he started his own church. From this account of Paul Mwazha and others we see that AICs does believe that certain individuals are called to ministry, and in some cases a rite of ordination is performed. The difference with reformed churches is the manner in which the call is perceived and practiced.

AICs could be seen as a quest for an authentic expression of African spirituality. As such the emergence of AICs was an indictment of European Christianity which came to Africa through imperialist expansionism. The AICs was more a form of protest, than an honest response to divine revelation. In some instances, it has become synonymous with the liberation struggle against a socio-political and religious domination. This may have overshadowed other key issues like ecclesiology, mission, governance, leadership development and training.

Missionary Ministry and the Context

Ordination cannot be studied outside the scope of ministry. It is of paramount importance to examine the history of missionaries' ministry in context so as to locate leadership development and ordination in the process. A ministry had to be established which could not be regarded as synonymous with colonialism. As such the gospel had to be presented in such a way that it would be seen as devoid of any political indoctrination and proven to be an empowering faith in a living God who saved. In this way it would be effective in winning the African person to Christ.

The gospel the missionaries preached, was based on the Bible. This dictated the need to train African church leaders in an academic environment. This was achieved by establishing schools, like the Inyathi Mission of the LMS, which was the first formal school to be established when the Mission station was set in 1859. Other missionary schools included the Hope Fountain Mission, Dombodema Mission, Empandeni Mission, and Mnene Mission. The first African ministers were teachers as well (Clinton 1959:64).

Furthermore, the missionaries responded to the African context, by addressing the physical needs of people, especially the many diseases that were killing people. To this they responded by building hospitals. Zambezia (1997:197) puts it in this way:

“The ministry of healing was also a means of carrying into Africa the total salvation of body and soul, as Christ had done. It was a very convincing way to evangelise. So missionaries opened hospitals, dispensaries and clinics. Initially Africans had no confidence in White doctors. Later on the missionaries gained the confidence of Africans by gentleness supported by spectacular cures, and missionaries took advantage of this confidence by ministering to their spiritual needs at the same time.”

In every age the church must respond to the context. Herein is mission and its relevance.

As we examine the attempt by the missionaries to be contextual in preaching of the gospel, one may raise a criticism against them that they were selective in their response to the context, they did more harm than good by disregarding African culture and spirituality. Something that is argued to be the main reason for the emergence of African initiated churches. According to a letter written by Mary Moffat to her son, in (Moffat 1886:349) she says, “...persevere with your colleagues till you see the influence of the Holy Spirit descending upon those poor ignorant men and women, till of such stones God raises up children unto Abraham.” This language exhibits a denigration of African culture and spirituality, which is contrary to contextualising the gospel.

Strategic Approach of Missionaries

Ordination of ministers, as seen from the history of missions, did not necessarily empower them in doing ministry. History records that missionaries had a way of approaching the mission field through targeting winning the trust and approval of traditional authorities. The LMS is a good example in doing this. Robert Moffat was a good friend of king Mzilikazi. This made it easy for them to be acceptable amongst the Matabele. According to Clinton (1959:36), they were given land for free by Mzilikazi to build their

mission station. Dachs (1973:67) makes an assertion that, in order to succeed and reach people, the missionaries adopted certain tactics for practical reasons, one of these was that the missionaries realised that if they were to succeed it was necessary to convert the chiefs to the new faith and to gain their trust. For example, in 1899 the missionaries at Epworth Methodist Mission baptized the headman Chiremba, his wife and their son and daughter.

Another method used by the missionaries, was the use of music at each mission station. Dachas (1973:67) notes that, there was a mission band which accompanied the teacher on his evangelistic journeys to attract the villagers to the sermon. This points to an innovative approach to delivering the gospel. When people were attracted to the melodious tunes of music, they would flock to the missionaries who would then use the opportunity to evangelise. This is a clear strategy, but again it may point to a deliberate effort to extinguish African music by replacing it with Western hymns and music.

From the very beginning of missionary activity, ecumenical bodies like the London Missionary Society (LMS), American Board of Mission (ABM) and other multi-church organisations were involved. Their ecumenical strategy culminated in the in the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference (SRMC) of 1903. Ruzivo (2017:2) writes that:

“The first ecumenical body formed in Southern Rhodesia was the SRMC. It was formed in Bulawayo in 1903 by Reverend Charles Daniel Helm, who was a member of the London Missionary Society (Baxter and Burke 1970: 451). The first aim of the SRMC was to promote Christian missions in Southern Rhodesia. Protestant missions needed a united front to promote Christianity. The second aim was to encourage fraternal spirit in the mission field, and the third aim was to delimit denominational boundaries of all Protestant mission churches. Collection of statistics and paper concerning missionary work constituted the fourth aim. New societies working in the colony

were referred by government to the SRMC for information regarding vacant areas where they could possibly try to open mission stations (Beaver 1962: 255). The fifth aim was to secure uniformity in dealing with native customs and affairs. Generally, the Missionary Conference cooperated with and lobbied government on African social policy issues (Mills and Grafton 2003: 248).”

Pentecostal Churches

The examination of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe is significant in any research into ministry and ordination in context. This is because Pentecostal churches have dominant impact on the culture and tradition of worship to an extent that it has impacted the mainline churches. According to Togarasei (2016:9):

“In Zimbabwe today, there is no doubt that Pentecostalism is the most dynamic form of Christianity. It is, therefore, no surprise that even mainline churches are also accepting Pentecostal expressions of Christianity in their movements... Thus there is an array of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe today. Chances are that any new church that is formed is likely to have Pentecostal features. Currently the fastest growing church in the country is believed to be Emmanuel Makandiwa’s United Family International Church. Founded initially as a non-denominational movement while Makandiwa was still a pastor of the AFM, in 2008 the movement became an independent church”.

It is because of this interdenominational nature of these Pentecostal church movements that many amongst the membership of the reformed churches attend them without leaving the reformed churches, hence the Pentecostal-charismatic influences in the polity of mainline churches.

Initially, pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe developed through the efforts of missionaries who founded churches like the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Assemblies of God and the Full Gospel Church. Togarasei (2016:1-13)

notes that their history is scarce and most of it may have been lost because these missionaries did not receive recognition from the settler government. A good example is the AFM which he argues is the 'mother of other Pentecostal churches' in Zimbabwe. Its work began in Zimbabwe as far back as 1915 in Gwanda through the preaching of Manamela Zacharias. According to Togarasei, the AFM in South Africa then sent pastor G.J. Booysen to seek registration of the church with the colonial government, which did not succeed until in the 1940s. The following description of pentecostals by Dillon-Malone, who cites the Chief Native Commissioner of Kadoma (then Gatooma) district, gives some indication of the resistance pentecostal churches experienced:

“Faith-healing and emotionalism are prominent features of this sect. The psychic and moral effect of such teaching, to my mind, must tend to foster delusions among native community... Emissaries of such sects are a menace to the Administration by stirring up discontent among the natives.” (Dillon-Malone 1978, 9)

This reveals the kind of reception that pentecostal churches faced from the colonial government. It may be described as that of suspicion and negative judgement. As such it took long for the pentecostals to gain official recognition.

It was from the AFM that Mughodhi Apostolic Church and the Pure Apostolic Faith Mission all broke away. Some of the leaders who broke out were protesting the kind of discipline they got in the mother church (Togarasei 2016:4). The split of the pentecostals in Zimbabwe may be regarded as the first signs of doctrinal conflict in churches. This resulted in a different view of ministry, not as a unified force pursuing mission and evangelism, but as pure denominationalism. This was the beginning of religious contestation, and as such, every church needed to refine their activities to be relevant and compete for support.

The view of ordained ministry

The view of the ordained ministry in Zimbabwe from the arrival of the missionaries in 1859 to around 1999 has been that of respect, bordering around the veneration of the person of the ordained minister. From the very first beginning of missionary work missionaries were respected and protected. This can be seen in the preface pages of “These Vessels...” (Clinton 1959) where Lobengula who was the Ndebele King is quoted to have said “These vessels (missionaries) must not be broken.” This implies a certain respect to missionaries, most probably because of their nature of work as most of them were ordained ministers that they were special messengers of the gospel. They were to be protected even in times of war and conflict.

The leadership structure of the Shona people in Zimbabwe is hierarchical. The culture observes the supremacy of those who have been installed leaders (Mukanya 1999:87). Ordination was seen as the act of installing someone in the helm of the church. The ordained minister was seen as a person of authority even in society. This was particularly true because of the charity work they were involved in within their ministry and purpose of mission stations. The African men associated their ministry of empowerment with ordination.

It is possible this background but of course with some element of fundamentalism that see a huge population of Christians from some traditions going to the extents that may be described as venerating the clergy. Such practices are epitomised in the following picture 1:



Picture of Ghanaian Prophet Boateng arriving at Harare International Airport. Picture taken 30 May 2013. Copied from <http://nehandaradio.com> on 16/07/2020.

Current Pentecostalism and emerging churches

The concept of the emerging church is topical in current scholarship. It challenges the traditional held notions and practices of doing church. The church as an institution and its traditions like the practice of ordination are challenged. According to Carson (2005:1) the emergent church (as it is called by some of its leaders), believes that the culture has changed. As such the church must change from the way it has always been done that is, if it is to be relevant. By this, this concept is related to that of a missional church. At its heart, the emerging church is a kind of protest against notions of modernism that truth is absolute, it is a protest against tradition and orthodox ways held in church as an institution. John Drane (2006:3-11) brings the point that, many researchers argue that by 2040, the church as an institution will have given way to a kind of loose spirituality and a fluid church that is currently seen in leaning towards house churches, market place ministry and the cyber church.

Togarasei (2016:8) argues that, “the present picture of Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe shows a lot of influence: emphasis on gospel of prosperity; individual centred ministry; radio and television evangelism; print and electronic media crusades advertisements; transnational religious network; and so on.” For this thesis ministry is the main focus. Seeing that Togarasei talks about individual centred ministry, it becomes an area of interest because it is such ministries that seem to be associated with self-ordained ministers and self-appointed bishops. A good example of such ‘Pentecostal Churches’ in Zimbabwe is the ‘Prophetic Healing and Deliverance’ (PHD) whose leader Prophet Magaya is alleged to have spoken in a public conference that his was not a church but a ministry (www.newsday.co.zw/2015/07/phd-is-not-a-church-magaya accessed 02-10-2019).

The PHD, led by Walter Magaya, is a big charismatic organisation that commands a great following. Some people who attend this organisation are members from some mainline churches. This speaks to dual membership or a situation where church in terms of a denomination or institution is no longer binding. Some people attend and adhere to this organisation identifying it as their church yet the founder disputes its status as a church. There are many movements like this one in Zimbabwe who are built around the person of the founder who is a charismatic leader. Some scholars, define these church organisations as movements but Kalu describes it as the “Third Response” to white domination and power struggle in the church (Kalu 1998:3).

In reacting to the immersing church Bishop O. T. Chipunza at the ordination of Pastor Masawi, in a sermon entitled ‘Season of Unparalleled Favour’ (22 April 2015, Sunday Mail accessed from www.sundaymail.co.zw) he said “we have brothers that God called, who did not go through the process we are performing today, a tradition that is performed by churches that came before us – the tradition of officially ordaining church ministers according to God’s dictates, according to the laws of our land.” This he says strengthens the

institution of the church as can be seen in churches like the Methodist and Anglican Churches, which have withstood the test of time. According to him, “there is no chief who ordains himself...there is a day of inauguration.” This does speak against the reality of some self-proclaimed and self-ordained bishops and pastors. This is in line with what Archbishop Johannes Ndanga (also in Zimbabwe) said that “there are pastors who are not appointed or installed into power, they ordain themselves and just call themselves Bishop...” This is a trait of the emerging church in the post-modern society (www.chronicle.co.zw/bond-note-split-church accessed 23-02-2018 in a Chronicle Newspaper of 7 August 2016).

There is difference of opinion whether pentecostals in Africa, particularly those established by Africans like the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God for Africa (ZAOGA,) are part of the African initiated churches. There is the notion that this ‘third response’ emphasises prosperity, healing and the elevation of charismatic leaders who are referred to as prophets and apostles is ‘a faith response’ of protest against white domination and power (Kalu 1998:3). This was part of the reason for the emergence of the African Initiated Churches. Paradoxically, it seems to carry along religious commercialism typical of the religious right in America. This is all a testimony how Western culture still dominates religion in Africa, even in churches which seem to be born in protest against Western influence.

This kind of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe has brought an unusual dimension to the understanding of ministry, where the term ‘ordination’ is only implied in certain beliefs without necessarily being done as it was done in the reformed tradition. According to Shoko and Chiwara (2014:219):

“In most cases, prophets are called by the divine into the ministry although in some cases they pass through a prophetic initiation process. For instance, the call of the prophet Isaiah (6.1-9) in the Bible involves the divine who called and commissioned Isaiah to become a prophet. If Elisha son of Shaphat is to be considered prophet, then his

commissioning was through prophetic initiation by Elijah as his mentor”
(1 Kings 19:16-17).

Instead of talking more about the call process and ordination, they talk about initiation. It would seem the road to ordination is marked by the success of initiation something that has not been part of the Christian discourse over centuries. It was in explanation of this occurrence that Mangena and Mizha (2014:142) talked about that some pentecostal ministers having spiritual fathers who reportedly give them spiritual power. This does point to the practice of occult in some Christian sects in Zimbabwe where instead of ordination, one is initiated.

Is Zimbabwe postmodern?

Is Zimbabwe post-modern or not? This is important to answer, because it provides the context in which we investigate the relevance of Calvin’s views for reformed churches in Zimbabwe in the 21st century. This comes in the work of new church movements that point to the emerging church as we have noted above. Akuul (2010:1), in his conceptualisation of post modernism, says amongst other things it is the “acceptance of a mass media dominated society in which there is no originality but only copies of what has been done before. Globalisation, a culturally pluralistic and profoundly interconnected global society lacking any single dominant centre of political power...instead the world is moving towards decentralisation of all types of global processes.” For Kasule (in Ewing 2004:1) “modern as applied to Africa may be considered in terms of decolonisation.” Following this thought, post-modernism would then be synonymous with decolonisation. In this line of thinking, a critical question may be posed as to how decolonised is Africa really? The answer would then reveal that Africa is not very much post-modern. Against this definition, one may argue that postmodernity must be understood as a style of presentation for conditions pertaining to relations and communication. These views show the problem of definition concerning ‘postmodernity’.

In this thesis the term 'post modernism' implies an era of history where the world is following the globalisation arrangement of political economy, the culture is now relative as a result of proliferation of information and migration; resultantly absolutes are being eroded by multifaceted ideals and beliefs, and there is now a tendency of upholding isolated notions instead of institutions. This is the characteristic of the context in terms of religion and culture in the 21st century. Zimbabwe is not immune to this reality of the 21st century. It may be lagging behind in terms of capitalistic development and in terms of decolonisation but aspects of post modernity are a reality in the contemporary society.

Kealotswe (2014:238) implies that, it is no longer a question whether countries as Zimbabwe are post-modern or not. This is now a reality of the times. He says:

“The countries that form Southern Africa such as South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Zimbabwe are modern or postmodern countries. The sociological definitions of modernity and postmodernity do vary in accordance with the arguments of various sociologists...modernity simply refers to modern period where there is fast change due to technology and the increase in scientific knowledge...Postmodernity is the other argument by sociologists that the present world is a postmodern world which does not have values and is constant changing”.

With all the above definitions and argument on postmodernity, it is of significance that one identifies some marks or signs of postmodernity in the church. This will then help in concluding beyond doubt the situation that characterises the church in Zimbabwe.

The marks of the postmodern religious society are many. They range from the use of technology in church as is championed by the current pentecostal charismatic churches in Zimbabwe. The membership tends to be moving between churches as they are freer to adopt to a movement than stick to

one institution. This is influenced by the perspective of life that there are no universal truths that find expression in a liberal philosophy of life. The other evident historical development is that of an emerging church. This manifests itself in the growth in market place Christianity and home churches. These are gaining preference and more acceptance than institutional churches.

Zimbabwe's education system was pioneered by the Christian Missionaries and the missionary schools are testimony to this. Though a lot has been done to improve and develop the system however the legacy of missionaries lives on. The Christian element in our education system is still strong. The religious studies have been criticised to neglect other religions as Islam and Buddhism amongst others yet these are some of the key religion in the post modernity. Gwaravanda (2011) says it is critical of "Zimbabwean legacy of Christian Missionaries in these words" the Zimbabwean Ordinary level is by and large basically and essentially limited to Christian and biblical teaching." Such an awakening and critique demonstrate the need of a multi-faith approach to the study of religion and this is a tenet of post modernity world view.

The face of religion is changing quite drastically in the world and Zimbabwe is not immune to these changes. Lehmann (2009:12) writes that, the world has become a global village "in Islam, especially in the Middle East, institutional religious rhythms centred on mosques and their personnel exists in tension with an infinity of curers, seers, and popular practices." He continues in Ibid and says "Christian Pentecostal practices such as effusive singing, healing and speaking in tongues, are gaining ground among Catholics in the form of charismatic renewal, illustrating how popular forms spread across boundaries with little attention to sensibilities of hierarchical or nominal authority." This shows the influence of post modernism and the globalisation.

These postmodern tendencies have been witnessed in all church traditions and the reformed polity has not been spared. The ordained ministry is a critical pillar in reformed ecclesiology as well as mission. Pockets of new

church movements without any institutional affiliation seem to undermine traditional institutions of church authority. This expresses a postmodern culture that is within the context of contemporary globalisation. Peters et.al. (2020:4) argue that modernity is itself a viral concept and has been made more pronounced by the Covid-19 pandemic, saying:

“The concept of viral modernity applies to viral technologies, codes and ecosystems in information, publishing, education and emerging knowledge (journal) systems. Evolutionary bioinformatics indicate the conceptual closeness between the two. Philosophy and the humanities more general are marked by two emergent and profound developments that have already begun to determine their future shape and major theoretical preoccupations: the ecological turn and the digital turn. At the most basic level the ecological humanities share an ontology of interconnectivity with the new digital technologies and together decentre humanity and redefine it as part of larger living and technological systems.”

In this culture of relativism, churches and all institutions are facing social isolation. Doing church in traditional way of gathering and fellowship is prohibited. This is the reality yet post-modernity technology has made people very close albeit social distancing and isolation. This is the situation in Zimbabwe though some are left behind due to problems of access to the digital technology. The world at large is facing this kind of social evolution and the church must rethink its ecclesiology and polity in light of the context. This becomes very necessary in the light of the questions such as of the meaning of the ordained ministry in such a culture.

The current ecclesial climate where people are not able to gather for worship as they do is evoking responses of affirmation and adoption of the post-modern culture. This is an age that calls for virtual worship service. Were as in the churches of the mainline tradition as the reformed, it was previously unheard of to celebrate the sacraments online, the context now demands

such ministry. This only post to post modernity, as Rotaru et.al. (2010:328) argued saying:

“Virtuality is one of the fundamental concepts carried in the post-modern paradigm due to the features it implies and to its forms of manifestation. The virtual space, the communication and media technologies are marking points that can be found in the contemporary debates regarding the specific of society and culture (Morales, 2009). Also, the central elements that shape the post-modern paradigm are the effects or cultural forms of the new media, of the virtual space and of the communication through media technology.”

It is in noting such reasoning and some glaring marks of post-modernism that one may conclude that Zimbabwe has become post-modern as well.

Ecumenism in Zimbabwe

As much as this thesis in this chapter is concerned with the developments within the church in Zimbabwe, the question of ecumenism cannot be overlooked because the current global church operates like one village, and ecumenism is one of the many initiatives that are understood to be among many mission imperatives of the church in the 21st century. This culminated in the adoption of LIMA Texts known as the BEM document. It addresses the sacraments and ministry. Ordination is a key element of ministry hence it is of interest to examine the ecumenical related developments in Zimbabwe. This concern for the shared vision of ministry in churches, everywhere and of course Zimbabwe is better expressed in the first statement of the BEM (1982:16) under the Ministry Section which states:

“In a broken world God calls the whole of humanity to become God’s people. For this purpose, God chose Israel and then spoke in a unique and decisive way in Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Jesus made his own the nature, condition and cause of the whole human race, giving himself as a sacrifice for all. Jesus’ life of service, his death and resurrection,

are the foundation of a new community which is built up continually by the good news of the Gospel and the gifts of the sacraments. The Holy Spirit unites in a single body those who follow Jesus Christ and sends them as witnesses into the world. Belonging to the Church means living in communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.”

It is important to note that many church denominations in Zimbabwe are affiliated to the World Council of Churches, and as a result they are signatories to this ecumenical confession. So it is important to understand these ecumenical developments.

In Zimbabwe there are basically four ecumenical bodies that represent various church denomination. These are the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (herein after called the ZCC), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (Herein after called the ZCBC), The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (Herein after called the EFZ) and Fambidzano Yemakereke. These bodies represent the various theological traditions espoused by the general populace of church denominations in Zimbabwe. Though there are differences amongst them, they must be understood as expressions of ecumenical spirit within the churches in Zimbabwe.

According to Gundani (2001:80), the ZCC was formed as a result of disagreement between black and white church leaders in the Southern Rhodesian Christian Conference (SRCC) in 1964. Some white church leaders felt that it was not the duty of the church to speak against the government on political matters. It was then decided on the formation of the Christian Council of Rhodesia that later became the ZCC at independence. When one critically analyses this, it would seem that the ZCC was inspired by some kind of a protest black church leadership against the pro-state (colonial government) white leadership. From its inception, it was aimed at being prophetic and advocating for social justice, speaking the truth to power. The membership of the ZCC is composed mainly of mainline churches. It is however important to note that three African Initiated Churches joined the organisation. These are the Africa Independent Church,

The Christian Marching Church and the Ziwenamo Church. This may be seen as an expression of unity within the church in Zimbabwe.

The second organisation to talk about is the ZCBC. It represents the theological interest of the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. This body was formed in 1969 (Rudolph 1978:12). Though its commitment to ecumenism has been questioned because of mainly being comprised of Catholics, it has to be seen that its prophetic voice speaks on issues affecting the entire nations and other churches as well. It also sends representation in the Heads of Christian Denomination that represents all umbrella bodies in Zimbabwe. In this way, it can be taken as an ecumenical body. Sifiso Mpofo (2014) in his thesis alludes that:

“In both pre and post independent Zimbabwe, the ZCBC has been a protagonist of justice for all citizens by documenting and collating cases of human rights violations in the country. As a result of its thrust on social justice, most of its members were viewed as enemies of the state. The fact that the roles of the church and state were distinctly highlighted, did not however, assist the ZCBC to explore vigorously the spirituality of its membership.”

It should however be seen that this body (ZCBC) is the most conservative in theology and practice. In their ecclesiology, the ecclesiology is sacramental. Ordination is a sacrament, a thing that the reformed church tradition disputes.

The third church organisation which participates in ecumenical initiatives is the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (herein after named EFZ). This is an organisation of like-minded pentecostals and charismatics. They call themselves Evangelical. By this description, they focussed more on the sin question rather than the social structures and politics. They sought to transform the society by the gospel. Nowadays, they are becoming more and more involved on social justice issues, evidenced by their participation in the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD). Vestraelen

(1995:192) tells us that, it was first mooted in 1962. It was however, after 1963 that it was founded following the resolutions of the meeting of Evangelicals in Choma (Zambia). The ministry as practiced in member churches of the AFZ is more liberal, sometimes not centred on the church but as well as on the individual and his spiritual giftedness.

Fourthly, on the ecumenical church bodies in Zimbabwe are the *Fambidzano Emakereke Avatema* (herein after called Fambidzano). It has about 99 member churches in its ranks. Mainly comprised of the AICs. Duneel (1987:211) tells us that this organization of AICs was established in 1972. This ecumenical initiative, though confronted with many challenges, it has managed to introduce a kind of theological education by extension training to the leadership within member churches. This may be seen as a positive development because many AICs have little or no appreciation of the Bible at all, as they view it as a book of the white colonialists. Some critics may argue that based on the membership of churches in Fambidzano, their ecumenical thrust is limited within different AICs and other like-minded Pan—Africanist churches in agenda. This falls short because they have of late participated in the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations.

At the national level of ecumenical discourse there has not been genuine and deep theological discourse that produced confessional documents on ecclesiological issues such as ministry and polity. These will be necessary to push the agenda of ecumenical witness and unity of the body of Christ in Zimbabwe. This gap might have been a result of the church's preoccupation with struggle for social justice and the betterment of the lives of the Zimbabweans. The proliferation of many 'sects' in the name of the church results in people being hardened to the 'true' or what has been accepted as the orthodox gospel. Also people are swindled a lot of money by some self-proclaimed pastors and bishops. There needs to be some self-regulation by the church in order to work together with secular authority for the good of all fraternity. Mutangi (2008:529) discusses the current religious climate in these words:

“The proposition that mainstream Christians constitute about 80% of the population can no longer stand. In proof thereof, the same US Department of State’s 2007 Report correctly states that ‘a variety of indigenous churches and groups have emerged from these mainstream denominations’. This development has occurred on such a massive scale that it is very unlikely that the mainstream Christian population still stands at between 70% and 80%. In most cases, it is the young people who are ‘floor-crossing’ to join the Protestant churches, a term virtually unused in Zimbabwe. In the place of ‘Protestant’, preference is given to the use of the term ‘Pentecostal’ to depict ‘radical Christianity’. Mainstream Christianity is associated with elderly people for the reason that it allows syncretism. Pentecostal Christians, who tend to reflect a younger membership, believe that such conduct amounts to a compromise of faith, thereby diluting the level of sanctity expected from Pentecostal Christians”.

It is the argument of this thesis that the ecumenical bodies may aid in the regulation of religion in such a society as in Zimbabwe, and contribute to church unity which is part of the global ecumenical vision. This thesis may add to the resources for consultation towards achieving this objective.

4. HERMENEUTICAL PERSPECTIVE

To what extent are the reformed confessions and scripture still normative in the formulation of a church order or in ministry? Many would argue that scripture cannot be used to find some sort of a norm for ecclesial praxis in the 21st century. However, if reformed theology is still convinced that the principle of *sola scriptura* is still relevant and important, the questions remains: *What does scripture say about ordained ministry?* Reformed theology builds upon the interpretation of scripture. Scripture is normative for churches in the reformed tradition regarding ministry, concept of offices and official ordination. In this chapter, relevant passages from the scripture, reformed confessions as well as church orders will be considered in terms of the research topic.

Ministry

In the pursuit of a clear understanding of ordination based on the Bible, it is prudent that one should firstly look at the concept of 'ministry'. Ordination is intricately linked to the concept of ministry in such a way that the talk of the ordained ministry is very significant in both ecclesiology and polity. The two kinds of ministry, 'ordained' and 'un-ordained', are related in that both flow from Christ's priesthood. It is this realisation that has inspired this brief look at ministry in this passage. What separates the un-ordained and the ordained ministry is idea of an office in the case of the ordained minister.

The idea of office and ordination for ministry also finds support from the New Testament. It has to be noted though, that in the early writings of the New Testament and in Acts, what we have are ministries. The idea of offices developed in the Catholic Epistles when the church became more institutionalised. Some scholars however argue for the development of church offices from the book of Acts in a gradual manner. An example is Heartely (2014:14) who argues that, in Acts the concept of offices is already present, like the office of deacon in Acts 6. It is different in the epistles of

Paul, which list the qualities needed for someone who will ascend to church offices without giving details on how some of them came to place. For example, when Judas Iscariot died there was need for an act of appointment so that one occupies that office. Luke says, “*For it is written in the book of Psalm, let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his position as Bishop let another take*” (Acts 1:20). In Acts 6:4, we get a clear demarcation of offices. The office of apostles stood on its own and according to Luke, they concentrated in the ministry of the word and in prayer. All those who are not appointed into the offices belong to the un-ordained ministry of the church according to the priesthood of all believers.

In Sakenfeld (2009:93) we learn that ministry is nothing more than service. He states that, in the Bible it proceeds from the Greek words ‘*Diakonia*’ from which the English word deacon means service. In the Bible it is many times translated as ‘ministry’. Such scriptures include Acts 6:4 which talks about the ministry of the word and prayer; and 2 Corinthians 3:8, which talks about the ministry of the Spirit. It refers to the life of a Christian in aspects of ethics, sacrifice, Christian duty and the fruit of the spirit. It includes such works as loving service, looking into the welfare of others and various forms of Christian service. As it is, it relates to what may be referred to as general ministry. The opposite of general ministry will be the ordained ministry.

It is important to note that the Bible is not definitive as far as the number of ecclesial offices or their names or even their purpose for which they serve. A study of the Old Testament, will yield such offices as kings, priest, teacher, prophet, elder and judge. These offices change from time to time. For example, Samuel has been considered judge (1 Sam 12:6ff), priest (1 Samuel 13:12), and prophet (1 Samuel 9:9). In the New Testament, we have the disciples at the beginning of gospel accounts, who later on become the apostles; then we get the deacons, the evangelists, the teachers and the pastors. As time went by and the church became more institutionalised, we read (for instance in the Pastoral Letters) of the *episkopoi* (bishops) and the *presbyteroi* (the elders) and again the *diakonoï*. We find multiple offices, but

no definite blueprint. The Bible reflects an early existence of some rudimentary forms of offices and gifts, and the appointment which for now we will withhold the term ordination. So we have those in offices and the general priesthood of all believers as it were.

This understanding of ministry as '*diakonia*' puts it in the general sense. It can be any service. Sakenfeld (2009:93) argues that, "The uncertainty over the nature of Christian ministry may reflect the diversity of biblical witness on the subject." The New Testament offers us no uniform understanding on the subject. Scriptures such as Romans 12 speaks of diverse gifts and ministries someone is assigned to by the Spirit of God, as a gift from grace. 2 Corinthians 3:8 talks of the 'ministry of the spirit'. One must never limit ministry to the work of service by human beings; God Himself also performs '*diakonia*' as indicated in this verse. All these texts are translating '*diakonia*' as ministry. One can then argue that there is an overlap between the gift and the purpose which it accomplishes. It may be due to such reasons that ministry is defined in a general sense.

When one seeks to understand ministry, one must be aware of the perspective from which you look at it. Ministry is a subject within ecclesiology because we talk of the ministry of and within the church. Though this true, ministry also belongs to practical theology. It is also a vehicle of mission; it can therefore be studied under missiology. We could also consider ministry from the perspective of church polity. This is given credence by the fact that the first use of the word '*diakonia*' in Acts 6 relates to order, when there was conflict due to the side-lining of some by another in the distribution of food.

Sakenfeld (2009:94) points out that the New Testament derives much of its terminology from the Old Testament. In the Greek Septuagint '*diakonos*' is used. "God's covenantal love towards Israel requires the work of those who speak for God to call Israel to faithfulness." God as the chief Shepherd of his people Israel does not leave his people orphaned but he sets over them rulers and prophets to exercise ministry over them for their good. This

ministry of oversight can be seen in Scriptures as Numbers 27:17; 1 Samuel 13:14 and Ezekiel 34:5-2.

The necessity of ministry must not be minimised. It is necessary to nurture faith through the service of administering the Word and sacraments. The necessity of ministry is that there should be a gathering of the church, it must be preserved by the Word and sacraments which confer the faith. Those who perform this task are the “officers” of the church and accordingly it is that office which is called church’s ministry. One may derive two implications concerning the biblical ministry from this understanding: that the ministry is the work of those who are in offices of the church and that ministry is service that aims and is focussed at nurturing the faith of the church. This states that, ministry is only limited to the church as it is part of God’s mission in the entire world hence Ephesians 4:11-13 will include evangelists in the gifted offices of ministry in the church. These are those who will interact with the world with the aim of converting people to Christ. Their work is more on the world than in the church.

According to Van Wyk (1991:67) ministry is service. It can be understood clearly from Latin ‘*ministerium*’ in which we get the word minister – a servant. The Latin word for ‘office’ is ‘*officium*’ and it is translated ‘Office’ in English. This word carries more dignity than that of ministry. It speaks of an official. It must be understood therefore that church ‘offices’ becomes the prisms through which ‘ministry’ is done. Those who are not ordained fulfil a calling and responsibility that comes with being a child of God. The ordained ministry represents Christ as it were and the church in whose name they function.

Faith and Order (BEM 1982:16) defines ministry as the calling of the whole people of God. It is service,

“In a broken world God calls the whole of humanity to become God’s people. For this purpose, God chose Israel and then spoke in a unique and decisive way in Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Jesus made his own the

nature, condition and cause of the whole human race, giving himself as a sacrifice for all. Jesus' life of service, his death and resurrection, are the foundation of a new community which is built up continually by the good news of the Gospel and the gifts of the sacraments. The Holy Spirit unites in a single body those who follow Jesus Christ and sends them as witnesses into the world. Belonging to the Church means living in communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

Ministry learns from God's relationship with Israel in the Old Testament. He had called them to himself in order to achieve his purpose on earth through ministry, to which Christians are called today. This view articulated by BEM (1982:16) relates well to the scriptural description of the people of God in Exodus 19:5-6 which says "*Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people: for the earth is mine: And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the children of Israel*" (NIV). Service defines the people of God and at the same time it is the very purpose of their existence. This purpose is participation in the *Missio Dei*. In this vein the BEM states that:

"Living in this communion with God, all members of the Church are called to confess their faith and to give account of their hope. They are to identify with the joys and sufferings of all people as they seek to witness in caring love. The members of Christ's body are to struggle with the oppressed to-wards that freedom and dignity promised with the coming of the Kingdom. This mission needs to be carried out in varying political, social and cultural contexts. In order to fulfil this mission faithfully, they will seek relevant forms of witness and service in each situation. In so doing they bring to the world a foretaste of the joy and glory of God's Kingdom."

It is from this ministry based on a loving relationship of God to his people that some are chosen for the equipping of leading and enabling all else through ordination of which much will be said later.

Ministry is related to discipleship. Discipleship is a conscious decision that revolutionises the life of believers. As a disciple one ceases to live for him or herself. They begin to live for the Lord who has called them and for others. This is seen in relationships and high moral life. This finds support in Bonhoeffer (1963:7) in his words "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." This dying does not imply literal death in a physical sense but dying to self, living for Christ and other people. This is what ministry was all about in Bonhoeffer. Such a call is given to all the believers as disciples of Jesus Christ regardless of whether the person is ordained or not. It is a call for the people of God.

According to Luter (1980:268) the English word *disciple* is derived from the Latin term *discipulus* (Greek, *μαθητής*) meaning "learner." This is helpful in searching for discipleship in the Epistles because its kindred verbal form "to learn" (Greek, *μανθάνω*) is used in the Bible. He goes further to link it to Matthew 11:29 which says "Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls" (NIV). It is this "yoke" that one has to carry while learning from Christ which is ministry. The learning of discipleship takes place in the context of ministry by God's people.

Ministry should never be seen as something that makes another person better than the other. Kung (1967:363) is of the opinion that the fundamental error of ecclesiologies which turned out to be nothing more than a hierarchy of important people, was that it failed to realise that those who held office are primarily not dignitaries but believers; members of the fellowship of believers; and any office they may hold is of secondary if not tertiary importance.

The word priest in Spanish is *presbitero*, in Latin *presbyter*. It means the elder or leader of the community. According to Küng (1967: 364), in “no occasion did Jesus describe himself or his disciples as priests. It was only the deep impression made by Jesus life and death, as showing a unique obedience and devotion to God and man, that caused the community to describe Jesus’ life and death in terms of the cultic images...and even Jesus as the high priest.” This tells us that ministry is truly about service and thus must be kept and viewed as such. This is the ideal meaning of ministry and offices, though it may be different in various ecclesiologies in churches.

God is the author of ministry. Osborne (2003:11) says that, the naming of ministry in the Bible began with Jesus Christ himself when he named ‘the Twelve’ and the word ‘apostles’ being given by him. So in order to understand ministry as presented in the Bible one must go back to Jesus. God is a sending God. Jesus demonstrated this truth. He sent his disciples to do ministry. The fundamental characteristic of Jesus ministry is important for an understanding of Christian ministry. A Christian minister, like Jesus, is not self-appointed, nor even community appointed. Naturally, the person involved plays some role in responding to God’s call, and community too, plays some role in accepting a person for ministry. From this background it can be seen that one does not appoint himself to the ministry in as much as one does not ordain. Also it is worth noting at this stage that ministry is the task of both the ordained ministers and the general priesthood- all people of God.

Dozeman (2008:12) builds his theological argument based on the Bible that “ordination for ministry derives from the holiness of God. If God were not holy, there would be no such thing as religion in human experience.” The argument here is that ordination and ministry follow each other. These two result from the concept of a holy God and unholy, sinful humanity. So for one to come into the presence of God he must be set apart for it. He (Dozeman 2008:13) further argues that, “the root meaning of holiness (*quodesh*), means to be set apart”. From this follows set apart spaces

(sanctuaries) where ‘set apart functionaries’ (ordained ministers) operate or serve. From this argument ordination is a rite of passage for one to serve in a sacred space (sanctuary/church), doing sacred service (ministry). Such Scriptures as Psalms 22:3; Isaiah 57:15; Isaiah 6:3 and 1Peter1:16 presents God as holy and set apart in self/being. Ministry becomes therefore a holy task in a spiritual sense hence the plea by Paul in Romans 12:1 to present our bodies as holy and acceptable sacrifices which is our spiritual act of worship.

As Dozeman (2008:18) continues his argument one can read and interpret the significance of ordination and the ministry, he presents the argument that because of the holiness of God it is imperative to regulate who comes into contact with the holiness of God. He says “unregulated contact with holiness results in death, regardless of motive. God kills Uzzah when he steadies the ark (a holy object) in spite of his good intention (2 Samuel 6:6-11).” This speaks of the significance of the ordained ministry in the church, but it also sets boundaries and indicate that ministry in preaching and teaching the word by the laity is limited. The church needs the centrality and the sacrosanct ministry of the ordained offices. To speak of this regulation does not in any way imply moral purity though this is important, it refers to being set apart for this task in the way that God has provided and in this case it is ordination.

As we seek to understand the concept of ministry in a deeper way, it is important to interpret it within its context. It is in this sense that one may understand the close relationship there exists between gifts or spiritual abilities of Christians, their purpose which is ministry and special recognition and commission of some by ordination. This finds resonance with what is presented in Koffeman (2014:111) that:

“The word ‘charism’ denotes gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit on any member of the body of Christ for the building up of the community and the fulfilment of its calling. The word ‘ministry’ in its broadest sense denotes service to which the whole people of God is called...ordained

ministry refers to persons who have received a ‘charism’ and whom the church appoints for service by ordination through the invocation of the spirit and the laying on of hands.”

This means that all people are called to ministry as long as they are Christians. The explanation of this fact is in the ‘priesthood of all believers’. Gassmann (1993:118) writing for the Faith and Order puts it this way: “It is essentially through baptism and confirmation that Christians are made members of the body of Christ and participate in the priesthood. Therefore, any service performed in the church by a Christian, by virtue of his baptism and confirmation is supposedly an offering of his whole person.” This therefore describes ministry to be a sacrifice according to Romans 12:1.

The ministry also functions by and in offices. For example, “the selection of the twelve apostles in the ministry of Jesus is transformed into the apostolic office in the book of Acts...1:26 signals the shift in understanding of an apostle from the twelve who lived with Jesus to an office of the church, when it employs the noun ‘apostleship’ (*apostolos*) to describe ‘an office of ministry’.” This argument establishes the relationship between the offices in the church, ordination and ministry. Walther (1951:36), also shows this relationship when in his argument he quotes from the Augsburg Confession that the term ‘ministry’ in its abstract meaning it refers to office or station from/in which ministry functions, and in a more concretely manner it refers to the person and the specific sacred function.

Ephesians 4:11-13 has generally been regarded by many as referring to the role of the gifted or ordained offices of the church. David Gordon (1994:69-74) says there is a truth in the common interpretation that the task of the ordained ministers is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. It however falls short from the intended meaning. It is true in so far as it refers to mutual works of love by Christian and not teaching the word, preaching and administration of sacraments. The implication from this argument is that the work of the ordained ministers which is in itself ministry entails three things that are perfecting of the saints, doing ministry in a way that prepares the

saints for their portion, and, edifying the body of Christ. So we see from this argument that ordained ministers should not have their scope limited relegating some works of ministry to the un-ordained folk.

'Ministry' is a significant concept of the biblical teaching and faith. In (1994:75-6), David Gordon, cites passages that speak of the importance of ministry in the Bible. He cites passages as Acts 13:2; Romans 1:1 and 1Timothy4:13-15 which show people who devoted themselves to ministry. Scriptures like Acts 13:2-5 and 2Timothy1:6 narrates the church's approval of ministry of individuals, and there are Scriptures that gives us qualifications or prerequisites for one to be accepted into ministry like 1Timothy3:2 and Titus 1:7-9. It follows from such textual analysis that God is the author of ministry, Christ modelled it, the Bible teaches and therefore the church must observe it for the nurturing of the faith. As this is true, so is the concept of ordination, it is authored by God, Christ gave it as we can see in Ephesians 4:11-13 and the Bible teaches it, therefore the church should uphold its honour and perpetuate for posterity and faith.

The priesthood of all believers

The doctrine of 'the priesthood of all believers' was first taught systematically by Martin Luther in his theology of reformation during the 16th century. It was nothing new as it had always been part of the biblical text. Scriptures as Exodus 19:5-6; 1Peter 2:9; Revelations 5:9-10 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 provide the basis for the understanding of this doctrine. These scriptures emphasise that we are all called by God; we are all priests meaning that we are the same, we are members of the body of Christ and we have a service to perform to the Lord. This doctrine was obviously contradictory to the Roman Catholic Church understanding of clergy who were seen as having more authority in the church due to the process of ordination which according to the writings of Volts (1997:156) was the sole means to being a priest. All this means that, this is a doctrine for Protestant churches.

By this doctrine, “Luther transformed the use of the words ‘calling’ and ‘vocation’ by assigning them to all Christians” (Lolter & Van Aarde 2017:3). This is explained in the larger context of Ephesians 4. We see in verse 1 that each and every believer should live their lives in a manner worthy of their calling. This is consistent with the view that, those in ordained ministry serve the church with the delegated authority within the context of the priesthood of all believers. This implies that, all believers are sacrificing priests with their lives that they live to glorify God. This fits well with 1 Peter 2:9 which says of Christians “but you are a chosen generation, and a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness to his marvellous light...” The implication is that the priesthood of all believers means that believers are living not for themselves but for God.

Ephesians 4 has been used a lot in the understanding of the priesthood of all believers. Lolter and Van Aarde (2017:3) see Eph4:11-12 as key to this understanding. They argue that:

“The church structure in Ephesians is presented as a missional church structure and in the missional church model the saints are to be equipped by the gifted ones for the work of the ministry (Eph4:12). The gifted ones (Eph4:11) possess the missional functions of apostle, priest, evangelist, pastor and teacher. It is not the offices of the church in view. The gifted ones are the people who function in these gifts given to the church to equip the believers to function missionally.”

This connects the concept of the priesthood of all believers with the missional church. The church as a missional church functions by both the ordained ministers and the general priests which are believers. They do the works of ministry in the world through that priestly function.

Dozeman (2008:105) helps to bring to light the New Testament development of the concept of the priesthood of all believers by linking it to the work of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, only those who were anointed for

special leadership of God's people were filled with the Spirit. The Gospel of John describes all Christians as children of God (John1:13). In the second book of Luke, one of the central themes in the access to the spirit of God by all children of God. Scriptures like Acts 2:8, 33, 38; 8:15, 10:44 etc. are enough to show that all the children of God have the same Spirit. This put them in the same level in their access to God, since now, the Holy Spirit or rather the Spirit of Christ dwells in them. This narrows the gap between ordinary members of the church and the clergy. All have the same spirit. It is this reality in the New Testament church that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers seeks to explain.

It is by baptism into the body of Christ that Christ who is the living Stone, we are built into a spiritual house to be a holy nation and priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices that acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1Peter 2:4, 5). The universal priesthood was established by Christ. A person becomes a priest in this order when he or she comes to faith in Jesus Christ." This however means that, since all are another the priesthood of all believers then all can be bishops and clergy. We are same and equal in-terms of standing before God, but he has chosen to call some to certain offices for the government of his church. Ordination becomes an event that separates priests not interns of an ontological being but in terms of function, within the body made of different members of equal importance.

The task of the priesthood of all believers is to do the 'works of ministry' as declared in Ephesians 4:12. The works of ministry must be understood in terms of both testimony and the love ethic of the gospel applied through the lives of believers. Lotter & van Aarde (2017:3) also adds to the role of the priesthood of all believers by making reference to missional ecumenism. They argue that:

"the unity of the Spirit (Eph4:3) is more than a unity in terms of theological perspectives, worship styles, church government and cultural patterns...the goal of growing up into Christ is facilitated through cross cultural and cross denominational interaction and

pollination. In Ephesians 4:15, the ultimate goal towards he and his readers are moving, is that ‘together may grow into Christ who is the Head.’”

In this scenario, the role of the priesthood of all believers include the achieving of the unity of the spirit in the church, and the building of the body of Christ. The role is both pastoral and missional. This is what they call ‘missional ecumenism’.

Ever since the Lutheran reformation, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers has been part of the foundational understandings to ecclesiology by most of the Protestants. The *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) in Question 32 which asks “Why are you called a Christian?”, is basic for the understanding of what many theologians in the church understand the Bible to mean by the scriptures concerning the priesthood of all believers. It says:

“Because I am a member of Christ by Faith and thus share in His anointing, so that I may as a prophet confess His Name, as a priest present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him, and as a king fight a free and good conscience against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures.”

This exposition by the *Heidelberg Catechism* gives foundation to the triple office of a Christian that is prophet, priest and king. As Christians we are like Christ in that we share in his anointing. This is succinctly anchored in our understanding of the ‘priesthood of all believers’. It is however important to understand that we become members of this priesthood which is the body of Christ by the sacrament of baptism.

The doctrine of the ‘priesthood for all believers’ balances the concept of ordination. Without it, ordination would have resulted in the clergy becoming unequal with laity in the church. As Luther expounded this doctrine, as Christians we are priests to one another as each of us are our brother’s keeper. This he based on his understanding of the priesthood of Christ and

the sacrament of baptism. Following this understanding the church then is the community of saints which are under or governed by the law of priesthood of all believers (Althaus & Schultz 1966:313). The church structure is founded on the priesthood of Christ and it is itself constituted by the priesthood of Christians (Aguian2015:3). This was an untenable view to the Roman Catholic Church as they were contrary to the held convictions of the bishop being the mediator between God and man.

In arguable one of the best expositions of Martin Luther of the 'priesthood of all believers' and that has influenced the understanding of this doctrine for ages was in his 'Letter to the Christian Nobility.' He said:

"It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy. Yet no one need to be intimidated by it, and for this reason: all Christians are truly a spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves others. This is all because we have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike...we are all consecrated priests through baptism...it follows from this argument that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status... The priesthood of all believers means that we stand before God, pray for others, intercede with and sacrifice ourselves to God and proclaim the word to one another" (Luther 1520:127-129).

According to the exposition of the priesthood of all believers from the protestant and the reformed understanding of it, ecclesiology learns a lot from this doctrine. For example, the question of church unity is emphasised in the priesthood of all believers in that as members of one body we must serve each other as priests. It was this equality and sameness in status

before God that was taken to the extremes by the radical reformers like the Anabaptists. They saw no need of clergy as all could hear from God through scripture and serve one another. Recent scholarship has put more impetus to the study of the priesthood of all believers as there has been a heightened need to investigate the significance of offices and ordination in the light of ecumenical thrusts and need for church unity.

Calvin (1536:416) spoke about the unity in the body of Christ, which when one observes today will see the concept of the priesthood of all believers. He said while commenting on Romans 12:8:

“Although he properly calls those rulers to whom the ministration of the church was committed and they were seniors, who ruled and governed others and exercised the censure of manners, yet that which he saith of them may be generally applied to all kinds of superiors; for it is no small care that neither is a slender diligence looked for of them who ought to watch night and day for the health of all men; although the estate of that time showeth that Paul did not speak of all superiors because there were no godly magistrates, but seniors (elders), who were correctors of the manners.”

Priesthood of all believers sometimes is seen to clash the concept of ordained ministry. Koffeman (2014:113) provides the argument that:

“A view of ordained ministry...often provokes opposition from the perspective of what the BEM calls ‘the royal and prophetic priesthood of the faithful’ (BEM/M, 17:1-6). All members of the church, living in this communion, are called to confess faith, to give account of their hope, to identify with joys and sufferings of all people, to struggle with the oppressed towards freedom and dignity, and so on.”

From this argument, one can deduce that the priesthood of all believers is the purpose of the Christian calling. This is primarily to be Christian even before one becomes an ordained minister. The ordained ministry is a gift of

grace to the church (the offices and not the persons). Koffeman (2014:114) argues along these lines and say, “without the congregation the ordained ministry loses its relevance, without the ordained ministry the congregation loses its orientation.” Herein we see the symbiotic relationship between the church of the priesthood and the priests who are ordained into the offices.

Ordination

Gassmann (1993:116) says “the subject of ordination touches the very heart of the Christian message and action.” This is arguable true because it has to do with the ministry of the church to itself and the world. It has to do with the way church is governed and ordered. In the same breath he (1993:116) states that, “The table of the Lord is the appointed place for Christians to nourish and express their oneness in Christ Jesus. Yet at just this point of ultimate sharing, many of them are commanded, as part of the sincere belief of their churches, to part from one another – this is because of their differing official views on ordained ministry.”

The views of ordination vary from church tradition to tradition and from denomination to denomination. This is not supposed to be as such because we believe in one God and read the same biblical text. An example of this truth is that a Roman Catholic Church Christian is less likely to partake in a communion which is administered by a reformed minister. Similarly, the communion table in a Roman Catholic Church is not open for a person coming from a Pentecostal or Reformed Christian. Though this is caused by the different understanding of the sacraments yet it is also caused by the theological controversy regarding ordination. A good example for this difference is that for Roman Catholic Church, ordination is a sacrament as the Holy Communion is a sacrament. Reformed Christians do not view ordination as a sacrament.

The Old Testament is the first place to dig in search for the background of the rite of ordination. Therein “priests had a local responsibility of taking care of the temple, while the prophets spoke the Word of God both to Israel and

to the nations. Jesus' disciples were called apostles or 'sent ones'. They were called to leave home, family and occupations for the sake of Jesus and the gospel (Mk10:29)" (Plueddeman 2009:14). This represents the ordained ministry. While those who do not leave their families and occupation are in the category of the priesthood of all believers. The ordained ministry must serve the general priesthood so that all are equipped for the work of ministry.

Gonzalez (2012:228) argues against the Levitical priesthood in the Old Testament that according to him it does not seem to have had a clear concept of ordination. He states that:

"according to the New Testament, the Old Testament priesthood was a type for saving priesthood of Jesus Christ (Hebr. 8:5; 9:11, 23; 10:1; Col 2:17), and after the death and ascension of Christ, the Levitical priesthood is 'obsolete...growing old... (and) ready to vanish away...'" In this sense he disputes the Old Testament as providing a background that call help in the interpretation of ordination in the New Testament. To a certain extent this argument can be accepted, but however, what is important for the purpose of historical links of the New Testament concept of ordination is the 'tradition' of appointing, setting into office through the rite of ordination. Certainly the rite must be interpreted in terms of the Jewish background that we see in the Old Testament."

Such argument reveals a denial of the Bible as the basis for ordination. This implies that the rite of ordination is a creation of the church that can be learnt from tradition outside scripture. This opens the church to a scenario to some kind of a church that is less regulated. However most progressive scholars link ordination to strong biblical basis.

Another Jewish tradition to ordinations learns from the Mosaic office. In Dozeman (2008:51-58) is the argument that Christian ordination as is known and practiced today has its origin in the Judaic traditions around the call of Moses. In the burning bush Moses received a call to both the priesthood and prophethood. During the process something divine was deposited in him, this

a symbol of ordination. The argument is that even when he could not perform the duties assigned him, with the aid of a helper his brother Aaron, his priestly and prophetic duties he still retained. In these offices Aaron could not function because he was not ordained and commissioned for it. He (ibid.) continues and says from the narrative in Exodus 3-7,

“The result is that the present form of Torah includes distinct experiences of holiness combine into one office of ordination. The process of call to the Mosaic office includes both charismatic experience of holiness as the numinous, which prompts critical self-reflection with regard to motive and ego, and the ritual appropriation of holiness through the critical study of tradition and liturgy. The distinctive experiences of holiness with the call process lay the foundation for the ordination to the charismatic word and to the ritual mediation of the sacrament in Christian tradition.”

This argument says the experience of the divine mediates the call which itself is part of the process to ordination. Ordination presupposes a call. This is inherent in the mosaic traditions held in the Torah.

As we continue the pursuit of understanding concept of ordination from a hermeneutical perspective it has to be elaborated with references the fact that ordination is always preceded by a call process. The very first instance where we see ordination in the New Testament was in reference to the ordination of the deacons in Acts 6. Though it is not explicit that God called them, an argument is that the church was active in the appointment. So it may be argued that God used the church his body to call them. Also the fact that there were some criteria of choosing them, it was not open to everyone but they were looking for certain charisma from the Holy Spirit which presupposes a call. Without exhausting all the scriptures on ordination in the New Testament, it is significant to cite Acts 13:1-3. It clearly shows that a call preceded ordination through the laying of hands on Paul and Barnabas.

The idea of self-ordination in the Old Testament was not heard of. It is along this path that Gill in [www.studylight.org/commentary/exodus_cites Exodus 28:42](http://www.studylight.org/commentary/exodus_cites_Exodus_28:42) says, “You shall put them on Aaron your brother and his sons with him; and you shall anoint them and ordain them, and consecrate them that they may serve me as priests.” We see here that it was Moses doing the ordination according to the word of the Lord. They did not ordain themselves. Gill (Ibid) says when Moses put them on their garments he was vesting them with authority from God being symbolised by this investiture, and henceforth they had the right to exercise the function of priesthood. The deductive meaning of ordination here is that it is a sacred ritual that was done to an individual or people according to the word of God.

There is yet another question that warrants consideration as we look at ordination in the Old Testament. The answer helps in understanding further this concept. It has been argued whether ordination in the Old Testament was a once-off event, consecrating the whole lineage to come thereafter or not? Speaking about this Baton Muddiman (2001:99) argue that, it is the book of Leviticus that “in chapters 8-10 seems to envisage the anointing of Aaron and his sons as a once only event, setting apart their descendants to the priesthood forever, as apparently does (Exodus 29:9; 40:15) ...” This reading of Leviticus points to a hereditary priesthood as done in African Kingship. What seemed to defeat this argument is that every new high priest was consecrated with fresh anointing as can be seen in Leviticus 6:22. “The son who is to succeed him as anointed priest shall prepare it. It is the Lord’s regular share and is to be burned completely” (NIV). From this argument we deduce that ordination is a ritual that is performed on those whom have been accepted according to the criteria of God which in this case was the lineage of descendants of Aaron. This is very close to the African concept of kingship where also the candidate is formally inaugurated to serve in that capacity, though designated by family lineage and ancestry.

In the Old Testament the process of ordination was an elaborate one, with many elements. In (Muddiman 2001:87) we have an argument from

Leviticus 8:28f. It says ordination included “investiture in the sacred vestments (vv. 5-6, 8-9); anointing, a symbol of appointment (v.7; only for Aaron though 28:41 mentions anointing for them all); and ordination proper (vv.10-35), which is a seven-day rite of passage (v.35) consisting of particular sacrifices.” From the fact that ordination was so much detailed ritual that was fundamental to the appointment of priests into their function, points to the significance of this act even in the New Testament to those who take up ministerial service.

In the quest to understand the meaning of ordination in the Old Testament, Van der Merwe (1962:34-43) gives the understanding that, ‘the laying on of hands’ was used in the Jewish Rabbinical traditions. It was called *s’mikah*. It was used in the installation of priests and kings into office. He then brings the practice in the Old Testament where he cites the laying on of hands on the sacrificial animal, be it thanks-giving, sin and burnt offering (Exodus 29:15; Numbers 8:12 and Leviticus 4:4). When this be applied to the practice of ordination as depicted by laying on of hands, there is an implied meaning that ordination may also mean that the ordained person loses the life for himself but now lives to serve the church or the ordaining institution. This is taken from the fact that when the sacrificial animals were laid hands upon, they were consecrated to serve the people sponsoring those sacrifices through their death.

The Hebrew term *s’mikah* is related to *samakh*. The two mean the same, the difference is in translation. According to Ferguson in (1960:126) *samakh* is also used in the Old Testament in cases where witnesses were laying their hands on an accused person on grounds of blasphemy, and the person was to be stoned. It is also used of a person who lays his hands on a sacrificial animal to transfer his guilt. It is also used in reference to Levites blessing people (Numbers 8:12). He also argues in (1960:127) that in the rabbinic traditions the word *samakh* was also used interchangeable with *minnuv*. Whichever the word used the meaning was still the same that is, ordination or official installation. These were used with reference to

appointing rabbis and elders. It is this appointment of elders that will then feed to the appointment of elders by ordination through the laying on of hands in the New Testament.

Van der Merwe (1962:36) also talks of the laying on of hands in transference and installation into office. He cites “Num. 27:18ff and Deut. 34:9 who state that Moses, on command of Yahweh rested his hands on Joshua and thus appointed him his successor.” He then relates this practice to the New Testament usages like in 1Tim 4:14. Concerning the transference of office, the reading of Deut. 34:9 says, “Now Joshua Son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him”. This is the same with the perspective of Deuteronomy 34:9, which by understanding implies that the laying on of hands in ordination is given as the reason why he possessed these qualities. Such an interpretation would be misleading as it does isolate this verse from the larger context of the Old Testament Bible. If one considers the same scripture in Num27:18 which says, “So the Lord said to Moses, ‘take Joshua son of Nun, a man whom is the spirit, and lay your hand in him’” they will reach a different understanding from these words. This reading leads to the interpretation that even in the Old Testament ordination was a rite of installing a person into the sacred office and sometimes leadership. It did not add any grace to an individual but it confirmed to the audience the call of God resting upon that individual and the graces of God in them.

According to Robertson (1932) the Greek words that are used for the laying on of hands in reference to ordination are *ipithentes tas autois*. The act of ordination happens through the laying on of hands in the New Testament. It is not to anyone who ordinarily receives this sacred rite of ordination but a person who received a divine call. The church also has some prerequisites such as training. This preparation is implied in the appointing of the seven deacons. It is herein that we find the enquiry into qualifications as also outlined in the pastorals (1Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 2Timothy 3:8-13).

It may be argued that this is the reason why Paul would instruct young Timothy not to be quick in laying on of hands 1Timothy 5:22.

The other words according to the Vine (1981:144) are many because there are a variety of Greek words that the New Testament uses and are translated in English 'ordination'. One such word is '*Tithem*' from which '*Kathistem*' comes from. These words are used in Titus 1:5; Hebrews 5:1 and 8:3. In all the cases it is translated to ordain. Ordination therefore is an act of appointing, to set, to cause to stand and to set down over and against. Considering the whole of this argument, one may then deduce the meaning from this etymology that ordination is to put in place in an official way.

The words that are used in the Bible for ordination as Vines (1981:144), would explain in his dictionary of the Old and New Testaments words are '*Tasso*' which is used in Acts 13:48 and in Romans 13:1; '*Horizo*' is used for Christ as divinely ordained in Acts 10:42, and 17:31; with '*Krino*' meaning to divide, decide, and judge used in Acts 16:4. These three words have a legal implication in their meaning. The deductive meaning therefore is that ordination sets apart a minister and from that point she or he can be regarded as legally appointed by the church. It can be inferred that this is an important task by the church.

Barkley (2018:139) argues that, there are "three passages in the NT record an act answering to ordination...acts 6:1-6, the appointment of the seven, 'whom they set before the apostles and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them'. The second is acts 13:1-3, the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas, 'when they had fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away'". In (2018:140) "the third is 1Tim4:14 which says, neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery." This third scripture on New Testament ordination which is 1Timothy 4:14 implies a God given gift of grace to Timothy given to him when the presbytery laid hands on him in ordination. This is the line of thought by Roman Catholic Church that in

ordination the ordained receives spiritual graces that impress an indelible character in them. Whatever was in Paul he received it in ordination.

Paul is one of the key figures in the New Testament who is worthy studying in order to understand the meaning of ordination. It is generally understood that Paul was himself ordained. According to Pipim in his unpublished paper, *The Meaning and Purpose of Ordination*, “Before Paul’s ordination, he already possessed the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17; 13:3). This comes against the argument that Paul himself was not ordained since he argues in Galatians 1:12 ‘I did not receive it from any man (meaning ordination), nor was I taught it, rather, I received it by revelation from Christ’. This becomes difficult when one tries to reconcile this argument with Acts 13:1-3. The same can be said of the seven deacons (Acts 6:3-6; cf. 1 Tim 4:14). Though Christ is the truth (Heb4:15; 7:24-25; 8:1), all believers in Him constitute a Holy Priesthood...” This line of argument helps us to understand the nature of ordination, whether it adds an indelible mark on the character of an individual or not? The implication is that ordination does not confer any spiritual graces on an individual. This means that ordination is a confirmation by the church which is the body of Christ, confirming the calling and empowerment for holy use by God.

Furthermore, on the argument that ordination does not confer to an individual an indelible mark on their character does find credence in the reading of the text in 1 Timothy 4:14 that seems to allude that ordination imparts certain graces on an individual as was the case with Timothy who received a gift that he was charged not to neglect. He says, “God gave it not by miraculous gift from heaven, but ‘by means of prophecy ‘... Paul himself participated in the laying on of hands of the presbytery, the same being the occasion when 1 Timothy 6 was set aside unto the attainment of this gift, an attainment which was prophesied at the time.” This means that ordination did not impart anything to Timothy. The gift was given to him through prophetic utterance at the time of his ordination by the elders. It then follows that the charge not to neglect his gift must be understood as an imperative

in the present. The antithesis seems to be in the encouragement by Paul that he was not to continue neglecting this gift as he had been doing. This argument removes the notion of the ordination being some mystical ritual that results in certain graces to the ordained because if indeed there was something mystical in ordination, there would be no need for him to continue working on it in order to keep it alive.

The role of the elders in ordination is important in that they represent the church. The New Testament Greek word for eldership is presbytery. "... Should occur three times in the English Testament, twice having reference to Jewish Sanhedrin, and once eldership in the church. Lu. 22:66; Acts 22:5; 1Ti. 4:14" (McGavey 1870:2). These leaders were representatives of the church hence in ordination it would seem that they played leading role. This does not mean that they conducted ordination privately. The church would have been present to witness the ordination. It all happened in the context of worship. This seems to find justification in that the periscope from which 1Timothy 4:14 falls is dealing with public elements that Timothy is instructed to observe and that is 1Timothy 4:1-15.

As a result of the above argument on 1Timothy 4:14 which says: "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you." One may argue that, this is a description of what happened on the occasion Timothy was ordained. It is not a promise or a prescription of what will happen in future ordinations. This may be true in as much as it does not prohibit such an occurrence to happen in future ordinations. The meaning of this argument is that we may not built a doctrine on this verse of ordination impressing something in the soul of an individual.

In the book of Titus and in chapter 1:5 "Titus is reminded that he was left in Crete for the express purpose of appointing elders in the local churches which by being properly organised, should be better placed to deal with false doctrine" (Rowley 1962: 1006). This exegetical commentary derives from the context and imply that ordination grants one authority to be the custodian

in the church, guarding it with authority against any false doctrine. This observation from the context of Titus places ordination in the area of church order which comes under the broader subject of church polity. It is very important for the church to observe this rite and ordinance because we see from this portion of Titus a reminder for him by Paul not to deviate or forget this task as it was fundamental for the soundness and order in the church. These elders were not to be simple appointed but must be set apart by the act of ordination.

Hans Küng (1968:405-406) presents ordination as the service or rite of giving authority to the ordained, so that he can perform ministry with authority in the name of the church that has received this grace in the name of God. This authority must meet preparedness and servanthood on the part of the one who is ordained, if not, such authority may be abused. This he reaches through scriptural interpretation. It is similar to the way that reformed reading of the Bible may come to define ordination. Seeing that he was a Roman Catholic Church Scholar may lead to the conclusion that ordination is probably the same in different church denomination, it is however influenced by ecclesiology and context of a particular church.

The above exercise of going back to the Bible revealed that ordination is a God inspired ritual that is done through the laying on of hands by elders. These can be pastors or bishops. As the process is taking place the church must be present and be part of it. It is the official appointing a person of minister into ministry and has some legal connotations with it. Those to be ordained must exhibit certain credentials as the Bible spells it. This may imply certain preparation through some training. Ordination does not involve any mystical elements but is not an unimportant external rite. It confirms that the person has been called by God and through the church.

What solidifies our hermeneutical perspective as regards ordination from the Bible, is the understanding of the scriptural practice within the first three centuries of the church. This is important because the New Testaments accounts were born out of the tradition of the church. The gospel of St John

justifies such an attempt in chapter 20:30 when it says “*and many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book,*” Church tradition in the extra biblical sources do come in handy to the aid of written scripture. Bradshaw (1990:3) argues that, “although references to different ministerial offices and functions are quite plentiful in the Christian literature of the first three centuries, references to the rite of ordination are almost none existent: election and appointment are mentioned, but few details are given as to how those were carried out.” This absence of details on the how of appointing and electing people into offices may not stand because from the Bible tradition we know that people were appointed into offices through ordination. What bolsters our understanding of the tradition of ordination is that people were appointed to ecclesial offices during the first three centuries.

The validation of scriptural tradition of ordination is clear from the document by Tertullian during the half of the third century. Gonzalez (2012:240) agrees that “in the writings of Tertullian we find that the words *ordo* to refer to distinct social groups within the church. For example, he uses *ordo episcoporum* to refer to a ‘succession’ of bishops from the apostolic times.” This document by Tertullian demonstrates the significance of ordination in the ascending to any ecclesial office as is interpreted in the argument of this thesis. By this argument we seal our understanding of ordination from a hermeneutical perspective.

Having gone through the exercise of looking into ministry and ordained ministry from a biblical perspective; and seeking to understand various views and perspectives on the subject there needs to be a derived meaning of ordination for this thesis that summarises all discussions and all exegesis. The following has been found to be true of ordination.

Both in Old Testament and New Testament there are indications of the calling and anointing of people to stand in service of God. People are finite beings with inherent weaknesses and sinful inclinations. In Psalms 51:5 we get the sense that humanity is sinful from birth. As he belongs to the profane,

for him to work in the sacred business of the Lord, there is therefore a need for him to be commissioned for that work. Dozeman (2008), guides us to understand ordination in that light. It offers sinful humanity the kind of commissioning to work in ministry which is a sacred responsibility.

The Relationship of ministry and mission

Both ordained and general (un-ordained) ministry of the people of God who are the priesthood are the servants of mission. The mission of God may be defined as God's work of establishing his kingdom in the world. It is more than what the church is doing. The ministry of the church both of the ordained and the general priesthood feed on to what God is doing as mission. According to Hooker (2008:1-2) the *missio Dei* (mission of God) is about self-sending of God through Jesus Christ. Ministry is limited to what the church does within and outside its halls extending to the world, while mission is globally. So ministry is one of the servants of mission. The mission of God includes non-believers and those of other nations. This learns from God's loving concern of the whole of his creation as demonstrated in such Scriptures as John 3:16 and Matthew 6:10.

Ministry and mission are related to such an extent that some scholars find it problematic to separate the two and to identify which of them is more encompassing than the other. According to Hartley (2016:53), some academics "conceptualizes ministry (diakonia) as either a subset of mission or as more encompassing term than mission reflexively influences and is influenced by one's ecclesiology." This debate is very significant for this dissertation because the relevance of the ordained ministry relates to these two concepts that are ministry and mission. For the reformed ecclesiology it would seem that ministry is a servant of mission, therefore the person of the ordained minister does not only belong to the ministry of their church but also the entire humanity and life which are things that are encompassed by mission.

This understanding of the reformed churches can be seen in the UCCSA (2006:1-28) in the missional plan for the local church, the argument is that the mission is God's movement of love to his entire creation. The church is privileged to participate in mission which is understood to be the activity of God. This booklet actually presents five key areas of ministry for the church that are called the marks of mission. These are proclamation of the gospel (tell), teaching and nurturing (teaching), loving service (tend), transformation of society (transform) and caring for creation (treasure). The ministry in a local church is coined around these five marks of mission. In this argument we see the understanding that the ministry is a part of mission. One may argue that ministry primarily belongs to the church but mission belongs to God, yet the church is a creation of God.

From the reformed understanding of ministry and mission as exemplified in the UCCSA, the *diakonia* which is service in the church is located in the tending mark of mission. The ministry of the word and sacrament by the ordained ministry is located in the telling and teaching aspects of mission. Such ministries as the stewardship of creation and social justice ministry fall under the treasure of creation and transformation marks of mission. In this case the person of the ordained minister is a servant for and in mission. In this case ordination must be understood as a rite of initiation into certain offices in mission through the participation of the church.

According to the understanding that ministry serves mission it is paramount for the church to be united in its catholicity. The catholicity of the church speaks of the universality of the church. The church across denomination and boundaries. The differing polities of the church should not be divisive. The church must maintain unity in diversity of its manifestations. According to Kärkkäinen (2014:115) ordained ministry is one of the ecclesial elements that contribute to the division and apartness of the church. Such occurrences hamper the participation of the church in ecumenical work and mission. From the wisdom of Koffeman (2009:16-29) the church must find

ways of ecclesial unity because ecclesiology determines polity which affects the mission of the church.

Avis (2002:1-42) wrote that mission is the one that must shape the ministry of the church. As such the ordained ministry are called to sustain the church's involvement in mission to the world. The understanding of ministry within the *Missio Dei* perspective reminds us of the relative significance of the ordained ministry in the participation of the church people in mission. In the same breath he tells us that *missio Dei* is the order that grounds the whole covenantal role of the ordained ministry. Mission must be engrained in the nature of the ordained ministry. If thus is the case the whole ministry of the church will be ecumenical and mission friendly, it will relevantly serve the society.

The role of the ordained ministry is that of mission enablers in the church. This in line with the understanding of Ephesians 4:11-13 which declares:

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors, and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Newbiggin (1989:235) explains this scripture in the words that “men and women are not ordained to this ministerial priesthood in order to take away priesthood from the people, but in order to nourish and sustain the priesthood of the people”. They must prepare the people for the works of mission. In other words, the goal of ministry is mission.

It gains be argued that mission is ministry in a missional and an ecumenical sense. Similarly, ministry may be argued to be mission in a local context. Such is the relationship between the two. The *notae ecclesiae* can be seen to illustrate this idea if one considers that the classical marks of the church

(one, holy, apostolic and catholic) were developed as the church came together ecumenically to deal with challenges that had implications on the mission and life of the church (Hinson 1986:64). Conversely, the marks as proposed by the reformers (preaching of the word and administration of sacraments according to the word) were developed within an attempt to define what could be used to define the true church ministry in any given local context. This may help illustrate the intricate relationship of ministry and mission.

Historically, the church has always been acutely conscious of ministry. This is clearly recorded in the Bible. Acts 6:1-7 is a case in point for ministry as *diakonia*. Ephesians 4:11-13 also demonstrate the awareness of the church concerning offices and preparation of the believers in for the ministry under the banner of the priesthood of all believers. To say the church was aware of the 'mission of God' is theologically true but may not be historically accurate. The language of mission and especially *missio Dei* concept falls within the discussions of the church in the 20th century.

According to Van Aarde (2016:285) the development of the study of mission "key missiological concepts and world contexts are identifiable. The concepts and contexts are missions (1811-1910), church and missions (1910-1950), church and mission (1950-1975), convergence and divergence (1975-1995) and missional church (1995-present)." It was from these contexts that Barth's argument that mission must be understood as an activity or attribute of God himself was first proposed in a paper given at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932. Further development of these ideas are found in 1952 at the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council. Mission was understood to derive from the Trinitarian nature of God: the Father sends the Son; the Father and the Son send the Spirit; and the Trinitarian God sends the church into the world as a dynamic embodiment of divine love towards creation. It is along this line of theological debate that Bosch (1991:389-93) argued of the paradigm shift from the understanding that mission is something that can be done for

God as ministry, but rather it belonged to God. Humanity is only privileged to participate. He thus would argue that “Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission.... There is church because there is mission, not vice versa.... To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love”. (1991:390)

Learning from the concept of *missio Dei*, the ordained ministry becomes the most humbling form of service in mission. This is born from the realisation that any such ministry is servitude. The authority remains God who is the author of mission. Ministry is just a local contribution to a universal, global movement of God. All ministry must be thus understood in line with what Luke 19:40 which declares “*And he answered and said to them, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out*” (NIV). God can do without the ministry of people, he only chooses to use people in his mission.

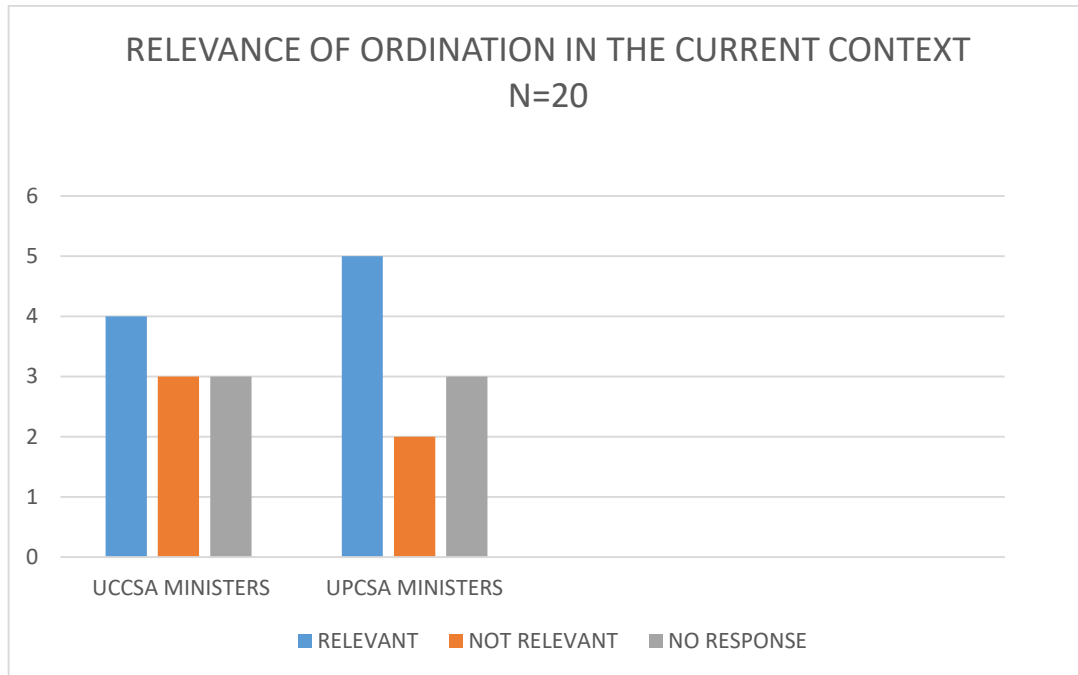
5. EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE

Research Data Analysis

The following are statistical presentation and analysis of the findings relating to ordination by two selected reformed churches which are the UCCSA and The UPCSA in Zimbabwe. These serve as a sample that was taken purposely because these churches are involved in talks towards an envisaged union. The inspiration behind this investigation is two-fold, that is to evaluate the relevance of Calvinistic views of ordination and the general understanding of this ecclesial and polity practice in the contemporary Zimbabwe that is characteristic of the post-modern sub Saharan Africa.

The questions were set along the understanding of ministry and ordination, own church's concept of ordination, relevance of ordination in contemporary society and future, and points that need attention regarding this rite. For clarity and more understanding on questions and response refer to annexures.

Presentation A



Explanation and analysis

The above bar chart shows the presentation of the results of questionnaires that were sent out to about 20 ordained minister of which 10 were from the UCCSA and 10 from UPCSAs. Of the 20 questionnaires sent out, 14 came back with answers and 6 were not brought back.

The results show that within the current context in Zimbabwe there is a question of relevance regarding the practice of ordination. This is shown by the fact that from the sample of ordained ministers 5 of 14 (25%) doubted the relevance of ordination in the current ecclesial climate.

The other observation from the results is that the UPCSAs ministers are more confident of the significance of ordination than the UCCSAs. One may argue that the UCCSA is very liberal in following Calvin, while the UPCSAs is more on the conservative side. This is also seen in that though Congregationalists are part of the Reformed and Calvinistic family, they hold a different view on

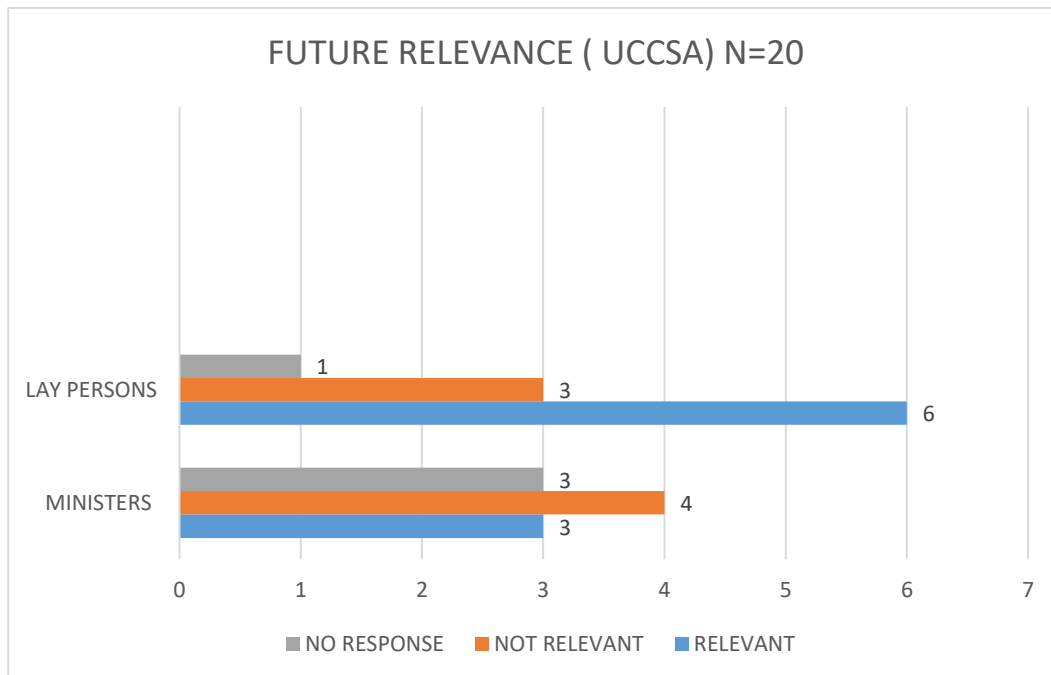
the elders. They recognise two offices that of the pastor whom they call elder and that of the deacon, while Presbyterian traditions upholds the office of elder, teaching elder and deacon. So we see that the UCCSA has moved to some extent from original view of Calvin on offices, a thing that the Pilgrim Fathers were careful to do (Vischer 1992:88).

The possible reason for the question of relevance as depicted in the above presentations may be due to the reason that the religious environment of the current Zimbabwe is highly contested and there are new worship traditions though Christian some do not value the institution of the church and such practices as ordination. These church 'movements' seem to be attracting a huge following while the traditional mainline churches as the Calvinistic Reformed seem to be losing a lot of members. This explanation is backed by the explanation of Rev. L. Neshangwe the Presbytery Clark of the UPCSA in Zimbabwe, who argues that, "Sometimes, it is not so much about the institutional recognition but the charisma that attract and win people for the Lord. This is a reality before us."

Presentation B

FUTURE RELEVANCE UCCSA

| UCCSA | RELEVANT | NOT RELEVANT | NO RESPONSE |
|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| MINISTERS | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| LAY PERSONS | 6 | 3 | 1 |



Explanation and Analysis

The above depiction (presentation B) shows results of the questionnaires given out to the 10 ordained ministers and 10 lay members of the UCCSA on views concerning future relevance of ordination in Zimbabwe. Of the sample of 20 only 9 responded affirmatively concerning the future relevance of ordination in Zimbabwe, 7 people were not affirmative of the future relevance of ordination in Zimbabwe and 4 people did not respond.

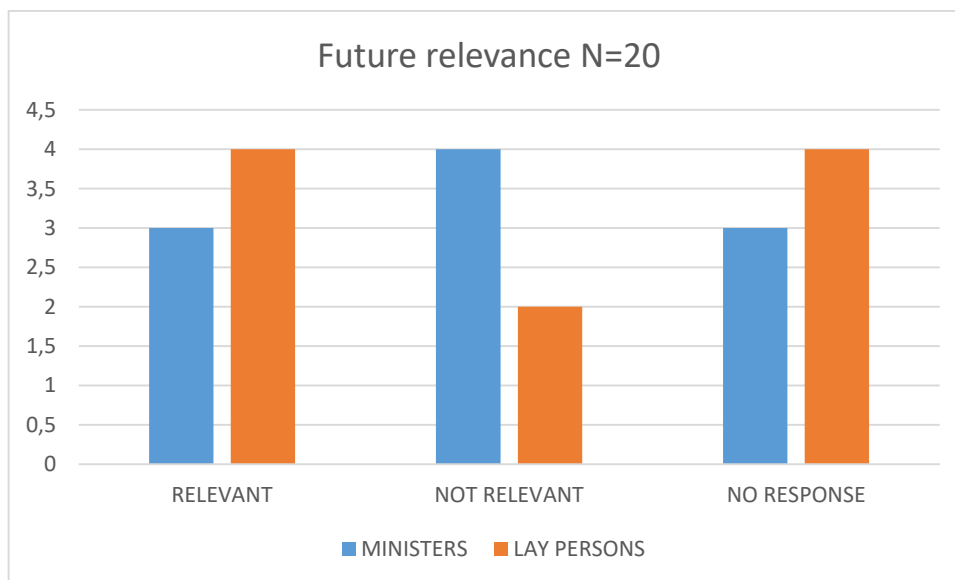
This presentation shows that the future relevance of ordination is in question. This challenges the church to dig deeper on the reasons and thereby make a better strategy concerning the way forward of the church. It should be noted that lay members seem to have more confidence in the significance of ordination than the ordained ministers of the UCCSA. This will be discussed in chapter 5.

Presentation C

FUTURE RELEVANCE UPCSА

| | RELEVANT | NOT RELEVANT | NO RESPONSE |
|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| MINISTERS | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| LAY PERSONS | 4 | 2 | 4 |

Chart



The above table speaks to the results of the questionnaires on the question of future relevance by 10 ordained ministers and 10 lay members of the UPCSА. 7 respondents were affirmative of the future relevance of ordination, while 6 doubted the relevance of such. 7 requested participants did not send their response. What is also revealing, is the fact that lay persons, in general, are more positive about the future of ordination and the church. This might reflect negatively on minister's experience of ministry, calling and commitment to ministry.

The figures in this table reveal that going to the future, the question of relevance of ordination is a significant one that the church must consider in its strategic way forward because it has a bearing on the practice of ministry and broader participation of the church in the mission of God (*missio Dei*).

One could submit that the irrelevance of ordination is a new development in church history because from the reformation to the most recent history, the relevancy of ordained ministry was seldom challenged. This may be largely due to the challenges of the modern and the post-modern era.

Some of the issues which emerged from the questionnaires are the following:

Understanding ministry

All the questionnaires began with a question of understanding ministry and ordination. The questions were addressed to participants from the reformed churches, and to clarify their response and put it in context, the questions were also addressed to 5 Pentecostal and 5 AIC ministers.

The answers from the participants from the reformed churches reveal an understanding of ministry within the broader concept of the priesthood of all believers. For example, ministry is defined as the work of the Lord through the church and its members, while ordination is understood as being set apart of ministers to the specialised ministry that may not be done by all the general priesthood of members. On the other hand, the participants from Pentecostal churches and African Independent churches understand ministry as work done by gifted individuals. They seem not to associate the ministry with church membership, which may be interpreted as showing a lack of appreciation for the priesthood of all believers.

The understanding of ministry as *diakonia* / acts of service by all children of God and ordained ministry as the official rite of entry into offices of church government is something that the reformed churches in Zimbabwe may have learnt from Calvin. Though he did not clearly use the term 'priesthood

of all believers' yet his ecclesiology manifests it. For example, Calvin teaches (see Inst.3.10.6) that says:

“Every individual Christian, in whatever profession or trade he or she might stand, has a calling and a duty to serve God: Every man’s mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned to him by the Lord... So necessary is this distinction, that all our actions are thereby estimated in his sight, and often in a very different way from that in which human reason or philosophy would estimate them. ...it is enough to know that in everything the call of the Lord is the foundation and beginning of right action.”

This quotation from the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* may be largely seen as the foundation of the priesthood of all believers. This is because it observes that God call Christians to serve him in different ways and in different capacities. It is not just the ordained ministers who perform ministry. It is this arguable this thought behind the understanding of the ministry by the participants from the two selected reformed churches in Zimbabwe that were involved in this research. This suffice to say that Calvin’s theological print still has relevance in the understanding of ministry, church offices and particularly the subject of ordination.

The same Calvin’s high regard of the priesthood of all believers is seen in his ecclesiology particularly as relating to the office of the elder within the context of church offices. It was in his Genevan Articles of 1537 that he argued for the inclusion of the other church membership in the government of the church so as to ensure unity, participation of all and church ownership by all, not just the ministers. He argued that, "we have deliberately required of you to be pleased to ordain and elect certain persons of good life and witness from among the faithful in all quarters of the city, having oversight of life and government of each of them" (1954:52). The word ‘deliberately’ reveals that there was a purpose behind this election of ruling elder, and this is most certainly the priesthood of all believers. This is still strong in the

concept of ministry and understanding of the offices and ordination by the reformed churches in current Zimbabwe.

Education of ministers

In the questionnaires from the participants of the two selected reformed churches in Zimbabwe, the question about education was raised. In some instance, too much emphasis on the education in the preparation route of a minister is seen as eroding the significance of ordination because at the end of the day the education of the minister is overemphasized. On the contrary, education of ministers is said to be a key element in the call processing by the church leading to ordination.

The above observations reveal the legacy of Calvin in terms of education and theological preparation of those who were to serve the church in offices of church government. In his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Inst. 4.3.11), he states that:

“It is usual also to say, that private men are called to the ministry when they seem fit and apt to discharge it; that is, because learning, conjoined with piety and other endowments of a good pastor, is a kind of preparation for the office. For those whom the Lord has destined for this great office, he previously provides with the armour which is requisite for the discharge of it, that they may not come empty and unprepared.”

In this argument of Calvin, it is clear that he held the view that the process leading to ordained ministry was not simple. It took a lot of preparation of which education was part of. This is implied in the words ‘learning’ and ‘armour’.

This legacy of education and thorough training for ministry is demonstrated in Calvin’s return to Geneva, in 1541 where he wrote in his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, within the context of a discussion of the office of doctor, that a college should be established for teaching young people as a way to prepare

them “for the ministry as well as for civil government” (Reid 1954:63). This passion for education was inherited by most reformed churches. It becomes clear that Calvin is still relevant in the Zimbabwean context, especially in the reformed churches. This is demonstrated by the question of training and ordination as regards to ordination from the questionnaires.

Offices and ordination

It was observed in the questionnaires that in the reformed churches there is an issue with the moving away from the practice of ordination of deacons to limiting it to the office of minister and elder. On the other hand, some reformed churches like the Congregationalists maintain only two offices in the church that is minister and deacon, and with ordination only being practiced on the minister. This observation in analysis reveals the influence of Calvin in the certain section of churches in Zimbabwe, however, there is some adjustment on his guidance regarding offices. It may be because of contextual reasons or the recent developments in hermeneutics that account for the shift and differences.

In the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* Calvin emphasised three offices of the church. Ruling elders, teaching elders and the deacons. All these were ordained as a way of entry into the sacred vocation of ministry (Inst.4.3.11). We see his developed theology of the church in his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* of 1541 where he says “there are four orders of office instituted by our Lord for the government of his church. First, pastors; then doctors; next elders; and fourth deacons. Hence if we will have a church well-ordered and maintained we ought to observe this form of government” (Reid 1954:58). While the UPCSA still maintains these offices, it is however moving away from the ordination of deacons to just inducting them (see Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA 2007, Chap 2:39). The UCCSA which is a sister church maintains two offices that of pastor and deacon, though the deacons are not ordained but inducted as in the current practice of the UPCSA. The meaning of the question of church offices was inherited from Calvin. There has been some adaptations and refinements to particular

denominations depending on reasons that include new ways of understanding Scripture and adaptation of given church polity to the context.

Ordination and transference of grace

Almost all participants in this research seem to agree with Calvin that ordination is not a sacrament. Only one participant from a church in the reformed tradition defined ordination as a sacrament. However, there is a recurring question that was raised concerning the rite of ordination transferring grace to an ordained minister. This question came in different ways but expressing the same thing. For example:

- One participant stated that they believe ordination transfers power even though this is foreign to their church's belief and teaching.
- Some participant said that he/she believes something happens during the rite of ordination.

These observations reveal the presence of Calvin's ecclesiology in Zimbabwe particularly in reformed churches. This presence is however met with questions that are a proof of a struggle in context. The post-modern religious environment in Zimbabwe seem to value the loose structure of a church more than an institution. Also, because of the difficulties that people are experiencing due to the socio-political and economic challenges, people are looking for quick solutions to their problems. As a result, people have high regard of the charisma over the office and ordination, but that is not as evident in the reformed churches. The Calvinistic influence, contrary to the charismatic/pentecostal influences, is strong enough which means reformed churches remain sceptical about individuals who present themselves as specially gifted and important.

The struggle for Calvin was a religious one that made him to denounce vehemently the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church which stated that ordination was one of the several sacraments in the church. The priests were seen to be wielding power over the church because of ordination.

Calvin took a stance and argued against the notion of sacrament and the thinking and belief of the transference of grace during ordination. In (Inst.4.3.16) it is Calvin's argument that ordination has a dignity for it as instituted by the Lord, it is the last part of the call process and must never be viewed as having any mystical powers for that would be superstition. Even if they were sacraments, he argues that in (Inst.4.14.9) "it is not as if I thought that there is a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them, by which they can of themselves promote or strengthen faith, but because our Lord has instituted them for the express purpose of helping to establish and increase our faith."

The question of whether ordination has some powers and whether it is a sacrament is evident that within the ecclesial context of Zimbabwe, there are some different views regarding the concept. In this context, the influence of Calvin is very strong especially as regards to the participation of the reformed and Calvinistic churches within the religious landscape. His influence may not be underestimated, neither should it be overstated, but because of the current up surge of ecumenical consciousness within the church, it has to be appreciated and leveraged upon when it is relevant to the context.

Laying on of hands

Almost related to the subject of the transference of grace or some mystical power during ordination is the question of the laying on of hands. According to data from the findings some participants have the belief in that there is what they call 'anointing' which is some mystical power of the Holy Spirit. The act of laying on of hands during the process of ordination is seen as a very key element. Calvin had something to say about the practice of laying on of hands. In (Inst.4.3.16) he said "it is certain, that when the apostles appointed anyone to the ministry, they used no other ceremony than the laying on of hands." It was because of the contextual challenges in the way the laying of hands was taken in the Roman Catholic Church that he added in the same paragraph of the institution that "...for if the spirit of God has not

instituted anything in the church in vain, provided it be not superstitiously abused.” So we see that the issue about laying on of hands was important. It must be noted that in the current context in Zimbabwean churches, there are some traditions who are quick to practice it in the daily worship services. Zachman (2008:183) advises that, “the key element for Calvin comes in the prayer for the Holy Spirit that accompanied the laying of hands...” Again we see the relevance of Calvin in the churches in Zimbabwe.

Ecclesiology inspires Polity

In the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* IV/3 Calvin speaks about the church governance. His concept of offices departs from the fact that Christ is the only Head and Owner of the church. It can thus be argued that polity learns from ecclesiology. This was revealed in the data from the questionnaires in such answers as:

- The relevance of ordination is within the context of the priesthood of all believers where Christ alone is Lord.
- Ministry is *diakonia* and ordination is official entry into ministry and the offices.

Therein 10 people out of 14 who responded they revealed that their understanding of ordination is based on doctrine as taught by the church. Such were their answers:

- My understanding comes from ecclesiology of my church
- Ministry is a calling and ordination puts the ordained minister in a position of leadership.

This is likely an inheritance from Calvin, who influenced the teaching of the reformed churches. Those who differed from the reformed view of ordination and offices offered such answers:

- ordination is a sacrament

- My understanding is different from that of my church in that I believe there is a transference of grace in ordination

The above answers to the question of similarity in belief with the participant's reformed churches reveal a new perspective to the understanding of ordination. Dreyer (2013:4of 5) posits that, "there is a direct link of ecclesiology, church polity and ministry. Church Polity and church ministry is based on ecclesiology, on our understanding of what the church should be." This relationship in turn impacts on the church praxis. This proves polity to be a practical ecclesiology. This also accounts for the similarity in responses in the questionnaires from the UPCSA and the UCCSA because both of them are Reformed and Calvinistic. Even though one follows a Presbyterian polity and the other a Congregational polity, the elements of Calvin's ecclesiology is present in both.

Broader church context

The Zimbabwean church context goes beyond the boundaries of ministry by reformed churches. It includes Pentecostals, Methodists and AICs, to name just a few. It is for this reason that this thesis considered two more church denominations, namely the Pentecostals and the AICs, together with the UCCSA and UPCSA.

The understanding by some other denominations in Zimbabwe, other than the reformed churches and as revealed in the questionnaires from the Pentecostal and IACs revealed an understanding of ministry that is built around the clergy. The research found such responses as:

- It is God who chooses and ordains one to be a minister
- Ordination can be directly done by God or indirectly through the church. Ministers do ministry.
- A servant of God who is ordained performs miracles and help people.

Such responses reveal a conviction that God ordains. Lay people are excluded from ministry. Ministry is thus seen as the work done by those in elaborate offices of pastor, prophet and apostle. This reveals a lack of appreciation for the 'priesthood of all believers'. The other issue that emerges in the questionnaire from the Pentecostal and the African Independent Churches is the question of charisma over the rite of ordination. According to the findings in the questionnaire on ministers of AICs charisma is seen as a proof that a person is ordained or appointed by God. This was shown in such responses as the following:

- The church must not ordain someone who does not demonstrate the gift of the spirit
- Ordained people have spiritual power and commands respect even the society

For example, one defined ordination as something spiritual that is transferred by God to an individual. This seen to be the same with what God did to Jeremiah before he was born Jeremiah 1:5. The argument is that even Jesus Christ was ordained by God, there is no place in the Bible where we see him receiving his ordination from men. The finally basis for this belief is an appeal to Paul on scriptures as Galatians 1:1 and 2 Timothy 1:1 that reveal Paul as an apostle by the will of God and not men.

Almost related to the view of the AICs but different is the kind of view that is held by some Pentecostals. It states that ordination is a confirmation and a gift by the church on one who has already been called by God. Here, the emphasis is on the calling by God, something that is different from the Calvinistic concept of a call, where the church plays a significant part in the call process what he calls the external calling. This confirmation by the church (ordination) recognises the charisma that is upon an individual. Hence in this context, the emphasis is on the charisma and not ordination when one talks about the call.

The research that was made through the questionnaires reveal that in the context of Zimbabwe, there are different views regarding offices and ordination. For example, the reformed and some mainline churches limit the discourse about offices to the pastor, elder, deacon which is a legacy from Calvin. The Pentecostals and some AICs talk of the offices of the apostle, prophet and evangelist among others. These shows that the ecclesial climate in Zimbabwe is pluralistic. Calvin's influence is still evident in some churches, while others, are holding to different teachings. The question of the relevance of ordination is very debatable, and this research shows less confidence that in future the same practice will remain relevant in the light of the emerging traditions that emphasises charisma over ordination. Some people, as revealed by the participants as contained in the questionnaires, are starting to dream of a future church where all are equal (priesthood of all believers) and there is no ordained ministry. The argument is that even though reformed churches teach the priesthood of all believers, in reality and practice ordained ministers are elevated or seen as such in churches.

UCCSA and UPCS: Archival documents

In this section of the thesis, analysis is made of archival documents from the UCCSA and the UPCS. It has to be noted that the nature of material found from the UCCSA is not systematic since it is generally from reports and minutes, while that acquired from the UPCS is systematic as it is contained in some programmes and polity documents. The purpose herein is to try and establish the Calvin's influence on church polity and as regards ministry and ordination in the reformed churches in Zimbabwe. It is noted that these two churches provide a small but significant sample for a scientific enquiry on the reformed churches in Zimbabwe which include such churches like the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, the Baptists in their various forms, and The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.

Induction and ordination in UCCSA and UPCSA

At the first glance and observation of the two orders induction and ordination services of the UPCSA and UCCSA there is glaring difference. This relates to creeds and confessions. In the Ordination of elders in the UPCSA we note:

- Do you accept as subordinate standards of the faith the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds?
- Do you accept the substance of the faith expressed in the Confession of Faith of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, and in the Declaration of Faith for the Church in Southern Africa?

This is also found in the order of the service for ordaining ministers. The same point is emphasised in the Manual for Order and Faith of the UPCSA in chapter 2 on the Faith of the Church, there are the following words:

“This Church accepts the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as inspired by the Holy Spirit to be the uniquely authoritative witness to Jesus Christ and in that sense the Word of God and the final rule of faith and life. It accepts the ecumenical creeds commonly called the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene (Niceno-Constantinopolitan) Creed as subordinate standards that witness to, and safeguard, the faith that was committed to the disciples of our Lord.”

It recognizes as witnessing to the Reformed faith

- The Westminster Confession of Faith and
- The Twenty-four Articles of the Faith

The UCCSA has a simple order of service. Though it accepts these creeds along with other reformed churches to be true, they do not emphasise them as much as they emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding worship and faith. The UCCSA in place of the guide and confession of creeds

emphasises covenant, that she is a Covenant Church. These are the words recited in such special ceremonies and services:

“Covenant Renewal

Moderator: And now as one people within the household of God, in the unity of the faith, in the communion of the saints, in love and goodwill to all, let us in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, give ourselves afresh to the Lord and to one another in joyous covenant.

Congregation: We believe in God our heavenly Lord; We confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour; We depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit; We seek to live in God’s presence according to all that God has made known and will make known to us We covenant to worship, work and witness together in the fellowship of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa for the building up of the body of Christ and the manifesting of the reign of God on earth

Moderator May Almighty God, guide and guard all your people, grant that the covenant we have made here today on earth be sealed in heaven, through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Congregation: Amen.”

While one may note some difference between the UPCSA’s confessional ecclesiology and the UCCSA’s covenantal response, both do find a home in Calvin. He upheld the ecumenical nature as guided by the ecumenical councils. The concept of the covenant was also high in his ecclesiology. Dreyer (2010:171), with reference to Calvin’s Inst. 4.1.6, explains that “according to Calvin’s understanding, the church is a result of God’s covenant with people. All the faithful must be members of the true church. Baptism is a sign of the unity between believers and Christ as well as the covenant.”

Zimbabwe Ministerial Committee Report (1)

Synodical Committee Meeting (ZMC), 11 February 2007 at Njube, Pg.1. Item

3. Ordination to the holy ministry:

It reports on the beauty of ordination of two ministers. The minutes celebrates the coming ordination of two other ministers who are female. The committee through this report calls the church to “listen to the voice of God calling the people for the various ministries.”

The minutes raises an observation that it takes a long battle to produce a minister and therefore any ordination into the ministry of the word and sacraments deserves celebration of highest note. This long process may be argued to affect the church negatively, that it results in the low numbers of ordained ministers in the church and this impacts of the quality of mission. On the other hand, it may be celebrated in terms of producing quality ministers a thing that befits the spirit of Calvin’s concept of ordained minister.

The implication from these minutes is that the UCCSA has gone to the lengths of being inclusive in their concept of ordination to include women, a thing that many scholars dispute using Calvin as the authority in the interpretation of the Bible pertaining this issue as can be seen in the **Order of the Induction Service of the UPCSA**. In the section dealing with the act of induction there are these words:

Brother/Sister [*name*],

Do you accept the call of this congregation as God’s call to you?

And do you promise, with God's help...

In the words of the act of Appointment we see:

Brother/Sister [*name*],

Do you accept the call of this congregation as God’s call to you?

And do you promise, with God's help, faithfully to

Call people to repent and believe the good news,

Welcome people of every race, tribe, clan and class...

Therefore, based on the above analysis and comparison, one can then say the issue of women in ministry and ordination is a doctrinal and polity accepted norm. This however does not eliminate completely, those who may be questioning the policy stand point and practice based on their interpretation of the Bible. So we see an agreement in this regard between these two Calvinistic denominations in Zimbabwe. There are some scholars especially of feminist orientation who see Calvin as an enemy to women in ministry (Thompson 2009:44). This means that if Calvinistic concept of ordination excludes woman, his theology in this regard has been developed and adapted to the current context that has inspired the re-reading and interpretation of the Bible in the light of women and ordained ministry. The reformed churches as typified by the UCCSA and UPCSAs uphold the practice of woman ordination into ministry a thing that some AICs and other churches in Zimbabwe are still sceptical about.

The Ministerial Committee is a sub-committee of the UCCSA's Synodical Committee which is the highest court of the church in Zimbabwe outside the conference. The conference is in session only once in two years. So the ministerial committee guide the synodical committee or the conference on theological issues because in the synodical or conference there is the general priesthood of all believers, not all are theologians. This process brings order in the processes of the church regarding theological issues, training as well as ordination. Church order being high on Calvin's ecclesiology and polity, this speaks of the relevance of Calvin in the contemporary Reformed churches in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Synod Ministerial Committee Report (2)

Minutes of 16 February 2016 at Synod Office P.3. 7.15. "A mass ordination service will be held...on 21 February 2016 at Njube UCCSA"

It means that the UCCSA sometimes ordains ministers in churches that is not theirs. These are then followed by induction services in respective local churches. Mass ordination and especially in a different church for someone who is receiving it for the first time seems foreign to Calvin. In Inst. 4.3.7 we get the sense from Calvin that a pastor must be ordained in their own congregation. He says, "while we assign a church to each pastor, we deny not that he who is fixed to one church may assist other churches...But because that policy is necessary to maintain the peace of the church, each has his duty assigned, lest should become disorderly, run up and down without any certain vocation..." This argument by Calvin becomes clearer when he talks about disorder when an ordained pastor has no certain vocation. This will surely be the case when a person is ordained outside their church and while awaiting their placement or induction an eventuality happens to him or the envisaged placement church, a disorder will result. It is therefore arguable that the practice by the UCCSA in Zimbabwe to ordain ministers in mass and outside their church is a new development that speaks to the current contextual issues.

On the same issue of one being ordained in the church that is not to be their charge the UPCSA is clear in its Manual for Procedure and Faith in the appendix section p. 13-14, where in the edict of ordination and induction it states that, "...Any relevant objection made will then be reported to the meeting of Presbytery that follows, and Presbytery will decide at that meeting whether to (ordain and) induct AB to the pastoral charge of this Congregation (or to the collegiate pastoral charge of this Congregation)" The implication herein is that, the Presbytery sends communication in advance to a would be charge to say we are coming to ordain minister A or B on your congregation. If there are objections to that, they can then be raised so that

ordination may follow proper order. This follows the Calvinistic spirit in so far as ordination is concerned.

UCCSA Zimbabwe Synod Ministerial Committee

Minutes of 17 November 2017 held at the Synod Offices, P.4. MM.8.

Candidate for Ministry.

In these minutes we see the reception and processing the name of ministerial candidates in the words “ministerial committee received three names of people who had been interviewed and were deemed fit to be recommended to go for full time studies...”

The recommendation was to be made by the ministerial committee that is a standing committee of the Synodical Committee Meeting. Tabling of this recommendation from the interviews in a church synodical meeting offered a church an opportunity to participate in the external call as stated by Calvin. The ministers on their own cannot in the UCCSA process and finalise the candidature of ministerial training without involving the church membership. We see this process reflected in the UPCS polity regards the processing of ministerial candidates. The following procedure is set in the UPCS Manual:

“17.3 The applicant first consults with his/her local Minister (or Interim Moderator) and through him/her applies to the Session.

17.4 The Minister (or Interim Moderator) and Session first verify that the applicant is a duly enrolled member of the Congregation and has been an enrolled member of this Church for at least one year.

17.5 The Session interviews the applicant.

17.6 (a) Entry into the Ministry is by ordination. But if the church accepts anyone as a student and/or licenses him/her as a Probationer that does not commit it to ordaining him/her.”

What the UPCSA calls the session represents the role or participation of the church in what Calvin would call the external call. The UPCSA describes the thoroughness of preparation of an individual for ministry, the very principle that the UCCSA is quick to observe. The same is true on the entry into ministry, it is by the route of ordination. From this understanding, it can be then argued that Calvin's elements of the concept of offices and ordination are still found in the polities of reformed churches in Zimbabwe as revealed in the observed procedures in the UCCSA and UPCSA for processing the ministerial candidates.

The reformed tradition emphasizes values the 'priesthood of all believers'. This is part of the reformation heritage. It is implied in all Calvin's ecclesiology and polity. According to the UCCSA Zimbabwe Synod Conference 26-29 April 2012 Resolutions, in P.1. 2.10. 'The conference resolved that the ministerial committee should lead the church in education concerning 'congregationalism and the ordained ministry'. The teaching ministry of the church is integral in the reformed heritage, hence the teaching elders. In this context, this resolution was born from the serious concern that there are church members who abuse ordained ministers in the name of congregationalism and such principles as the priesthood of all believers. The UPCSA as well upholds the principle of the priesthood of all believers. It is clear in the 'Manual for Order and Faith in the UPCSA' (2007 -2014) in Chapter 16 P: 1 on ministry where it states clearly that:

"The priesthood of all baptised believers is an important biblical and Reformation principle. Within that priesthood the Church has from its very early days recognised the need for Ministers who are called, trained, equipped and ordained to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to care for all those in their charge, and, together with the Elders, to rule. Ministers form a key leadership group in the Church, with special responsibility for its life."

UCCSA Minutes of the Training Committee (ATMC)

The ATMC is a committee in the UCCSA denomination that sees the representatives of all five synods that make up the UCCSA namely Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia and Botswana. This committee is a subcommittee of the Highest Court in the Administration of the UCCSA. It passes the final decisions concerning ministry and ordination as well as mission in its broader sense. At a meeting held at Kuruman Moffat Mission on 14-18 October 2012, the following issues were discussed:

P.1. Talks of two ministers who were “tasked at the last meeting with drafting some guidelines on the subject of ordination services. This was after some observation and general dissatisfaction with the manner in which ordination services have generally been led in several cases.”

The concern was that the order of services lacked uniformity. The minute further states that:

” Emphasis and reminder that ordination is done by the authority of the UCCSA; and the role of the moderator in the ordination services needs to be highlighted as he/she is the person who should ensure that the services are done in accordance with the UCCSA, the spirit of service, rather than that of enthronement, should prevail at ordination services...”

In the practice of the UPCS the authority of who ordains a person who enters into ministry is the church. The Church does it through the structural provision of the Presbytery. See UPCS Manual for Order and Faith.

17.42 If the Presbytery resolves that the Probationer is suitable for ordination it follows the procedures for a Call or Appointment as set out in paras 16.45-55.

17.43 When the Presbytery has approved a Call or Appointment the Moderator of Presbytery consults with the Session of the Congregation concerned and determines the date of the Ordination.

17.44 The Presbytery ordains and inducts the Probationer in the face of the Congregation

The role of the Moderator in the UPCSA is paramount in leading the process of ordination as in the UCCSA. The order for a minister's ordination and induction or appointment to a charge states as follows in the preamble:

“The Moderator should work through the order with the ordinand, or at least see that he/she has the order to work through, beforehand. When this Order is conducted in a congregation whose first language is not English, some of the hymns and prayers, one of the Scripture lessons at least and perhaps the Declaration of Standards and/or the Vow should be in its language. The charge at least to the congregation should also be in its language, or be translated in the service.”

It is in the programmes of induction and ordination where the role of the moderator is prominent. The moderator is a spiritual leading role among the colleagues of ministers and presbyters. Unlike the Synod Secretary in the UCCSA and the Session Klerk that are administrative, and the moderator's role is befitting the Calvinistic understanding of the sacredness and the dignity of ordination. See (Inst.4.3.3) in which Calvin talked about the dignity of ordained ministry.

For Both the UCCSA and the UPCSA ordination is seen as the official entry into the ministry of the word and sacrament. A comparison in their ordination and induction programmes reveal a very serious element in which the one who is ordained enters into a covenant with the church and pledges commitment and discipline in abiding by the requirements of this sacred office. In the UCCSA it is seen in the signing of the Ethical Affirmation

document by the minister who is being ordained. For the UPCSA it is seen in the vows and pledges that one makes during the ceremony:

Vow

Facing those to be ordained and those just to be inducted as Elders, the Minister says:

Beloved in the Lord,

Do you accept your election to the office of Elder in this congregation, and do you promise to discharge all its duties faithfully?

Each replies separately:

I do.

For us to confer authority on you for this office,

The Church requires you, in response to its Declaration of Standards,

To take the prescribed Vow before God and this congregation.

The Minister hands a copy of the Vow to each candidate.

The candidates turn and face the congregation together.

Either separately or all together they read the Vow, audibly and at a deliberate pace.

This aspect of pledge, promise to abide by and covenant must be understood in the light of the high regard that Calvin had for church discipline. See (Inst.4.3.10) Calvin emphasised the fact that if one has been called he must be disciplined enough to undertake and discharge fully the requirements of the call. All this must be done in the spirit of discipline and order. So we see the spirit of Calvin in the reformed churches in contemporary Zimbabwe.

As a way of conclusion to the empirical perspective, it has to reiterate that according to the findings in this research both the UCCSA and UPCSA learn a great deal from Calvin in terms of their ecclesiology and polity. It was also discovered herein that these churches which are a sample of the reformed churches in Zimbabwe, have a need to renew their ecclesiology and polity in the light of the new ecclesial context brought about by the 21st century culture and perspective (post modernism). This ecclesiological renewal must be inspired by a strategical perspective that seeks ecclesial relevance to the context. It is within this broader approach that may further entrench orthodoxy and traditional practices of the church such as the concept of office and the practice of ordained ministry. The hope of this dissertation is that all Calvinistic reformed churches in Zimbabwe and elsewhere can benefit from such a renewal.

6. STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

This thesis was concerned with the question of understanding of ordination within the broader subject of ministry and offices within the reformed church and its relevance in ecclesial practice, especially in contemporary Zimbabwe. As has been depicted and discussed under the findings in Chapter 4, there is no common understanding of the concept of ordination and its significance as one of the important elements of ministry is under dispute. Neither is such knowledges of satisfying depth. Among other reasons for this scenario, it is a reflection largely on the deficiency of the teaching ministry as regards ministry and ordination to both the laity and clergy. According to Moltmann (1993:1) “At every period the church has a duty to be clear about its commission, its situation and its goal,” a very wise argument considering that even the missionaries who came to Rhodesia (modern day Zimbabwe) were strategic in their mode of propagation of the gospel. This calls for the church to be strategic hence the following strategies that are proposed as the way forward that follows.

Theological training of ministers.

The theological training of the clergy is a highly rated value within the reformed churches. This was inherited from John Calvin who esteemed this practice to the point of starting the Academy in Geneva. This thesis focussed more on the UCCSA and UPCS in Zimbabwe. These two denominations are in pursuit of denominational unity. The different understanding and the doubt over the significance of this ministry reflects on the theological training because many times these denominations train their ministers at the same colleges such as ‘United Theological College’ in Harare Zimbabwe.

The other phrase for ‘theological training’ is leadership development. These cannot be over-emphasized because of its significance in the life of the church. When God is doing something (*missio Dei*), He will usually start

with calling someone to lead his people in the mission. A good example is in the calling of Moses through the burning bush because he wanted to liberate his people out of bondage. Ministry is related to mission. In this light theological training or leadership development is key. The Bible is littered with stories of God raising leaders to accomplish that he was doing, so that at the end of the day it is him by his grace and not the particular individual. People like Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets are examples. In the New Testament we see it with the apostles, with Paul and later on people like Barnabas, Apollos, Timothy and many other who served in local churches.

The training of the clergy is urgent and needful in this context for the reasons that knowledge has proliferated the internet. It is accessible to anyone anywhere. People have many challenging questions concerning the faith and church, and these need a scholarly and answer from a well-read minister. The other trademark that has made pastoral ministry challenging is that many churches especially urban areas, are attended by highly educated people such as professors and doctors. This represents one extreme scenario that can result to the question of relevance of the part of the clergy. The other one is a congregation where there are elderly and people of low education. In this context, wisdom on the person of the minister is needed so that he can minister the gospel in simple but effective ways. Failure to be able to balance between academic and the nature of the congregation lead to the questioning of relevance on the part of the minister. This skill can be acquired through formal learning of the clergy.

The question of relevance in any given scenario is related to competency. A competent ordained minister will prove relevant to people. The problem in many churches, is that when the person of the minister acquires a diploma in theology or in rare cases a first degree, this certificate is enough for them to get ordination, but not enough to keep them relevant in the ordained ministry. It is thus recommended in this thesis that churches, especially Calvinistic churches in Zimbabwe should have a clear policy on clergy

continued learning. This should not just be on paper, but it must be pursued vigorously because the world is changing fast, the challenges are big and opportunities immense. The person of clergy must keep upgrading themselves in order to maintain relevance in ministry.

According to Mwangi & De Klerk (2011:1) in their 'call for an integrated competency based training model for theological institutions', not just any theological training, they argue that:

“The task of theological training is to nurture gifted leaders who are in turn to nurture other believers so that the church can effectively fulfil her missional mandate. Because of the relationship between theological training and the practice of ministry, enriching theological training will enhance the ministry in the churches, thus translating theological training into practical ministry. The effectiveness of theological training must therefore be measured by how it enhances the practice of ministry in the work of its graduates.”

One may be persuaded to agree with the argument as stated above that there is a relationship between theological training and practical ministry, but however it has to be noted that the thrust of this thesis emphasizes on practical ecclesiology hence the argument that even polity is a practical ecclesiology discipline. In this regard it can be argued that the better strategic action to follow is to train ministers with a bias towards practical ecclesiology, especially on how one can practice church governance in the 21st century religious climate.

The church has done well to embrace ecumenical theology, and in some cases ministers are trained in theological colleges and seminaries of an ecumenical nature. As a way of responding to the demands of modernity and post modernism, the church must adopt a specialised ministerial training where those in such services are not only chaplains but are actually in those respective sectors. This will meet the new understanding of the church as a missional church. As a missional church the church is

concerned with relevance in every sphere where people are. It may be in the medical, teaching, media and communication and others areas like sports. For instance, we can have a medical doctor who is also an ordained minister of religion. He will be practising ministry using the culture and language of the medical field. This perfectly responds to the current context that is seeing the growth of the emerging church, a church that is fluid and does not seem to follow parameters of an institution. This can help preserve the dignity of ministry and significance of ordination in that it will be filling the gap that invites lay people to occupy in the name of 'missionality and the priesthood of all believers'. This is what Dreyer (2013:3) in his argument for a 'missional ecclesiology' calls radical reformation. In this state the church accepts that change only takes place once when there is a change in her understanding of reality and the context, she creates a new language and work creatively with new ideas and new realities. Similarly, ministry and ordination must be understood and practiced within the actions relevant to missional thinking.

The proper theological training of ministers will likely add to the quality of church membership, especially if such ministers take seriously the responsibility of teaching in the church. This is not just teaching polity without a proper foundation of ecclesiology. The absence of ecclesiological teaching in the church results in membership that is not properly developed. This may be the reason why this research unravelled many questions that may be considered basic for church membership. The teaching of church polity for membership and identity reasons without foundational teaching on ecclesiology create a kind of 'technical' believer who may not withstand the contextual and sceptical questions of post modernity.

Rethinking the 'Priesthood of all believers'

Calvin is arguably the dominant voice in reformed theology. His work permeates most teaching and practice of reformed church's understanding and polity. Many times, he is regarded to have built his theology with a view of the priesthood of all believers. We have already seen from the research

findings that this doctrine is amongst one of the teachings that are sometimes interpreted to the denigration of the offices and ordained ministry. The main question becomes ‘if all are priests, then why ordain some and leaving others. Are we not making others more important than others? This question too was found by the research.

The place of the priesthood of all believers in the reformed churches’ can be seen in such teachings of the UPCSA when in **The Manual for Order and Faith in the UPCSA** (2007 -2014) in Chapter 16 P. 1 on ministry. It states clearly that:

“The priesthood of all baptised believers is an important biblical and Reformation principle. Within that priesthood the Church has from its very early days recognised the need for Ministers who are called, trained, equipped and ordained to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to care for all those in their charge, and, together with the Elders, to rule. Ministers form a key leadership group in the Church, with special responsibility for its life.”

Similarly, the UCCSA holds that the church is made up of a priesthood of all believers, who covenant with God and one another to walk in all his ways, these believers confess Jesus as their Lord and Saviour thus depending on the guidance of the holy Spirit. The priesthood of all believers is such an important understanding for ecclesiology and ministry yet there are some questions around it. This was clearly seen in questions from participants from reformed churches saying a:

- Ordination is getting less significant by current understanding of the priesthood of all believers.
- Sometimes debate the relevance of ordination in the context of the priesthood of all believers.
- Why ordain some when all are priests.

Calvin's position regarding offices of the church is very clear. For him, they are very significant for leadership, feeding (word and sacrament) and enhancing unity and church order. As an example, in Inst.4.3.2 he says:

“By these words he shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in governing the Church, is a principal bond by which believers are kept together in one body. He also intimates, that the Church cannot be kept safe, unless supported by those guards to which the Lord has been pleased to commit its safety. Christ “ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10). The mode of filling is this: By the ministers to whom he has committed this office, and given grace to discharge it, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the Church, and thus exhibits himself as in a manner actually present by exerting the energy of his Spirit in this his institution, so as to prevent it from being vain or fruitless.”

Similarly, he talks about ordination in the same *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (see Inst.3.10.6) saying that says:

“Every individual Christian, in whatever profession or trade he or she might stand, has a calling and a duty to serve God: Every man's mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned to him by the Lord... So necessary is this distinction, that all our actions are thereby estimated in his sight, and often in a very different way from that in which human reason or philosophy would estimate them. ...it is enough to know that in everything the call of the Lord is the foundation and beginning of right action.”

It is from the above quotation and others by Calvin that the reformed churches embrace the 'priesthood of all believers'. It is important to learn that the 'priesthood of all believers' is reached at by implication and interpretation. Calvin never used this term. Even the Bible talks about the

royal priesthood and not the priesthood of all believers (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9 & Revelations 1:6). The significant question is whether ‘the priesthood of all believers’ is the same as the ‘royal priesthood’. It would be quite significant to consider Luther who was a precursor of Calvin in doctrine and is held to be the one who developed this doctrine, to understand him in context.

It is important because the question of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ in Calvin has a room for debate while the whole question of offices and ordination are beyond any debate as to their place in his theology. In his *Institutio Christianae Religionis*, Calvin argued that:

“Now we must speak of the order by which the Lord willed his church to be governed. He alone should rule and reign in the church as well as have authority and pre-eminence in it, and this authority should be exercised and administered by his word alone. Nevertheless, because he does not dwell among us in visible presence (Matt 26:11), we have said that he uses the ministry of men to declare openly his will to us by mouth, as sort of a delegated work, not by transferring to them his right and honour, but only through their mouths he may do his own work – just as a workman uses a tool to do his work” (Inst.4.3.1).

This is about ordination. This is what the reformed churches embrace and practice as a way of appointing someone into official ministry. The grey area remains concerning the others of the priesthood of all believers who are left out, and those who are ordained seem to be superior to others. It may not be true in theology but at least in practice, it is obtaining.

The dispute from the laity concerning the ordained ministry and authority is due to the fact that the clergy exercise too much power over the membership of the church. The problem in this regard is not the concept ‘ordained ministry’ but the abuse of power by some ordained ministers. If the general membership of the church do not feel that the clergy are exercising too much power over them, they will likely appreciate the role of ordained ministry.

Such a strategy to limit power of the ordained ministry is biblical considering 1Peter 5:2-3 “Be *shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock*” (NIV). In other words, the strategy to preserve the significance and true meaning of the ordained ministry is servant-leadership.

This revisiting suggested here is not abandoning because the hermeneutical perspective in this thesis revealed that this concept or teaching is biblical. What however may be done is to re-tell and explain this doctrine in ways that does not seem to disregard ordination. For example, the Lutherans, argue that the ordained ministry is necessary for church order. It is true that all citizens of the kingdom in the church are equal. However, all may not be seen to be administering sacraments, as it may result in disorder. Hence the ordained minister functions on delegated authority on behalf of the priesthood of all believers so that there is order in the house of God. An analogy used is that of citizens in a city, all are equal and may do the same thing.

However, it would not be prudent if all carry their own garbage bins to dispose them. It is the duty of the mayor to perform the civic functions in a city for the good of all. This may better tell the story of ordination but however it seems to denigrate the divine aspect in the act of ordination. This was the same observation made by Ellingsen (1981:340) that, “One finds him speaking of the ordained ministry as derived from the priesthood of all believers; yet in other places he speaks of the office as divinely instituted.” The reformed churches need to relook at the concept of the priesthood of all believers in relation to the ordained ministry to ensure relevance and subsistence between two doctrines.

In redefining its ministry in relation to the priesthood of all believers, the church may learn from modern theologians as Moltmann (1996:10) one of the reformed scholars, who argued that the dawn of the modernity brought a paradigm shift in the understanding of the church. This is even more in the

post-modern. He argues that, “The new development was that lay men seized the chance of his call to apostleship as the modern world freed itself from clerical domination and come of age”. It is thus imperative for the survival of the church and its mission to recognise the ministry of the lay people in the context of the priesthood of all believers. Ordained ministry must not be seen to dominate the lay people in the church as this will create resistance and a schism in the church.

It remains to be understood that though all in the church are priest because of baptism, there needs to be someone commissioned to lead others. Ordination comes a way of official commission on the person to lead and coordinate others in the church. Koffeman (2014:142) concurs when he states that:

“Ordained ministry is a representative pastoral ministry with a view to oversight, continuity and unity in the church. The quality of church and ordained ministry is determined by the way of oversight (integrity), continuity (authenticity), unity (conciliarity) and mission (inclusivity) function. In the church, mutual oversight is concentrated, concentrated in a ministerial form of supervision, should be organized in a responsible way with the respect of the integrity of the church.

This underscores the need for the continuity of the ordained ministry in the church for the sake of order, something that reformed churches so much value according to 1Corinthians 14:40 “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (NIV). So the priesthood of all believers must not be used to sanction disorder in the house of the Lord where all do everything.

Ordination and concept of ‘authority’

Almost related to the whole question of the priesthood of all believers is the concept of authority and power for the ordained ministers. Seeking to establish the significance of ordination in the reformed churches in Zimbabwe revealed deep seated questions regarding ordination as

elevating pastors over the laity. This is a serious concern because of the understanding of the priesthood of all believers. According to the research findings:

- The church teaches that ordained ministers are servants but in practice they are special
- Ministry is an expression of faith and ordination is bestowing authority to a minister
- Abuse of office and power by those ordained

There are many responses unravelled by this research that imply the following ‘ordination makes some believers more special than others, it creates hierarchy in the church, and it confers authority and power on some over others’. These are some of the reasons why some Christians believe that the practice of ordination must be abolished.

Calvin built his theology against this practice which was actually a contextual issue for him. In the medieval Catholic Church, the clergy wielded so much power due to the belief that ordination set them apart to become as representatives of God on earth. This was such that even the bishop was seen to be superior to all other clergy hence creating an unhealthy hierarchy in the church. This is disputed by Calvin in his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (see Inst. 4.4.2). The BEM (1982:19) document which is an ecumenical instrument that almost all the reformed churches have approved deals with. The same practical issues that the BEM document on ministry seeks to address and level the field between laity and clergy saying:

“Therefore, ordained ministers must not be autocrats or impersonal functionaries. Although called to exercise wise and loving leadership on the basis of the Word of God, they are bound to the faithful in interdependence and reciprocity. Only when they seek the response and acknowledgment of the community can their authority be protected from the distortions of isolation and domination. They manifest and exercise the authority of Christ in the way Christ himself revealed

God's authority to the world, by committing their life to the community. Christ's authority is unique. "He spoke as one who has authority (*exousia*), not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:29). This authority is an authority governed by love for the "sheep who have no shepherd (Matt. 9:36)."

On paper, and maybe in faith, the reformed churches believe that authority of the ordained ministry is ministerial and therapeutic (Roy Briggs:1996:51), yet in practice the opposite seems to be true as is clear in the findings of this thesis. It is from this observation that there is a need for a methodology as practical ecclesiology that will bring together ecclesiology, and praxis (polity).

There seems to be a disconnect between the teaching of the reformed churches on authority and praxis. In the reformed tradition, ordination does not give a person authority over others, but authority use the Word of God, the constitution and carry out decision of the meetings. In such cases, it may be prudent to revise the doctrine and teach it as a moral ideal. That it is the perfect will of God that authority of the ordained ministry be ministerial, anything more than that is a deviation from the scripture. So it becomes the moral duty of the ordained minister to work in bridging the gap that exists between the reality and the ideal.

Still on the authority of the ordained ministry, it must be taught to the church that their kind of authority is that of enforcement of the legislation as contained in the Bible, confessions, resolution of conferences and assemblies as well as church's constitutions. They do not possess authority in themselves but the authority to enforce any legislation or decision is inherent in the office that they have been ordained into. They don't have more or less authority than others within the priesthood of all believers. This we see in Koffeman's book 'In order to serve,' (2014:.14-15) when he talks about the role played by scripture in polity and that polity is related to confessions. Hence, it is the misunderstanding of ordination that see it as achieving what is contrary than what is intended on the practical life of the church.

Balancing academic education and charisma

The research findings revealed that the quest for the significance of ordination in contemporary religious climate especially in the reformed churches in Zimbabwe is clouded by the question of theological education over spiritual gifts (charisma). Respondents revealed a deep seated dissatisfaction over the emphasis of education over spiritual endowments. As a result, many Reformed Christians tend to have dual membership to some charismatic churches who though their ministers are not educated they are seen to possess some considerable charisma.

There must be a relationship between ‘gifts and talents’ and ‘ministry and offices’. According to Koffeman (2014:111) “the word charism denotes gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit on any member of the body of Christ for the building up of the community and the fulfilment of its calling.” In this sense ordained ministry refers to the work done by persons who have received charism and whom the church has appointed for service by ordination through the act of laying on of hands. This kind of theological thinking can help the reformed churches in especially in Zimbabwe to present the ordained ministry to be a contextually relevant practice. In this way the church can be fruitful in her missional activities.

According to van Alten (2017:162) the theology of Calvin on ecclesiology and offices is such that there should be no one in offices and ordained ministry without the requisite grace related to that office. He says:

In his commentary on Acts 5:30 Calvin, in reference to the exact same words of Peter, also applies it to human prophets, judges and other ministers (*Prophetas vel iudices vel alios ministros*). Here he comments that God will equip with special gifts those on whom he lays some special or distinguished task. This is also one of the reasons why Paul and Barnabas prayed whenever they appointed elders in the different churches. It was so that God might furnish with the necessary gifts those elected to be pastors. And thus, Calvin says, we receive from God those whom he has equipped

with the necessary gifts and who have been fashioned and prepared by his hand. There is no need for the Spirit to cry to us from heaven that a man is called of God, says the reformer, whereby he implies that the Spirit is manifest in the gifts.

The fact that there is a lament of ordained ministers without the necessary charisma is therefore a theological indictment on the current reformed churches on the need to exercise due diligence and screening when it comes to the process of calling and candidature for ministry.

To further verify the findings, there were ministers from pentecostal churches and AICs that were interviewed. They revealed that for them ordination is synonymous with acceptance that God has called an individual. In this kind of thinking and belief it is not proper to appoint someone through the act of ordination who has no record of the manifestation of particular gifts of the spirit. Though most ministers especially in AICs are not formally trained as theologians to be pastors, they command a huge following. People flock to their churches because they are in pursuit of a particular gifts that will help them in their lives. This is a challenge to all mainline, especially reformed churches to embrace this perspective in their understanding of a call and ordination.

One can argue based on the Bible that if God has called a particular individual, he will empower them with certain graces to achieve that assignment. Acts 1:8 says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (NIV). The apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit for ministry hence, their ministry was a huge success in the Greco-Roman World. This is far from the understanding of this Scripture to mean that to all would be future ministers, the call and ministry will happen the exact similar way to that of the apostles. This may be what Calvin spoke about concerning Ephesians 4:4-16 saying:

“By these words he shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in governing the Church, is a principal bond by which believers are kept together in one body. He also intimates, that the Church cannot be kept safe, unless supported by those guards to which the Lord has been leased to commit its safety. Christ “ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10). The mode of filling is this: By the ministers to whom he has committed this office, and given grace to discharge it, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the Church, and thus exhibits Calvin's himself as in a manner actually present by exerting the energy of his Spirit in this his institution, so as to prevent it from being vain or fruitless” (Inst. 4.3.2).

We see in the above quote that Calvin taught that ministers' work carried some grace that actually made it fruitful. This tendency to place more emphasis on education of ministers was a later development in church history. Even though Calvin emphasised formal training of ministers, he did not neglect the element of charisma, at least in doctrine. For example, he stated that:

“It is usual also to say, that private men are called to the ministry when they seem fit and apt to discharge it; that is, because learning, conjoined with piety and other endowments of a good pastor, is a kind of preparation for the office. For those whom the Lord has destined for this great office, he previously provides with the armour which is requisite for the discharge of it, that they may not come empty and unprepared.”

It is clear from the above quotation that Calvin talked about ‘learning’, ‘piety’ and other ‘endowments’. In this post-modern era, there has been a proliferation of self-ordained bishops and prophets, sometimes not theologically trained. These command a lot of following and some of members from the reformed churches follow them. This shows a deficiency in the link between ecclesiology and polity. Something Koffeman (2014:15) seeks to remedy when he argues that, *diakonia* (service/ministry) must work

in hand with *charismata* (gifts of grace), and they must not be any conflict between them.

If the call-system and process is done very well in the reformed churches as is spelt out in documentation, this issue of emphasising one element of the call over the other will not be a problem. As an example, in the UCCSA a person must have a call that is witnessed to by the congregation, then relevant committees process the passage of that individual to ordination. This is demonstrated in the UCCSA Ministerial Committee Minutes (17 November 2017, P.4 note 8). 'The external call' as Calvin (Inst.3.3.11) would call it, takes into consideration the aspect of character (piety) and charisma of an individual. This same process happens in the UPCS as well as is contained in *The Manual for Order and Faith* (pg. 27) says:

“When, guided by the Spirit, the Church calls to a ministry, it acts as Christ’s Body, on his behalf. By free election from among its members with their different gifts and ministries Christ, as the Head of the Church, calls some to be ordained or appointed to particular offices for oversight, for evangelism or missionary work, for shepherding and teaching, and for caring for the poor and the sick. All the offices are for the sake of the Church’s good order and its ministry, witness and outreach.”

The fact that there is a call for a balancing of values of education and charisma in issues of ordination within the reformed churches especial in the context of Zimbabwe may be an indication that there is no due diligence that is done in the process during the call process and the passage to ordination. This calls the church to be alert and exercise diligence to avert the situation where the practice of ordaining ministers is put into disrepute. In any case the divine element in the process to ordination especially the internal call, speaks to the charisma of God to any individual. If God has called a person, he will furnish him or her with everything that is needed to discharge that duty. This is in line with what Paul teaches concerning himself in ministry saying “*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to*

me was not without effect...yet not I but the grace of God that is with me” (1Corinthians 15:10). It is also in line with what Luke records in Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”*

Review of the sacramental debate of ordination

Why still proposing the balance between charisma and education of ministers in the call process, the next related question is whether or not ordination is a sacrament or not? The second issue to this question is whether ordination imparts certain mystical power or not, simply put: does ordination impart a certain power or grace to the ordinand?

On the first part of the question, the position of the reformed churches and that of Calvin was established in this thesis that ordination is not a sacrament, only baptism and Eucharist are held to be sacraments. On this position Calvin argued in the commentary on Acts in chapter 6:6 says:

“Laying on of hands was a sign of consecration under the law. To this end the apostles now lay their hands upon deacons, that they may know they are offered to God...Hence we gather that the laying on of hands is the rite agreeing unto order and comeliness, for as much as the apostles did use the same and yet that it hath of itself no force or power, but that the effect dependeth upon the Spirit of God alone; which is generally to be thought of all ceremonies” (1949:238).

The Calvinistic reformed churches learnt this from Calvin that ordination is not a sacrament, it is a simple sign of the conferment of office of ministry. In Zachman (2008:183) we are told that “according to Calvin, the laying of hands is no more a sacrament than kneeling.”

The second part of the question relating to whether any power of grace is passed on during ordination, Calvin’s theology seemed to address the context of the Catholic Church where the clergy were believed to be superior

to lay people because of the power they derived from ordination. According to the data in the findings of this thesis 10 people interviewed revealed a deep seated belief in the transference of power during ordination. Calvin in (Inst. 4.3.1) argued that:

“For though it is right that he lone should rule and reign in the Church, that he should preside and be conspicuous in it, and that its government should be exercised and administered solely by his word; yet as he does not dwell among us in visible presence, so as to declare his will to us by his own lips, he in this (as we have said) uses the ministry of men, by making them, as it were, his substitutes, not by transferring his right and honour to them, but only doing his own work by their lips, just as an artificer uses a tool for any purpose.”

He argued that Christ did not transfer his honour or power to the priest by ordination. This is largely interpreted by the reformed church theologians to mean there is no transference of grace through ordination. This position may be challenged when one seriously considers Calvin in (Inst.4.3.16) saying:

“And it is certainly useful, that by such a symbol the dignity of the ministry should be commended to the people, and he who is ordained, reminded that he is no longer his own, but is bound in service to God and the Church. Besides, it will not prove an empty sign, if it be restored to its genuine origin. For if the Spirit of God has not instituted anything in the Church in vain, this ceremony of his appointment we shall feel not to be useless, provided it be not superstitiously abused.”

It is clear from the above quotation of Calvin that his explanation of ordination must be understood from a contextual analysis. That of superstition of the medieval Catholic Church. As such it may not be the case that there is no transference of power during the rite. Taken further we may argue that ordination leaves a character *indebilis* /character change that is permanent in the life of the ordained minister. This is the kind of belief regarding ordination that was revealed in the findings of this thesis where

some people consulted revealed a belief in the impartation of grace or power during ordination.

One thought that may assist as the reformed churches re-look at the sacramental debate again is linking sacraments with the commission of Jesus Christ. This can be read in the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order that sacraments are “holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by Christ, to represent him and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him, and solemnly engage us to the service of God in Christ, according to his word” (Matthews 1658: chapter xxviii.1). God is one. To say sacraments must be instituted by Christ is to say they must be instituted by the Word of God. If we follow this logic ordination becomes a sacrament if we consider that the Holy Spirit ordered it. Acts 13:2 says “*while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said ‘set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’*” The setting apart follows in verse three of the same chapter, and it was through the laying on of hands and prayer. For this thesis its reference to ordination. So revisiting the sacramental debate of ordination considering the doctrine of Trinity may yield different results for the reformed churches.

Extensive discipleship and teaching of polity

This strategy talks about discipleship and polity. This is because the Bible teaches us to carry out discipleship (Matthew 28:18f). Discipleship makes the believer grounded in foundations of Christianity. A person who is a true disciple, or is taught well in discipleship will better understand the polity of any denomination. Reformed churches are no exception. The findings of this research revealed that the preoccupation with studying the significance of the ordination may sometimes be hampered by understanding of polity. This research unravelled different responses as to what ministry and ordination is all about.

Some members from the UPCSA questioned the new direction of ordaining ministers only while leaving out deacons. This is the practice at UCCSA

where deacons are only commissioned and not ordained. These are polity issues that people in the church need to be educated on. It seems some polity issues are a preserve of the clergy while the rest of the church follow un-aware. More that the tradition of teaching confirmation class to those who are candidates for church membership, the minister needs a clear program for teaching the whole congregation on issues of discipleship and polity. The reformed emphasis on scripture alone must be understood to mean preaching and teaching of scripture, and sometimes in polity studies. This is the reformed legacy from Calvin that churches in the reformed tradition must not lose sight of.

The teaching ministry is very important for training and discipleship. In the offices of the church from a Calvinistic perspective is represented in the office of a doctor or professor. The hermeneutical perspective is clear in the reading of Ephesians 4:11-16 that in this text Paul addresses the subject of church offices. Then verse 14 says after the offices have done their work “then we will no-longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming” (NIV). The polity of the church must be taught in reformed churches especially as people are learning for confirmation so that they understand what sought of church they are joining and get to appreciate the reasons behind what is happening. It is the firm belief in this thesis that some questions levelled against the practice of ordination is because people are not taught well.

Some ordained ministers relegate the teaching ministry in the church to the lay people. This is in line with the understanding of priesthood of all believers. In the case that this scenario obtains in the local church the minister must be the supervisor to the tutor of the catechumen or the Bible study. The word and sacraments is primarily the responsibility of the ordained minister. He has undergone thorough studies in ecclesiology and polity. The minister may need to take some Sundays to teach in place of the ordinary sermon. This is very important for the church. Gone are the days

when people will just be entertained with the evangelistic sermons Sunday after Sunday in church. The 21st century through the internet exposes congregants to a lot of various theologies and teachings. It is therefore paramount for the minister to teach some form of ecclesiology and polity of their churches.

This teaching ministry that provides training must be designed as well for leaders in the church. The reformed churches allow the laity to administer sacraments through some form of licensing to regulate for order. In this case therefore, training is needed for those lay people who are licenced to preach and administer sacraments. Some basic theological training is needed before the certification in order to standardize ministry in the churches. According to Malachi 2:7 *“For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction – because he is a messenger of the Lord Almighty”* (NIV). Such knowledge is important for all believers who are the priesthood, but more so those who perform the ministry of word and administering sacraments.

The missional church and leadership.

The Calvinistic churches must understand their ecclesiology as missional. The missional church understands its being and identity in its participation in the mission of God (*missio Dei.*) Accordingly, Koffeman (2012:191) argues that, the churches of the reformation history must understand that their signs of a true church imply mission. Pure preaching and administration of sacraments must be located in the imperative for mission, not just being seen as confessions. They are about the love of God to his creation. These signs are about the love of God to the world. Sacraments are a symbol of that love. It follows that the reformed churches must embrace being missional churches. A further exploratory of what a missional church entails, Niemandt (2014:4) talking within a particular focus to the Dutch Reformed Church says:

“Mission is understood as an activity of the triune God, Creator, Saviour and Redeemer for the sake of the world and in which the church is privileged to participate. The relationship of God to creation is described in Trinitarian terms. The mission of God is the continuation of the work started at creation towards the *eschaton*, a new, glorious heaven and earth where God will be all in everything and where Jesus the Christ is the *eschaton*, the very embodiment of God’s original intention with all of creation.”

The reformed churches must understand themselves as having their being in participating in the mission of God. It is the mission of God which must define and give structure to the missional church. This is the perspective that reformed churches must embrace. If they do, they then must develop missional leadership. It is in the missional leadership that the ordained ministry must function as being enablers to the general priesthood of all believers that will find their relevance. If the lay people find satisfaction from participating in mission, realising that the ordained ministry is enabling and not usurping their role they must be appreciative of the ordained ministry.

The ordained ministry has relevance in the church missional structure. Their function within the structure is to develop other priest (laity) for the work of ministry. A structure without ordained ministry results in a shallow ministry. It is them according to Calvin who have been given by Christ a ministry of the keys. He says in the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Inst. 4.1.22):

“To impart this blessing to us, the keys have been given to the Church (Mt. 16:19; 18:18). For when Christ gave the command to the apostles, and conferred the power of forgiving sins, he not merely intended that they should lose the sins of those who should be converted from impiety to the faith of Christ; 52 527 but, moreover, that they should perpetually perform this office among believers. This Paul teaches, when he says that the embassy of reconciliation has been committed to the ministers of the Church, that they may ever and anon in the name of Christ exhort the people to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20).

Therefore, in the communion of saints our sins are constantly forgiven by the ministry of the Church, when presbyters or bishops, to whom the office has been committed, confirm pious consciences, in the hope of pardon and forgiveness by the promises of the gospel, and that as well in public as in private, as the case requires. For there are many who, from their infirmity, stand in need of special pacification, and Paul declares that he testified of the grace of Christ not only in the public assembly, but from house to house, reminding each individually of the doctrine of salvation” (Acts 20:20, 21).

This ministry is for all in the church and the world. Thus their relevance is within a missional paradigm. This ministry of reconciliation is not only for the church but for the world around and outside the church. Such proclamation is the missional message to the creation of God. Herein, according to Calvin, is the place of ordained ministry even in the 21st century era.

Strategy around ecumenism

Reformed churches embrace ecumenical theology and witness. Those considered in this thesis the UCCSA and the UP CSA are good examples. One of the General Secretaries of the UCCSA Van der Water (2001:169) once wrote in a ‘Skryf en Kerk’ journal that:

“The first strand of Congregationalism is that which came as an outflow of the 18th century Evangelical Revival in England. In 1799 the LMS sent Dr J T van der Kemp as a missionary to South Africa, and with his coming Congregationalism took root in African soil. A second strand is that which comes from America, whereby materialised in 1967, ecumenical co-operation was a feature of this family of Reformed churches for many decades prior to unions.”

This touches at the birth of the UCCSA that it is a product of ecumenical initiatives. The London Missionary Society (LMS) which is now the Council for World Mission (CWM) and American Board of Foreign Missions (ABM)

now Common Global Ministries found churches that were to come together in 1967 to form a United Church called the UCCSA. The same LMS was very instrumental to the formation of the UPCSA. To appreciate their ecumenical strong witness is a line in their order of service for Ordination and Induction of Ministers (see appendix D). It is said in the declaration of standards that 'The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa shares the one holy, catholic and apostolic...it accepts the ecumenical creeds commonly called the Apostles and Nicene Creeds.'

Even though in confession and belief the reformed churches which include the UCCSA and the UPCSA in Zimbabwe hold and confesses the same ecumenical creeds that claim that the church is one, when it comes to the practice of polity and worship, the denominations are divided. They are united in confession but divided in practice and liturgy. For instance, it will be to consider that some reformed churches as Presbyterians have the office of an elder, whereas the Congregationalist does not have the distinct office of an elder other than the ordained minister. The difference in this case can be seen in the order of service for ordination of ministers, the one for the UCCSA is general free from confession of Creeds though it highlights the aspect of Covenant in it, while the one in UPCSA has an emphasis of Ecumenical Creeds in it.

It is herein proposed that a more united and ecumenical approach can help standardise the practice and teaching. The hope is that in this way the Christians can learn together and approach the issue of significance of ordination in the 21st century together from a common understanding. There are already instruments that can facilitate this common action like the adoption and use of the Baptism Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) document. Koffeman (2014:115) avers that, laments the fact that the ordained ministry continues to be a stumbling block in ecumenical dialogue. For example, in Catholic, ordination is viewed as a sacrament when in the reformed churches it is not considered to be a sacrament. Arguing for the significance in the contemporary world faces this difference in belief and practice as one

of the challenges. This difference may be viewed as an indication that it is kind of an optional rite that depends on belief, yet it is founded on the Bible and apostolic faith. It can be argued that it is one of the non-negotiables of the Christian faith.

The challenges of the 21st century world demand a united or ecumenical approach for the church. The proliferation of all kinds of information and that which is unethical has flooded the internet. It enhances information dissemination but it also affects the church negatively as not all information therein is the truth. The challenges that arise from the use of artificial intelligence do not only affect a single but all denominations. The 21st century challenges are complex; they need an ecumenical approach. These challenges include global warming, human trafficking and problems of migration. In such platforms the church governments which are mostly ordained ministers can reflect and decide on common action. This will result positively on the relevance of the ordained ministry. If the ordained ministry is only dealing with local challenges, then they will be globally irrelevant.

Reforming the practice of ordained ministry

This thesis characterised the contemporary context as the one with signs of postmodernity. The religious climate is seeing proliferation of mass media, tendency by Christian believers to adopt cultural practices foreign, leaning towards the practices of what has been called 'emerging church' and many other contextual issues. According to Guder in www.pcusa.org accessed on 05-05-2020, the post modernity has seen the collapse of Christendom as was known. It began in the 4th century. The church was a unique element in the state and it enjoyed certain privileges. It shaped modern civilisations and at the same time it was at the centre of culture. In the contemporary era, many church building are now empty. The church is now on the periphery of life with the kind of pluralistic ideas that are a reality. He calls for a kind of missional church that can help continue the mandate and purpose of the church which is mission even though in a different form than enjoyed under Christendom.

One of the challenges that seems to attack the validity of ordained ministry that started in the late 2019 to current early 2020 is the outbreak and spread of the 'Covid 19' pandemic. Though it ought to be treated on its own as it is a new contextual phenomenon, it is related to this post-modern world climate in that it has never been recorded before and many of the churches' response to mitigate its effects are dealt with within the post-modern technological advancement. It has been a challenge that it prevented church from gathering as was the case. Though a challenge, it can also be seen as an opportunity for the church to imagine alternate ways of being a church beyond the relics of Christendom. The clarion call is for the church and through the ordained ministry to give proclamation of the word its place it deserves. This word, whether done through virtual media or not, it will yield the kind of church that is relevant to the time, because it will always yield something, it will not return to God void (Isaiah 55:11).

The advent of the COVID 19 has taught churches the need for embracing the Electronic Technologies. It is true that many of the mainline churches, reformed churches included especially in Zimbabwe, have not in the past invested in such technologies. The Information and Electronic technologies was seen as something characteristic of Pentecostal worship. The lockdown associated with COVID-19 has left many churches helpless in their ministries, mostly relying on the use of WhatsApp. A good strategy going forward is to include Information and Technology course in the many church seminaries and colleges that train ministers. If the ordained ministry does not embrace the e-technology and virtual ministry it will be irrelevant to the 21st century religious environment.

Postmodernity

In appendix C2 on the question of relevance of ordination in the future, are the responses from the clergy as 'the relevance of ordained ministry is under threat due to the emerging churches, and also the concept and practice of part time ministry is killing the significance of ordination'. The concept of part time ministry happens when an ordained minister is gainfully employed in

some other place, while serving the church on a part time basis. This practice limits the work of ordained ministry to serving sacraments in the church, a thing that even licensed laity can do. This follows that ordination has lost its significance within the church. This mode of ministry is happening in reformed churches in Zimbabwe such as the UPCSA and the UCCSA.

As a strategic way forward, the church must ensure that the church enjoys full service of an ordained minister who works on a fulltime basis. This will bring back the significance of ordained ministry. In his 'Genevan Ecclesiastical Ordinances' in 1541 Calvin implied a full time work of the person of an ordained minister, who get to meet with other ordained ministers once per week to ensure pure doctrine. It is clear he held the seriousness and the demands of the office of an ordained minister. The reformed churches must seek to uphold this standard if the unity and purity of the church is to be maintained and the significance of ordination preserved.

The idea of emerging church, and other contextual phenomenon as the virtual reality eroding the significance of ordination may be a big problem of the churches approach to doing theology. The current studies of theology and the practice of church has become too liberal, without absolutes, always seeking to answer to the context. The overdoing of this may end up negating the cosmological and the ontological realities of being church. There must not be some tension between our understanding of a missional church in the 21st century and the nature of church. This is captured by implication by Dreyer (2016:5) in his article 'Church, mission and ethics. Being church with integrity'.

In his analysis of Barth, he argues that being less of the church in being an institution, is actually the more of being a church. According to him, the gospel must be free from the culture and politics of the day, in this way the church becomes powerful by the Holy Spirit who is the reason behind the reality of the church. This is to say in as much as the current contextual climate is a challenge to the church, she must not lose on the essentials of

being church as ordained ministry because the church is an activity of God and not man. In his commentary Calvin (cf. Anderson 1845:23) on the book of Psalms he implied that the church must always seek to resist the temptation of being carried away by anything, she must always come to a place of conversion where listening to God can take place and where discerning the will of God that will inspire any polity must take place. This calls the Reformed and Calvinistic churches to always maintain some conservatism in orthodoxy in every age for the sake of the true nature and calling of the church.

Validity of ordained ministry in the light of Covid-19.

The current context (early 2020) is characterised by fear caused by the Corona Virus pandemic that is threatening humanity and changing ministry as we know it. This started as an epidemic but was declared by the world health organization to be a pandemic after its spread throughout the whole world. It is spread through contact, unhygienic practices and has been declared to be airborne. The church buildings have been closed as many governments of the world have called a total shutdown of all activities as a way of curtailing the spread of the disease.

In this thesis we treat it as a post-modernity challenge to the church and the world because:

“The novel corona virus outbreak that we are facing reflects the times we live in. The tremendous development in transport and communication means that a contagion and the panic associated with its spread travels faster than ever, making it difficult to contain both. The world is at risk of devastating epidemics which lead to loss of life, economic losses and social unrest. The current outbreak will be a test of how prepared we are for such a fast moving, virulent respiratory pathogen pandemic” (GPMB 2019:1).

This challenge of the current context is making us rethink our lives entirely, including our faith and our religious practices as the world is changing in front of us. There is so much pain all around because of death of an alarming proportion. As of 31 March 2020 by 550am, 787000 deaths had been recorded (courtesy of CNN in edition.cnn.com)

According to Carvarlhaes writing in his blog about 'Being Church as we live with COVID-19' (19 March 2020),

“If we call the sacraments the gifts of God to the world, and some will call them even *means of grace*, we cannot say “nope you can’t have it now.” Be it for whatever good and sound theological reason you might have. During a crisis, we are not supposed to protect tradition but to bless the people...Pastors, bishops and theologians cannot keep holding power in the name of a necessary piety that is based mostly on hierarchies but named as faithfulness to the gospel. The notion of the assembly has to be redefined. The real and the virtual must be rethought. For people coming from the Reformation, they must continue to “be reformed.” As for those who carry the preached word as the fully presence of God, the ordinances of Baptism and Eucharist must also continue to be shared.”

The question relevant to this thesis and that demands a strategic answer is 'how does this situation impacts the understanding of ordained ministry and how can Calvinistic understanding help the church, and especially the reformed churches to proclaim a relevant gospel message?'

The question of relevance for Calvin pertaining ministry and ordination in the current context of the COVID-19 may get a negative answer. This is because Calvin did not write his theology with a context as this. His commentary on a text of Matthew 8:5-10, which is actually a text that may closely speak to the context like of COVID-19 where people don't go to church and are not supposed to have a contact with each other for the fear of infection, does not seem to provide much help. In this text a centurion

says to Jesus “I am not worthy that you should come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed” (NIV). When Jesus spoke the word the servant was healed and Jesus marvelled at the great faith of the centurion.

When Calvin comments on Matthew 8:5-10, he argues that the centurion believed that Jesus was God, in other words if he were many, to just speak the word without going to the person it would be superstitious. No one has creative power other than God, any of such a demonstration would be superstitious (Calvin 1994:335). The context posed by the Corona Virus is such that ministers are now using the electronic and social media platform to communicate the gospel and lead Sunday worship services. Since they are prevented by the context to come to church how does the pastor administer sacraments other than using electronic and social media? It is like in the case of the centurion man, where Jesus just has to say the word without coming into the home and touching the sick person.

Ordination itself is a contact ritual where someone receives the administering of laying of hands upon him/herself. The current context forbids this. The sacraments can only be celebrated by the minister blessing the elements online through saying the word. This is not to say that the religious situation will remain closed as it is due to the pandemic. However, by the time the pandemic is over people have seen the possibility of the church being done in people’s homes without them being gathered in the church in the presence of an ordained minister, and they have seen they can celebrate sacraments having the word, hence some may actually read the words of Christ’s institution of the last supper and celebrate communion on their own as families.

Some may actually think that following the Bible is better than relying on the words of an ordained minister in the social media. Whichever way the concept of ordained ministry is affected. As such Calvin must be interpreted like any historical person and record in the light of his context. This tells us

that the reformed churches need not to follow him religiously as he may not be relevant in all the times and contexts.

Calvinistic ordination and African Context

The relevance of Calvin in contemporary Africa is an area that this thesis will contribute to. There are principles that reformed churches in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular can leverage on to enhance the significance of ordained ministry and ecclesial ministry. These are principles similar to those already in Calvin but may help as a reminder to the reformed churches on what to be done as regards to the ordained ministry.

Ordained ministers as Messengers (*Izikhonzi* in Ndebele Culture)

In the light of questioning the relevance of the ordained ministry as was noted in this dissertation, a re-interpretation of the concept of ordination in cultural terms may help restore some relevance. Digging into the different African cultures, it reveals a similar thread running across them which is a sign of oneness of African people. In Africa, messengers were “trusted runners who were often sent particularly to deliver long and confidential messages. For instance, if a community was invaded, a runner was sent with a message to seek help from a friendly community.” This is spoken in reference to Kenya but it is very true of traditional Zimbabwe especially among the Ndebele people. The king had his messengers known as *Izikhonzi zeNkosi* which can be translated envoys or ‘messengers of the King’. Special information was not communicated by just any person but these special messengers who would have undergone some ceremony of appointing and swearing to fidelity to the king and truth.

In the current culture amongst the Ndebele in Zimbabwe *Izikhonzi* refers to deacons in the church. This learns from the concept of communication of special and confidential messages by the person appointed for that. The contemporary church, especially, the reformed churches can build on this cultural practice to teach the significance of ordination. The gospel can be

communicated by anyone amongst the priesthood of all believers. However, some truth in terms of the tradition of the church and theological teaching and guidance needs to be communicated by someone who is appointed for that through the act of ordination. It is probably in this line of thinking that we must understand 'Paul' in Ephesians 6: *“Pray for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel”* (NIV).

Due diligence in the process to ordination

In the African context leadership is held in high esteem. It is not something that is taken lightly. In the days before colonisation, consideration of the person to fulfil a certain leadership task involved consultations not only of notable people in society but also spirit mediums to see what the ancestors were saying. The consultations of the spirit mediums relate to the divine calling which may correspond to internal calling in Calvin. In the recent past (ca.1997) when there was a search in Zimbabwe for a Crown Prince of the AmaNdebele a lot of consultations were made to ensure due diligence.

One of the leading figures in these consultations Chief Mathema was courted by a local newspaper saying “the modern search for a crown prince began in 1997 when chiefs, culturalists, historians, academia, and community organizations met to set the process in motion,...we are therefore, satisfied that this choice was arrived at in a way consistent with our cultural values, customs, traditions, practices, historical precedents and due process and have found nothing objectionable about both the process and outcome.” This would correspond to external calling as Calvin would call it. Due process is equally important in the process leading to ordination of a minister because such a person becomes a custodian of the whole institution of the church in terms of law, practice of ministry and procedures (accessed from www.newsday.co.zw :2017/11, on 30/03/2020).

Charisma and installation

The fact that the research finding in this thesis highlighted the over-emphasis on academic education and training over charisma as one of the elements leading to the loss of significance in the contemporary Zimbabwe, is an indication that there is something to be learnt from the African cultural belief and practices that can help in the relevance of Calvinistic type of ordination in contemporary Zimbabwe. Phathisa Nyathi, a renowned historian of the Ndebeles in Zimbabwe argues that apart from things like loyalty and trustworthy, one of the determining factors in the selection of leaders such as chiefs was bravery and heroism in battle. The person needed to distinguish himself by possessing what we can call charisma or peculiar qualities that befit the office that one was ascending to (Nyathi 2000:127).

‘Ubuntu’

When one talks about the African culture Ubuntu comes into consideration, for it is a tie that bind African communities and relationships. The reformed churches can benefit much from recognising, adopting and practicing ministry through this African philosophy. Here are ways in which Ubuntu concept can enhance relevance and significance of the practice of offices and ministry:

Concerning unity and collegiality of ordained ministers what Mugumbate & Nyanguru (2013:3) say “Ubuntu relates to bonding with others. This is in line with what the word expresses in most African languages: being self because of others. This is also in line with the popular Zulu saying: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*. Such sayings as *I am because we are* and *I am human because I belong*, express this tenet. This means that in African philosophy, an individual is human if he or she says *I participate, therefore I am, is very significant*. If this provides the philosophy behind ecclesial polity of the reformed churches it can enhance respect and responsibility to the church of the ordained ministry.

It echoes very well what might have been in the mind of Calvin when he argued in the Genevan Ordinances (1541:2) that unity amongst the ministers was important for purity of doctrine, to the extent of saying “In the first place it is desirable that all ministers should meet together once a week. This is to maintain purity and agreement in their teaching and to hold Bible discussions. Attendance shall be compulsory unless there is good reason for absence...” in brief this argues that Ubuntu philosophy can better express unity and collegiality amongst the clergy which will in turn impact positively on the unity and purity of the church.

The notion of Ubuntu and communalism is very significant in African discourse. It is a philosophy that is concerned with the common good of the society. This is a thing needed in the church when the ordained ministry is there to serve the church than to be served. In as much as there is a persistent question as to which precedes the other the church or the ‘offices and ministry’ the answer depends on where one is coming from. For Calvin when he argues for signs of the church, the implication is that the church gives births to ministry (Inst.4.1.9). For a catholic the offices precede the church. This debate is a reflection that the church and ministry are organically related. As such there must be no disputations regarding the significance of the ordained ministry as is the case in the research findings of this thesis. For such a vision to be achieved Ubuntu concept can be a tool.

Church unity and the realisation of the dream of ecumenism is no small matter. According to Koffeman (2014:115), ordained ministry is one stumbling block towards unity and full-ecumenical potential of the church. This is because reformed tradition is fixated on the ideas of Calvin while Catholics are fixated in their sacramental theology concerning the church and ministry. On the other hand, the emerging church is preaching the church that is fluid, without any stringent boundaries of ordained ministry. As Meiring (2015:6-7) writes further on the significance of Ubuntu on the unity of the church, talks about what he calls the language of Ubuntu as

unleashing potential for unity, as enhancing healthy communities and as helping the church to move past hurtful realities of the past that are tearing the church apart. If the church denominations saw themselves as communities that are one because of Ubuntu, they will overcome denominational boundaries that are created by such views as ordained ministry. This will very different than the usual call to unity from the perspective of theology.

Strategies specific to UCCSA and UPCSA

The above mentioned strategies though speak in generally to all reformed churches, they also speak to the UCCSA and UPCSA. About the issues highlighted above, there are issues to do with the ongoing talks towards a union of these two denomination. In an unpublished paper from the two churches, Booth (2018:1) states that, “The Presbyterian Churches and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa have a long history of negotiations towards union. Since more than a century ago these churches have been ‘in a *journey* towards union’. It would appear that we all love the journey more than the destination, as church union has eluded us to this day.” This is very important for the question of the relevance of ministers because in these decisions for the union, the ordained ministers must guide. After all, Koffeman (2014:124) states that, ordained ministers are the ones who preside over meetings. This is true in UPCSA where the ordained ministers are moderators in every court of the church while in the UCCSA they are the Chairman and Presidents/General Secretaries over the courts of the church.

The issue with church polity is identity. The two churches as they engage on the union talks should define what kind of the union they want. This must be between organic and inorganic union. In case where they want to follow the process in steps or gradually, it may be wise to begin by an inorganic where churches are united in terms of confession by they still maintain their identities. If such a union works they may then proceed to an organic union where they have the same name, confessions, ministry, and polity and share

the same resources. The question of identity needs to be solved after considering the kind of ecclesiology that the new church can espouse. This is because, as it was noted in this thesis, ecclesiology determines polity.

Still on the union talks, it has to be seen that at grass-roots the UPCSA and UCCSA are already involved in some united acts of worship especially through the ecumenical forums such as '*Mubatanidzo we madzimai*', which is a Shona name for the gathering of the women from different denomination. This may be seen as not necessarily a movement towards the proposed union but ecumenical fraternising, however, such an argument may be defeated by the fact that UCCSA and UPCSA are already having some united congregations especially in South Africa. We have churches like the St Mungoes United Church in Bryanston which is currently being served by a UCCSA ministers, but previously, it was served by a minister from the UPCSA. Such congregations have both Presbyterians and Congregationalist members in one church. This is an expression of the perceived unity between the two congregations.

Seeing that lay membership of both churches are warming to the Union talks as expressed by their fraternising together and the united churches one may then be tempted to believe what Koffeman (2014:113) says that in many reformed churches the ordained ministers are the ones who are stumbling blocks towards church unity. Their role in holding the church back as it were may be an indication of their role and significance in the church that the church may not achieve a certain desired vision if the ordained ministers who have a large bearing on the church governance does not support the move. This may be an indication that the ordained ministry may be significant in the church currently, but in future there is a danger of losing relevance because the church may move forward and leave them behind. This may be explanatory why a significant number of the membership in both churches think that the value of the ordained ministry is not so significant. If this is the case, it calls upon the ordained ministry in both

churches to carefully listen and discern the move of the spirit through the church.

The issue of unity has a bearing on the future relevance of ordained ministry in both churches. For example, both churches agreed on theological positions for church unity as seen in the Union paper coming up with the following:

Ten Propositions:

- (i) The Church is created by the one God: Father (Creator), Son (Redeemer) and Holy Spirit (Sustainer). Being a creature of God's Word and Spirit the Church of Jesus Christ is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.
- (ii) The oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the Church have become hindered and even obscured by the sinful divisions and weaknesses of the Church which undermines its life and witness as a whole.
- (iii) The historical divisions amongst God's people, from Old Testament times through New Testament times, the Early Church, to the schism between East and West and latterly the separation between Protestant and Roman Catholic Church denominations are reflective not of God's design but of a fallen humanity that is fractious and broken.
- (iv) Through the blood of Christ, God's purpose was to reconcile humanity in one body through the cross (Eph. 2:11-22). This body is the Body of Christ, the Church (Eph. 1:23), with the one Lord Jesus Christ as its head and source.
- (v) Built on the one foundation of the apostles and the prophets, the Church also reflects its unity in being God's household, a 'holy temple' in which God lives through the Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit believers grow into 'one holy temple in the Lord' (Eph. 2:21). Filled with

the Holy Spirit those serving in the Church are urged to ‘maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ (Eph. 4:1-3)

(vi) The sum teachings of the New Testament attests to both the gift and mandate of the Church to be one, are clearly shown in the follows passages:

- Jesus said: ‘There shall be one fold, and one shepherd’ (John 10:16)
- Jesus prayed: ‘That they may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you and that they also may be one in us’ (John 17:21)
- ‘For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that body, are one body, so also is Christ’ (1 Cor. 12:12)
- ‘For he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us...reconciling both in one body by the cross’ (Eph. 11:14, 16)
- There is one body and one spirit even as you are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father...’ (Eph. 6:4-5)

(vii) It is God’s design to gather all creation under the Lordship of Christ (Eph. 1:10), and to bring humanity and all of creation into oneness and communion. Thus the Church, embodying in its own life the mystery and the transfiguration of humanity, participates in the mission of Christ to reconcile all things to God and to one another through Christ.

(viii) Through the oneness of humanity and of God’s people in union with one another, the whole creation is meant to be drawn to the goal of restoration and redemption. This divine plane reaches its fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth in God’s holy kingdom (Rev. 21:1)

- (ix) In exercising its missional mandate, the Church can only adequately fulfil this commission through a united witness. The Church's diversity of races, cultures, languages and nationalities does not detract from its oneness and catholicity but rather adds to the depth and richness of its nature.
- (x) On the strength of its united witness, the Church is also better able to share in the suffering of people and communities that are poverty stricken, needy, neglected, exploited, marginalised and oppressed and to pray, advocate and work for justice in society – in this process operating as an agent of healing, reconciliation and transformation. Not least within its own life and witness the Church is empowered to be a foretaste of the reign of God in the world.

Adopted, Pentecost 2017

It is surprising that after four years the union talks are still at the infancy stage, yet there was a target that the Union must be achieved after five years. If the theological rationale for unity was adopted by both denominations it means that the hitches towards the unions are to do with governance, structures and historical realities in different synods. Surely one would have thought that theology must determine the course where the church is going, but the context and traditions in the two denominations are a big influence. Concerning the traditions, one may argue that as long the theological basis has been agreed upon, these churches are both reformed, they may differ in some practices but these must not take precedence, because we belong to these denominations largely by the accident of history and not by choice. The decision that influence many in joining a particular denomination was to do with proximity and accessibility rather than doctrinal differences. The big question is the relevance of the ministers in giving life to this dream through their guidance.

The UCCSA and the UPCSA as many other reformed churches who follow Calvin, understand the concept of ordination as being set apart and

commission for the ministry of word and sacraments. Roy Briggs (1996:94) puts it in these words:

“We need to note the operative word, ‘given’. It is Christ’s will that there should be leaders in his church, and he gives them to his Body, to build it up and equip his people to serve him. Like the church herself, the ordained ministry is Christ’s creation. Those within the ranks are best described as ‘ministers of the word and the Sacraments’ – in other words, servants of the Good News and its Sacraments”.

In the system where lay people are sometimes licensed to offer sacraments, where they preach as members of the priesthood, this functional understanding may be seen as inadequate in giving basis for the relevance of the ordained ministry as was noted earlier in the thesis. The definition and description of the ordained ministry must be comprehensive to include guiding the church, sharing in the ministry of the word and sacraments and being a custodian of the institution of the church. This however can be criticised for the term ‘institution’ in reference to the church, as it has been linked with the Christendom church that in many places has given way to a less institutional and more fluid missional church.

The UCCSA and UPCSA must hold joint fraternal meetings or conventions for the ordained ministers. This will enhance prayer, fellowship and reflection on important matters that are affecting the church in the 21st century. Such forums will be beneficial in learning from each other on matters of ecclesiology and polity. The background from the congregational and that from the presbyterial polity will only serve to strengthen the bonds of the two Calvinistic churches and bring them closer to each other. In this unity, the ordained ministry can learn together and speak with one common voice in terms of their participation and submission to the ecumenical discourse and initiatives. When the laity see the clergy closing ranks, they will fraternise and be more welcoming to the talks of envisaged union between the two denominations.

Concluding Statement on Strategies

We have above seen the discussions concerning the argument around the ordained ministry and laity in the context of the priesthood of all believers, the tendency to emphasise education over charisma among other strategies. A key question to be answered concisely is what ordination is all about. If ordination is only understood as setting apart for the ministry of the word and sacrament, and this is overemphasized over some functions of the ordained ministry such as guiding the church (Koffeman 2014:224), being a custodian of the institution of the church and procedures, as well the ministry of presence by the minister – in cases where there is a context as COVID-19 where people cannot gather in the church with the minister to lead them in the word and sacraments, the significance of the minister will come into question. Though Calvin did not limit ordination to only word and sacraments, he emphasized it. In the contemporary context the definition and purpose of the ordained minister must be revised. Also the sacramental role of ordination must be incorporated in the argument without being oblivious to the traditions ascribed to Calvin who was running away from the contextual problems of his time to do with superstition which was rife in his times.

The question of relevance for the ordained ministry has huge implications in the African context that is Zimbabwe. In the African context, the value of leaders is upheld. Africans have a tendency to value the institutions of leadership. This is seen in the fact that the institution of traditional leadership had for long practiced was included in the New Constitution of Zimbabwe (see. Chapter 15). Zimbabwe has seen different groups and people lobbying so that this institution may be respected and given a prominent role in governance, for it is an important pillar of culture in an African society. This happened even some people who have adopted modern values of governance do not see the importance of traditional and cultural leadership. This shows that as long as the institution of the church remains, they will be people who will value ordained leaders for the governance of churches. At

the same time, the question of relevance for such leadership will be raised. These contrary voices must be taken constructively to refine and contextualise the ordained ministry to the post-modern religious environment.

7. CONCLUSION

Introduction

This thesis was in the area of Church Polity as it is concerned with the relevance of Calvin in contemporary Africa. His understanding of ordained ministry and ecclesiology is examined from a historical perspective from the 16th century, the church confessions and the current context. This was taken in the narrow perspective of his understanding of church offices and ordination in particular. The area of investigation was in the specific area of church polity within the reformed churches which embrace and practice Calvinistic theology. The study took a special focus in the two denominations in Zimbabwe, the UCCSA and the UPCSA. The hypothesis was that the teaching of John Calvin regarding official ordination is still relevant in 21st century Africa and churches in Zimbabwe can learn from this tradition in terms of ensuring church the furtherance of order and mission.

The subject of the offices and ordination fall in the category of polity. This fed into the firm conviction that polity is a practical ecclesiology subject. It is also informed by the ecclesiology of a particular denomination, and yet it plays out in a particular context. In its interface with the context it responds to, influences and is influenced to some extent by the context. The context has such issues as ecumenism, post-modern culture and the socio-political realities that have a bearing on how church polity is done.

The fact that church polity is practical ecclesiology learnt from such scholars as Dreyer (2013) who argued that there is a need for a new ecclesiology that is missional in order to have a polity that can better serve the church in the current context that demands a missional perspective to the existence of the church. In Koffeman (2015:4) it was learnt that “the New Testament does not offer one church–order model-be it episcopal, or Presbyterian – synodical, or Congregationalist–but rather a variety that depends on historical and contextual factors as well as practical needs”. This underscored the imperative for scholars to employ a method of polity that

will answer historical, contextual and practical issues of polity, so long they best respond to the context in ways that do not violate the spirit of the Bible. All these areas of polity are extensively dealt with when we employ practical ecclesiology.

On the relationship of church polity and ecclesiology, it was seen that polity is an applied ecclesiology (Hill 26:2). Seeing that it regulates the functioning of the community of faith, it can receive fair treatment when it is viewed through the lenses of practical ecclesiology. Polity builds on the scripture, church councils and confessions. It enhances the interaction of the church through its internal mechanism of government with anything secular (context) such as the state through secular legislation. This definition that church polity is an applied ecclesiology demands particular attention. It was seen to imply that church polity is a practical ecclesiology. The publications of the WCC Faith and Order Commission, which did not “explicitly consider church law, order and polity in its ecclesiology, whether as a help or hindrance.” Church Polity and ecclesiology, in theory and practice, are indispensable in terms of proper church governance and ministry (BEM 1981).

Having said this, Church Polity is a branch of theology, and for this thesis it is both ecclesiology and practical that deals with church law, tradition, confessions and order, all according to scripture. It learns from held views of ecclesiology concerning both the institution and the miracle that church is. This brings into perspective the hermeneutical side and the historical elements to ecclesiology, all determining the form and content of a particular church polity. Furthermore, polity is to do with church law/canon. So it has a legal side. It is a distinct division of practical theology but complex to study because if the methodology is not adequate, it may leave some of its sections unconsidered.

It was this conviction that polity is a practical ecclesiology discipline that influenced the methodology that was employed in this thesis, namely the practical–ecclesiological approach. This methodology employs the use of

four perspectives. The Historical perspective dealing with the development of Calvin's ideas on ordination and how they influenced and got shaped by the later generations. It employs the hermeneutical perspective that deal with the interpretation of the Bible concerning ordination and the reading of church confessions on the same subject. It further employs the empirical perspective that dealt with the research to find scientific data that speaks to the relevance of Calvin's ideas on ordination and how ministry is done in this era. Lastly, on the methodology, it employed the strategic perspectives so as to inform the best way forward to the contemporary Calvinistic churches especially in Zimbabwe regarding the ordained ministry.

Following are the summaries on the thesis according to the said perspectives of the practical ecclesiological methodology:

Historical Perspective

The historical perspective dealt with the ecclesial context in Zimbabwe, the medieval context of Calvin and the theological development of his ideas concerning the offices and ordination.

The consideration of context was important because it affected Calvin's thinking and ecclesiology. What earned him the title 'reformer' is the fact that he was concerned with the purity of doctrine that according to the reformers like him and the likes of Luther had been corrupted by the Roman Catholic Church. In his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* he dealt extensively with the doctrine of the church in book 4. This was however on one front. The other front he dealt with was that of the radical reformers. This influenced some of his teaching though not to a larger extent as the Roman Catholic Church doctrine.

The thesis found Calvin to have been uncomfortable with the Roman Catholic Church doctrine and practices. Catholic theology was sacramental in a way that was not acceptable to Calvin. For example, they taught that

there were seven sacraments which included ordination. Ordination was thought to be a sacrament conferring grace to the ordinand and thus leaving an indelible character. This Calvin disputed. For him ordination was a simple rite of conferring office of ministry by invoking the Holy Spirit and was not a sacrament. Almost related to the sacrament, the Roman Catholic Church then saw the priest as mediating the grace due to his ordination. Thus, priests were regarded as superior to the ordinary person. It was this context that influenced Calvin to adopt and promote a theology that embraced the priesthood of all believers. This is seen by his involvement of the laity in the offices. He introduced the office of elder in his polity. To him, all were equal in the church with the differences in function that is offices to which they have been called, meaning that the church preceded offices. It may then be argued that Calvin had a more functional view of office and ministry were as the Roman Catholic Church's ecclesiology was preceded by offices.

The second from in his context was that of the radical reformers. These were called Anabaptists, spiritualist and such other derogatory names. They were growing at that time. They believed Luther did not go very far in his reform hence they took an extreme position. They over-emphasized the priesthood of all believers such that some did not see any need for formal training of ministers. They believed direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. Some of them re-baptised those who were baptised as infants. Calvin wrote substantially against them. His emphasis in church order may be seen to be a counter to the practices of the radical reformers. Hence, Calvin emphasized a process of call in as far as ministry was concerned. This call had to follow a certain process starting from internal call, outward call by the church, training and ordination in a particular congregation. According to him, the sacraments were administered by the ordained ministers, as a means of maintaining order. So we see that Calvin benefited from his context.

The development of Calvin's theological view about church's ministry and ordination can be located within a period of a century since his ministry 1509-1564. His ministry can be traced from Geneva to Strasbourg and then

back to Geneva. His edition of the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* came out in 1536. The development of his ideas and their impact on the church particularly reformed can be deduced from the *Heidelberg Catechism of 1563*, the *Belgic Confession 1561*, and the *Canons of Dort of 1619*. The argument behind this selection is that these three confessions from 1561 to 1619 give us a spectrum of just over a century of time to analyse the development and the significance of the views of Calvin as relating to church ministry and ordination in particular.

For example, the *Heidelberg Catechism* used Calvin's ideas as found in his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Ins. 4.3.1), that only Christ is the head of the church and 'He alone should rule and reign in the church as well as have authority and pre-eminence in it, and this authority should be exercised and administered by his word alone. Nevertheless, because he does not dwell among us in visible presence (Matt 26:11), we have said that he uses the ministry of men to declare openly his will to us by mouth, as sort of a delegated work, not by transferring to them his right and honour, but only through their mouths he may do his own work—just as a workman uses a tool to do his work'. The *Heidelberg Catechism* puts it in similar words saying in Question 31, Why is he called Christ? "It is given that Christ means anointed. This talks of Christ being anointed by God himself through the Holy Spirit. Christ who is said to be the prophet, teacher, the only high priest and king governs us by his word and spirit." This tells of how flourishing his ideas were in the reformed world.

The other example on the development of Calvin's ideas, is the COD of 1619. These were produced in Netherland, almost a century after Calvin himself. His ideas were developed by the reformed churches in Europe. They were very relevant in those times. In article 2 and 3, the COD present the view of offices that shows being identical with what Calvin teaches. The confession says that there are four offices of ministers of the word, doctors/professors, elders and deacons. No one is to be admitted into any of these offices, into the ministry of word and sacrament without having been

lawful called into such a vocation. This is exactly Calvinistic as can be seen in (4.3.10). It was in his 'Ecclesiastical Ordinance' as contained in Calvin's Treatise (1954:59) states that:

"The examination contains two parts of which the first concerns doctrine – ascertain whether the candidate for ordination has a good and holy knowledge of scripture, and also whether he be fit to communicate it edifyingly to the people...the second part concerns the life, to ascertain whether he is of good habits and conducts himself always without reproach".

So we see the influence of Calvin's views on the COD. One can argue on Calvin's relevance in the history of the church post reformation especially within the 17th century.

According to John Calvin, ecclesiology is such an important subject in his theology such that he devotes the whole of book four of his *Institutio Christianae Religionis*. It was noted in this thesis that ecclesiology gives birth to polity because in church there must be order. The concept of church order was very fundamental to him, hence his publications like the Genevan Church Order of 1542. He built his ecclesiology around Christ as the head of the church. All others in the church are equal hence there is no room for a hierarchical structure in the church as is the case in the Catholic Church. Here we see his reactionary influence from his medieval catholic church. It was because Christ is the only head and sovereign ruler of the church ruling by his word, that the ordained ministers are not in any way above superior, they are just used by Christ in the ministry of the word and sacraments just as instrument.

For Calvin, the church is not only a New Testament phenomenon. It has always been present since the creation of the world. According to Milner (1970:8) in Calvin's commentary on Genesis 4 verse 25 where he says that "Adam and Eve, with few other of their children were themselves worshippers of God...we may rightly conclude that Seth was an upright and

faithful servant of God. And after he begat a son like himself, and rightly constituted a family, the face of the church began distinctly to appear (*extare coepit distincta ecclesia facies*) and that worship of God was set up which might continue posterity." This he describes as embryonic face of the church. An analysis of this discussion may be argued to be the genesis of the understanding of two natures of the church that is the invisible and visible. This was important for this thesis in giving us the understanding that the church offices are indispensable, as long as the church exist. They have always served the church from time immemorial.

Even though Calvin built on the protest from the Roman Catholic Church, he did not dispute historical ecclesiological confessions that were held true in the papal church. He embraced them and actually made claim that the Roman Catholic Church had left orthodox, therefore his ecclesiology sought orthodoxy of the church as described in the ecumenical creeds as was adopted in 381AD. He argues in (*Institutio Christianae Religionis* 4.2. 2) saying:

"Since this is the state of matters under the Papacy, we can understand how much of the Church there survives.^{52 532} There, instead of the ministry of the word, prevails a perverted government, compounded of lies, a government which partly extinguishes, partly suppresses, the pure light. In place of the Lord's Supper, the foulest sacrilege has entered, the worship of God is deformed by a varied mass of intolerable superstitions; doctrine (without which Christianity exists not) is wholly buried and exploded, the public assemblies are schools of idolatry and impiety...They dwell on the importance which Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and others, attached to this succession (see sec. 3). How frivolous and plainly ludicrous these allegations are...It follows, therefore, that the pretence of succession is vain, if posterity do not retain the truth of Christ, which was handed down to them by their fathers, safe and uncorrupted, and continue in it."

Herein, we see that orthodoxy was for Calvin determined by fidelity to the doctrine and its articulation by the ministry offices. This argument leads us to the conclusion of the place of the ordained ministry as well as that ministry of the priesthood of all believers in church orthodoxy. When the church's ordained ministry is being criticised for relevance in any context, there is need to re-look the church's orthodox, whether it is exercised and applied properly to best serve the context.

For Calvin the church has two natures visible and invisible. This he probably inherited from Calvin. The invisible church comprises the elect only. The sign or marks of the church are the correct preaching of the word and administration of sacraments. The ministers come here, only as servants of the church of Jesus Christ. Later as his theology developed he elevated church discipline to a level that it became another sign of the church. Again this high emphasis on discipline was influence by his context where he felt that there was rife indiscipline, immorality and abuse in the medieval Catholic Church. This was a sharp contrast to the notion upheld by the Roman Catholic Church that in order for the church to exist there must be a bishop (priest) for a church to be said to exist. This is because of the sacramental role and function of a priest because of ordination. Here we saw that Calvin had a functional view of offices. The ordained minister is not a kind of special person but the office is important in the church, he is just a servant.

Calvin saw the church as an eschatological reality. For him, the church is the kingdom of Christ, in which he reigns by his word through the ordained ministry (Inst. 4.3.1). Milner (1970:169) concurs in the words "Christ's think of the Kingdom of God as the church, but not simple so, for it is the manifest intention of God to reduce the whole world to order and subject it to his government." In this way, the church through its offices and ministry, has a guiding role of revealing and demonstration of the word through preaching and modelling of a godly life. It is this thought of the church as the kingdom of Christ and its implications on the earth that point to Calvin's ecclesiology

being missional. This follows the understanding of mission as the work of God on earth aimed at establishing his kingdom. This is despite the fact that it is very unlikely that Calvin ever used the term 'missional'. The relationship to 'offices' is they there exist for God and his kingdom. So in as much they are answerable to the church they must always be mindful of God's press and will. In this kind of view, we see why he would emphasised church discipline because the church is an eschatological reality. Believers are participating in the kingdom of Christ.

According to the discussion of this thesis on ecclesiology, the ordained ministry is therefore not a simple task that anyone must just ascend to. Though it is a privileged to serve the church, it remains a demanding work in terms of commitment and discipline. It is not a prestigious job but it puts the interest of the church above one's interest. Still there remains the question of the relevancy of this ideas particularly concerning the ordained ministry in the contemporary context. One thing stands true, Christ has not changed, his church has not changed in a theological and historical sense, but the methods of ministry have changed because the context has changed.

On Calvin's ecclesiology, related to the understanding of ministry, is a metaphor or image of the church as the mother. She (the Church) conceives us in her womb, gives birth to us, nurtures and nourishes us to mature age. Even when as a church we are in a state like death, God our father brings us back to life. This relates to the ministry of the church that in her ordained ministry has been given grace to minister the word and administer the sacraments. The ordained ministry has been given the administration of the keys, which he calls a ministry of reconciliation. This ministry is important in the church but also outside the church, the world must be reconciled to God. This makes the offices and ordained ministry very relevant especially in the church's participation in the *Missio-Dei*. The fact that the ordained ministry is being questioned in terms of relevance in the 21st century, is therefore a call for missional paradigm in the church.

Ecclesial context of Zimbabwe

The history of the church dates as far back as the 17th century when the Portuguese made contact with the Rozvi State in the present day Zimbabwe. Their work was not very much fruitful. The arrival of the LMS in 1859 at Inyathi Mission is recorded as the actual arrival of the Christian spirit in Zimbabwe. The LMS was comprised of different denominational personal, and hence it signalled the coming of the different denominations as we know and see them today in Zimbabwe.

The question of ecclesial context in Zimbabwe cannot be adequate dealt with without a discussion of unity. here are ecumenical efforts that seek to unite the church but it still has to be seen that there are differences along doctrinal lines, history to do with foundation as churches who were founded during the reformation era seems to enjoy fellowship with each other, and those associated with charismatic movement of the 19th to the 20th century seem to enjoy fraternizing with each other. To heal these divisions, as a first step, there could be projects as this dissertation which sought to clarify offices and ordination. This is a key area of focus as learnt in this dissertation. For example, guidance was received from Kärkkäinen (2002) who argued that ordained ministry was a key area that affects the unity and division of churches.

It was noted in this thesis that the current configuration of the church in Zimbabwe comprise the mainline churches who are Reformed, Evangelicals, Anglican and Catholics. In the picture are the modern church movements as the AICs, Pentecostals and 'Charismatic movements'. General the church is represented by the ZCC, EFZ, CBCZ and Fambidzano ecumenical groups. This expresses the fact that ecumenical elements in ministry are present in Zimbabwe. Though this thesis focussed on two specific reformed churches, the UCCSA and UPCSA, the other churches like the AICs and Pentecostals were considered because they are part of the religious and ecumenical context in which the ordained ministry is practiced.

The main concern of this thesis at this stage was to answer the question whether Zimbabwe was post-modern or not? In terms of Infrastructural, and economic development it was postulated that Zimbabwe is lagging behind from the western world, as many African countries are. However, when you look at social development, it may be characterised as post-modern. The elements of a post-modern society and religious climate are present, the culture is now relative as a result of proliferation of information and migration; resultantly absolutes are being eroded by multifaceted ideals and beliefs, and there is now a tendency of upholding isolated notions instead of institutions. This is the characteristic of the context in terms of religion and culture in the 21st century.

There is now extensive use of technology in church as is championed by the current Pentecostal charismatic churches in Zimbabwe. More so, with the emergence of the Corona Virus (Covid 19) that has caused isolation world over, people are not going to churches for worship, they are relying on the use of the technologies for live streaming and sending of recorded sermons. There is an emergency of the fluid church that seems to be doing away with institutionalism. The membership tends to be moving between churches as they are freer to adopt to a movement than stick to one institution. This is influenced by the perspective of life that there are no universal truths that find expression in a liberal philosophy of life. This historical development manifests itself in the growth in market place Christianity and home churches. These are gaining preference and more acceptance than institutional churches. All these contextual elements point to a post-modern society.

The question then that resulted from the conclusion of a post-modern Zimbabwean is critical to this thesis. It is to do with the relevancy and validity of ordination in this climate as learnt from Calvin's ideas and as practiced by the reformed churches. This was a very important question especially noting from the historical analysis of the church in Zimbabwe that from the time the missionaries came and up to around the recent past the issues of ordination

were not very much considered. This is because when the missionaries came into Zimbabwe regardless of which ever denomination they represented they were all consumed with the evangelism and missional activity. The issue of church doctrine was not that a priority then. After that, came the struggle for independence. All energies were galvanised against colonialism. This overshadowed doctrinal discourses.

Currently the situation has however necessitated some engagement, discourse and research because Zimbabwean churches seem to be independent of each other in terms of their denominations yet they are in pursuit of one common mission of God. The independence of churches should not *per se* mean difference in teaching. Another reality is that of self-appointed bishops starting their own churches (emerging Church) a thing that has been a key development in this 21st century. In reformed ecclesiology and church polity the understanding of the ordained ministry follows a systematic approach that is aimed at ensuring church order the very thing that was uppermost in Calvin. Against this context a call has been made by various ecumenical bodies for unity in mission. This is also seen by the developments that may be attributed to the move of the Holy Spirit as there are many fellowships by the congregation that express deep need for church unity. Church call to unity that is most relevant to this thesis is that of the UCCSA and the UPCSA.

Hermeneutical Perspective

This perspective was employed in this thesis to determine the biblical understanding of offices and the meaning of ordination in particular. This objective was born of the question whether the Bible is still used as the guiding light in the area current ecclesiology and polity especially in reformed churches in Zimbabwe. If so, how helpful in the context of modernity that seems to be a challenge to the church in the 21st century.

In order to reach to the understanding of offices and ordination, this thesis first considered the understanding of ministry from the Bible and the

priesthood of all believers. Ministry is *diakonia* in Greek. It refers to works of service in the church or for the Lord. 'Ministry' is a significant concept of the biblical teaching and faith. Scriptural passages as Acts 13:2; Romans 1:1 and 1Timothy4:13-15 show people who devoted themselves to ministry. Scriptures like Acts 13:2-5 and 2Timothy1:6 narrates the church's approval of ministry of individuals, and there are scriptures that gives us qualifications or prerequisites for one to be accepted into ministry like 1Timothy3:2 and Titus 1:7-9. It follows from such textual analysis that God is the author of ministry, Christ modelled it, the Bible teaches and therefore the church must observe it for the nurturing of the faith. As this is true, so is the concept of ordination, it is authored by God, Christ gave it as we can see in Ephesians 4:11-13 and the Bible teaches it, therefore the church should uphold its honour and perpetuate for posterity and faith.

Having seen that ministry is service. Two kinds of service were discussed in this thesis. The first one we can call the general ministry to all. This is what has been historically called the priesthood of all believers. This means that all people are called to ministry so long they are Christians. The explanation of this fact is in the 'priesthood of all believers'. Gassmann (1993:118) writing for the Faith and Order puts it this way: "it is essentially through baptism and confirmation that Christians are made members of the body of Christ and participate in the priesthood. Therefore, any service performed in the church by a Christian, by virtue of his baptism and confirmation is supposedly an offering of his whole person." This therefore describes ministry to be a sacrifice according to Romans 12:1.

The second form of ministry is a specialised form. This ministry functions by and in offices. For example, "the selection of the twelve apostles in the ministry of Jesus is transformed into the apostolic office in the book of Acts...1:26 signals the shift in understanding of an apostle from the twelve who lived with Jesus to an office of the church, when it employs the noun 'apostleship' to describe 'an office of ministry'." This argument establishes the relationship between the offices in the church, ordination and ministry.

The Augsburg Confession says that the term 'ministry' in its abstract sense it refers to office or station from/in which ministry functions, and in a more concretely manner it refers to the person and the specific sacred function. This specialised ministry that works in offices is what is called ordained ministry.

The Bible was seen to be very clear in these two types of ministry in the consideration of Ephesians 4:11-13. It speaks of ministry that operate in an office as apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, and pastors as appointed to prepare God's people for the work of ministry. This was seen to mean that the ministry of those in offices is like a mission enabler as it were for God's people to function well in the ministry they are called to do. To understand clearer these two types of ministry, the Latin was appealed to. According to van Wyk (1991:67) ministry is service. It can be understood clearly from Latin '*ministerium*' in which we get the word minister – a servant. The Latin word for 'office' is '*officium*' is translated 'Office'. This word carries more dignity than that of ministry. It speaks of an official. It must be understood therefore that church 'offices' becomes the prisms through which 'ministry' is done. Such is this specialised ministry as compared to the priesthood of all believers which is simply diaconal.

It was understood in this thesis that ordination is an act of setting someone for the purpose of functioning in an office that the Lord has established for the government, welfare and unity of the church. The subject of offices and ordination are not a new phenomenon; they were inherited from the Jewish religion which may be argued to be a parent to Christianity. In the Old Testament there were various offices such as Priestly, Kingly, Prophetic and Teaching. It was seen that when Calvin talked about ministry in his commentaries on the Old Testament, he would refer to offices. See his reference to a prophetic office in his 'Commentary to Jeremiah and Lamentations vol.1' (1536: 31). According to Calvin, a person who is to be consecrated for functioning in a particular office must be called. The act of ordination is the last part of the call process.

It was established that biblical, the concept of ordination as it developed in the Bible, it may have learnt from the neighbours within the Ancient Near East. It developed from the idea of the 'sacred and the profane'. God's work is holy. Man by nature is sinful. So for men to touch the holy things he must be commissioned. It was from this sense that ordination developed. It set apart the person for God's holy work. Also a sacrificial lamb was brought to the priest who will lay hands on it. Similarly, the rite of ordination sets apart one as a sacrifice for the work of the Lord. In the Old Testament those who were ordained were kings, and elders as Moses did to the leaders in Numbers 11:16f. The New Testament adopted it from the Old Testament.

A clear Scripture that depicts ordination is the appointment of the seven deacons in the early church (see Acts 6v6). The other notable scriptures in the early church that provides a basis is Actsc13:2 in which the Holy Spirit is said to have spoken and said:

“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them” (NIV). We are told in the verses that follow, that after they had placed their hands upon them and prayed, they allowed them to go. What is clear in the New Testament is that ordination as we interpreted it in this thesis is an imperative of God for all who would serve in the office of leading the church as a minister. No other method was used in Scripture that we have seen other than the laying on of hands and prayer. The other references which are discussed in this thesis are 1Timothy4:14; 2Timothy 1:6 and Titus 1:5.

This thesis did not find enough evidence in the New Testament that ordination is a sacrament. Neither did it find convincing proof to justify the disputation against this rite being a sacrament. By their definition sacraments are external means of grace. They are according to Christ's direct command. In this thesis, there is nothing found in the New Testament to warrant it being a sacrament. It was seen that it does not impart any grace and therefore should be divorced from any form of magic and mysticism. It must be understood in terms of an official appointment by the church

because the person of a minister does not work in an isolation. The authority for ministry is granted through the invocation of the church to the Holy Spirit.

This hermeneutical perspective was essential in this thesis because the conclusion on the relevance of the ordained ministry in Africa, and from a Calvinistic perspective demands proper interpretation of the Bible text on the topic of ordination. There needs to be a rereading of the confessions to determine how the church over ages has understood the Bible within a particular context of their time. This perspective is the basis for an informed conclusion on whether the current context demands new methods of exegesis when it comes to biblical concepts such as ordination, in order to have some relevance. All this is done not for the sake of knowledge but also that such knowledge may have a positive impact on the ministry of the church and ultimately the mission.

Empirical Perspective

This part dealt with the question: ‘what is happening now in Zimbabwe in terms of the ordained ministry with a particular attention to two selected reformed churches?’ The UCCSA and the UPCSA provided the context for analysis. The finer details of these church denominations as relating to their views and the practice of the ordained ministry denominations was investigated and analysed in terms of the relevance of Calvinistic understanding of ordained ministry, regarding mission and contemporary context. For a balanced view on the empirical research, the findings from the UCCSA and UPCSA were tested against that of about 5 AICs, and 5 Pentecostal churches from contemporary Zimbabwe on the subject of ministry and ordination.

According to Richard Osmer (2008:35), the empirical task is a descriptive one in practical theology and this helps to understand praxis in a more objective way. He further says in the same book (2008:50) that an empirical research has to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods so as to fully understand “the meanings that inform human action and diversity of life

worlds”, and to provide an enough scientific grounds for theological conclusions in this case regarding polity and specifically ordination. Such guidance was followed leading to the data and its depiction in graphs listed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

In pursuit of this understanding, this research this employed interviews and questionnaires in order to come up with solid conclusions concerning ordained ministry in the reformed tradition using some selected churches in Zimbabwe which are UCCSA and UPCSA. The interviews and questionnaires were centred around four following questions as can be seen in appendices of this thesis:

- (i) The understanding of ordained ministry,
- (ii) The knowledge of key elements of reformed understanding of ministry and ordination in current ecclesial practice,
- (iii) Areas of confusion or limited understanding related to the practice of ordination, and the practice of ministry, and
- (iv) The relevance of ordained ministry in light of current contextual issues.

Two sample churches from the reformed churches that were selected, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), and Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) were engaged for authority and permission to carry out this investigation. Not only were the questionnaires and interviews used, the thesis also makes analysis of archival materials. These can be seen in chapters and appendix D, E, F, G, & H. The choice of these two Calvinistic churches was inspired by their envisaged union that was expressed through the signing of a memorandum of understanding towards possible union. The memorandum of understanding was signed in Durban 2017. Of late commissions have been set to spearhead the work of this union. One of the commissions is on ‘Doctrine and Liturgy’ and the other one is on ‘Constitution’. I see in these

two, a work that will overlap dealing with issues of ecclesiology and church polity of the envisaged new United Church.

Research Findings

According to the research carried out in this thesis, the question of relevance for ordained ministry is a timely in the reformed churches especially in Zimbabwe as depicted in the findings. The sample of ministers both from the UCCSA and UPCSAs revealed that 45% have high regard for ordination, while 25% doubt the relevance of ordination. 30% of the population sampled did not return the questionnaires. Since this comparison was amongst ordained ministers themselves, it is indicative that some clergy are in ordained ministry yet they do not see the future of ordained ministry.

On the findings from the laity in UCCSA about 60% of the sample responded affirmatively on the relevance of ordained ministry going forward. On the other hand, the laity in the UPCSAs 40% expressed confidence in the value of ordained ministry, while the other 40% doubted the relevance going into the future. The other 20% of the sample population did not give feedback of their response.

The research findings were given in detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis. The statistics derived revealed that there is a probability that nearly half the membership in the reformed churches in current Zimbabwe have doubts concerning ordination due to many reasons that emerged out of the research. The definition of ordination itself and the understanding of this concept revealed inadequacies. People have various definitions and reveal different understandings with some being more aligned to the Roman Catholic Church understanding and some favouring the seemingly loose understanding. This is a wakeup call to reformed churches to revise their doctrines in the light of the contemporary culture and context.

Without dwelling much on the reasons and analysis given in Chapter 4 of this thesis to the findings, two critical issues emerged. A good number of

people in the investigation sample asked the question why ordination in the context of priesthood of all believers. They argue that ordination makes some more special and superior than others. The other issue that emerged from the findings was the question of balancing between the theological/academic training of ministers and the spiritual gifts (charisma) of the person. Many feel that what causes stagnation in the membership growth of the reformed churches is that many people in the contemporary Zimbabwe are attracted to charisma even though the minister may not be educated. This may be the reason of the seeming exodus from mainline churches to Pentecostal and African Initiated Churches who command a huge following in Zimbabwe.

Relevance of Calvin's Ideas on ordination

Behind all this research a dominant and significant question was the relevance of Calvin, as represented in his ideas or teaching concerning church offices and ordination in the contemporary Zimbabwean Reformed churches which were represented in this thesis by the UCCSA and the UPCSA. First of all, the understanding of offices as taught by Calvin are arguable relevant not in terms of their number but the current reformed ecclesiology. In the society people are sceptic about perceived 'owners' of churches. This is perceived from churches whose founder or bishop has no history in terms of succession, they are self-appointed and the resultant church has the name of the leader in it. Examples of such churches include those whose names are 'X Ministries' with X being the name of the founder. Most of this churches are run like businesses such that in the event of death of the leader, the son or wife of the deceased leader assumes the apex position in that church perhaps so as to maintain the family interest in that church.

They are comfortable with someone working in some church office to which when he dies or resigns the work may continue because offices do not leave but are always there in the church. The scriptural support of this understanding may be seen in cases like the choosing of Matthias after the

death of Judas Iscariot. There is need that the other be chosen to occupy that vacant office (Acts 1:20). This understanding help the church avoid abuse under the stewardship of some clergy. The concept of ordination as practised in the reformed tradition and other traditions help prevent the church from exposure to these cultic tendencies in the passage of ordination does not only prepare the one to be the minister, but it also regulates on who will ascend the office of the ordained ministry.

The emphasis on theological training of ministers is a tradition that the reformed churches may have taken from John Calvin. He had high regard of education and training. He started a theological school in Geneva that was opened in 1559. This was seen in his critique of the radical reformers who did not value formal training. The reformed churches have upheld this to the point that they were criticised in this thesis for neglecting the issue of charisma in the call process. Having said this the value of theological training cannot be disputed in the 21st century world was in some churches seat professors and other academically educated people. The kind of problems posed by modernity require theological education if the church is to participate in the ongoing trends in the world, so it may be argued.

Many people in the reformed churches are occasionally heard saying that their pastors are not just picked under trees. Such talk, is an indication of pride associated with the call process towards ordained ministry. These processes in both the UCCSA and UPCSAs are similar (See Procedure 1 of the UCCSA Constitution and Procedure 16.25-56 of The Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSAs). The process involves an internal call, that when an individual sense, they approach their minister who prays with them so that if it is indeed the call it may become clearer. The church then interrogates the person to see that indeed they are called. If the church is satisfied the person is then sent for ministerial training after which upon successful completion the person has to go through a period of internship/probation. If they succeed only then they are commissioned for ordination and ordained in a local church. Post-modern people seem to

value accountability. This call process as practiced in the reformed churches is still relevant for the church in contemporary Zimbabwe even though some people have criticised it for being too slow and long. This is a reflection on the relevance of Calvin because this tradition of a call process in this manner was adopted from him (Inst.4.3.10).

In the findings of this research ordination was also said to be submission to the yoke of ministry. This submission carries along with discipline. An act of ordination has with it some legal implications on the person of the minister. Spiritually there is a covenant entered between the minister and the church promising to journey together in the pilgrimage of ministry. Not only is this agreement spiritual, it is also legal. That is the reason why in the UCCSA when a minister is ordained they sign a document called the 'Ethical Affirmation' (UCCSA Constitution 2013) in procedure 6.3 and in the UPCS the minister. See appendix D, it has these words in the vows that is signed by the UPCS minister:

'...I recognize that in ordaining me,
the Uniting Presbyterian Church authorizes and commissions me,
to serve as a Minister of Christ's Church.
My ordination thus establishes a covenant,
between the Uniting Presbyterian Church and me,
that binds me to be faithful to it and its ministry.
I promise to honour this covenant and be loyal to this Church,
to accept its authority,
to abide by its laws and discipline,
and to encourage other members to do the same.

I will take my place in its ruling councils,
and seek its unity and peace...’

Calvin emphasized discipline in the church. Talking about the ordained ministers being bound to the church by ordination he talked about ‘law of vocation’ saying (Inst.4.3.7):

...Let everyone, then, who undertakes the government and care of one church, now that he is bound by this law of divine vocation, not that he is restricted to the soil (as lawyers speak), that is, enslaved, and, as it were, fixed, as to be unable to move a foot if public utility so require, and the thing is done duly and in order; but he who has been called to one place ought not to think of removing, nor seek to be set free when he deems it for his own advantage. Again, if it is expedient for anyone to be transferred to another place, he ought not to attempt it of his own private motive, but to wait for public authority.

This binds the leadership with their institution of the church, so that they are well disciplined. This was inherited from Calvin who was very much concerned about order in the church. This shows the relevance of Calvin in contemporary Zimbabwe, with regards to ordination as is done in the reformed churches.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ as the Head of the church is a scriptural thing. It can be seen in such Scriptures as Ephesians 1:22 and Colossians 1:18. This was very significant to Calvin’s ecclesiology (Inst.4.3.1), which is why he shied away from the terms bishop and overseer because these were associated with a hierarchical structure. Both the UCCSA and UPCSA as may other reformed churches in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, they do not include the office of bishop in their polity, and embrace the concept of the priesthood of all believers so that all are equal, only Christ is Head and Lord. It can be argued that those who use the title bishop, it is only administratively, they know that theologically only Christ is the head of the

church. When the term of the moderator or presbytery Clark and the General Secretary as many reformed churches use in their polity, the church continues. In the contemporary religious environment, we have witnessed cases where the so called bishop of the church dies, the church also dies with him, and we tend to reason that such a person exercises a lot of power of a cultic nature in that church, hence it may not continue without him or the result is a schism in the church in the aftermath (Daneel 1988:79). This adds weight on the argument for the relevance of Calvin's ideas on the contemporary situation.

According to Calvin each minister has a local church they are working with. This however did not mean independence for him. As can be seen in his Genevan articles, he valued collegiality to the point that he proposed a meeting for ministers once per week to pray, study and counsel each other (1541:2). This he saw as good for sound doctrine. This fits very well with the African philosophy of Ubuntu which says you are an individual in the context of the social collective. Ubuntu is a tie that binds relationship in Africa. It demands that the person of an ordained minister walk together in fellowship with fellow minister and be bound to the church and the community he leads. It is however a concern noted in this thesis that there is the shift to be apart by the churches yet we are in pursuit of the same mission. The ordained ministry must be a means to church unity and solidarity and not divisions in the body of Christ. Herein we see the relevance of Calvin's view of ministry, that it is relevant in the church struggle for unity in the current context.

Having seen the areas in which Calvin's ideas are still relevant to the contemporary church and the context of the world, there are some areas that needs reinterpretation, particularly noting the context from which he wrote. The reformed churches may not need to throw away such ideas or tradition but it may be helpful to approach them from a different perspective. The following areas noted in this thesis may cast doubt in-terms of relevance if they are taken dogmatically:

In the *Institutes* (Inst. 4.1.9), Calvin had this to say about the visible church:

“Hence the form of the Church appears and stands forth conspicuous to our view. Wherever we see the Word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence, since his promise cannot fail, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:20).

In this argument Calvin raises two important ecclesiological issues that may need re-interpretation to suit the context. In his concept of the church, it must be where ‘we see’ and where ‘the Word of God is sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered...’ The implication of ‘where we’ and ‘where the’ implies a geographic place. This needs reinterpretation according to the contemporary context where we see an emergent church that does not want to identify with an institution. It is more of a challenge when we consider the proliferation of online services as well as challenges like the COVID 19. It does seem that in the immediate future, the church will likely be adopting virtual form of ministry. This definition and description of a church by Calvin needs to be reinterpreted because the ordained ministry’s mode of function may need to change to adapt to the context.

In the process of reinterpreting Calvin, if the society be ripe to the fluid form of Christianity that is suggested by the emerging church scholars, the second form of the church which is the invisible may actually be used to base the theology of church and ministry. In this regard he says in his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (4.1.9), “The Church universal is the multitude collected out of all nations, who, though dispersed and far distant from each other, agree in one truth of divine doctrine, and are bound together by the tie of a common religion. In this way it comprehends single churches, which exist in different towns and villages, according to the wants of human society, so that each of them justly obtains the name and authority of the Church; and also comprehends single individuals, who by a religious

profession are accounted to belong to such churches, although they are in fact aliens from the Church, but have not been cut off by a public decision.” Ordained ministers, though their relevance in such a context may be debatable, will be ministering to an invisible church as it were in the sense that people are no more gathered in a certain locality.

In the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (4.1.22) Calvin teaches about the exercise of the keys which have been entrusted to the church by our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 16:19; 18:18 and 2Corinthians 5:20. Calvin see this as relating to the ordained ministry dispensing forgiveness, reconciliation and even church discipline. What is positive about Calvin in this context of emerging church and post-modernism is his emphasis that this ministry can be done in public ministry and private ministry as Paul did. He argues saying “...when presbyters or bishops, to whom the office has been committed, confirm pious consciences, in the hope of pardon and forgiveness by the promises of the gospel, and that as well in public as in private, as the case requires. For there are many who, from their infirmity, stand in need of special pacification, and Paul declares that he testified of the grace of Christ not only in the public assembly, but from house to house, reminding each individually of the doctrine of salvation (Acts 20:20, 21).” It is this emphasis by Calvin on the ministry of the ordained ministry as including ‘private’ ministry in homes that speaks to the relevance of Calvin’s ideas in these times of social isolation.

Strategic Perspective

The strategic perspective helped in this thesis to relate the problems that are part of the reasons for this thesis with the findings herein, in order to postulate a strategy for the reformed churches in their missional struggles with the contemporary context. Once again, the ideas inherited from the Calvinistic tradition came at the fore-front because in a huge way they constitute the reformed understanding of church and polity. Yes, the research found that there is no unanimity on the significance and relevance of the ordained ministry in the reformed churches as seen in the UCCSA

and the UPCSA. The traditional understanding of ministry and what it means to be church is being severely challenged by the contextual elements of post modernism such as social, scientific and political realities that presents a new religious environment for doing ministry.

It was from the problems and challenges unravelled by the research such as the reason that there is no consensus in the reformed churches in Zimbabwe on what ordination is, and its proper place in ministry. What is known of the ordained ministry seems to lack some theological depth, that this thesis proposed a standardised theological training of ministers that is satisfactory to the church because the environment for ecclesial ministry is challenging and complex due to the kind of knowledge that people have been exposed to. These ministers must be adequately equipped to respond to challenges and effectively teach the church important issues of ecclesiology and polity.

The empirical research found that many people are not very much schooled in the ecclesiology espoused by the reformed churches (UCCSA and UPCSA). This results in confusion as people sometimes begin to doubt essential doctrines such as ministry offices and ordination from an uninformed position. Yes, people may be taught in their catechumen class on polity, but this becomes only technical if there is no adequate knowledge of ecclesiology. Such believers may not withstand sceptical questions that are brought by post modernism. Hence the strategy for strong ecclesiological teaching in churches.

Another point relating to the academic training of the clergy, is the kind of processes leading to the training. These do not deal with issues to do with the call, but also the content and strategy of training. The aim must be to produce well balanced ministers in terms of academic knowledge plus the charisma that supports such knowledge. This came out of the finding that many participants were complaining that most ministers in the reformed churches lack in the area to do with the special gifting of the spirit. The context in Africa, and especially in Zimbabwe is that there are many people

who have been left out of the main stream economy and some social scientific developments. They tend to seek answers in religion. Thus, if the person of an ordained minister though gifted he/she be, if they feel that there is no charisma – they seek alternatives in such churches as AICs who depend on charisma as the criteria for ministry and not academic giftedness.

The question of the principles of the reformed theology could not escape the research. This was more so concerning the principle of ‘the priesthood of all believers’. Many of our participants feel as if there is no need for the ordained ministry as it negates the priesthood of all believers. Even though the theological teaching says the membership of the church is equal, and that ordination is an act of appointing into a church office which has nothing to do with the superiority of the clergy, it would seem the praxis is telling a story where the ordained minister seems to be above than the lay membership of the church. The strategy was then to ‘rethink and redefine’ the whole concept of the priesthood of all believers, and its relationship with the ordained ministry. There must be a deliberate plan to bridge the gap between the teaching and praxis.

While most strategies pointed to the fact that Calvin’s views on offices and ordination will remain relevant for some considerable future, it must not be ignored that the contemporary challenges of the post-modern world are slowly eroding its significance. The threats of the growing emergent church, the social and technological challenges that offer people options of doing worship away from church gathering and fellowships, and the proliferation of knowledge in the internet of which some of it is detrimental to Christian values and the emergence of health challenges as the COVID-19 are having a huge impact on how ministry is done, and conversely has an effect on the ordained ministry of the church and how it is perceived. It was recommended that there is need to understand Calvin from his 16th century context in order to best apply his ideas in the contemporary context so much that we may have what can be termed ‘contemporary African Reformed Church Polity.’

The question of relevance for the ordained ministry in the church in the light of shifting context cannot be under-estimated. History has painful lessons of some leadership groups in religious institutions who got extinct because of changing context. A good example is the Sadducees within the Jewish religion. They lead the sacrificial worship in the temple and had a hand in matters of political governance through their association with the Sanhedrin. They were Jewish leaders just as the ordained ministry constitutes leadership in the Christian church. According to Padfield (2017:10) the Sadducees were the largest of the Jewish leadership sects. They existed between the construction of the second Jewish temple (ca. 516BC) and its destruction by the Romans in AD 70. They operated in the temple. When the temple was destroyed they failed to rebrand themselves and adapt to the new context hence their demise. This provides a stern warning to the church to rethink its ministry.

From both a theological and hermeneutical perspective, the Bible teaches about the ability to read the signs of the times in order to act with wisdom (Matthew 24:3f). About this, the *Guadium et Spes*, Vatican II's pastoral constitution of the church in the modern context as cited in Himes (2002:1) tell a better understanding to the meaning of this concept when it reads:

To discharge this duty (namely, with the guidance of the *Paraclete*, to continue to the work of Christ who came into the world to give witness to the truth, to save and not to judge, to serve and not to be served), the church has a duty in every age of examining the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel, so that it can offer in a manner appropriate to each generations replies to continuous human questionings on the meaning of this life and the life to come and on how they are related. There is need, then, to be aware of, and to understand, the world in which we live, together with its expectations, its desires and its frequently dramatic character.

Reading of the signs of the times and proper remodelling and rebranding of the church is not an option, it is an imperative for the church's relevance in

mission. The 21st century context is such that the institution of the church with its establishments and servants like the ordained ministry are under scrutiny. It is thus a strategic way forward for the church to position itself and ministry in ways that best serve answer humanity's deepest questions in this era. This is a call for relevance, which the church can learn from old and foundational voices like that of Calvin to the reformed churches.

The dispute regarding the relevance of ordained ministry in the church especially in Calvinistic churches is a call to both a transition to static institutional church to a new missional paradigm. Herein the ordained ministry will find their relevance because the post-modern society requires a change that is more flexible and fluid. A church that is characteristic of a missional church. The other imperative that is necessary in this context is holding joint fraternal meetings and conferences in both the clergy and laity. This is very needful for church unity. The problems that confront the church in this contextual climate are global. This is the stage where the relevance of the ordained ministry must be demonstrated. If the ordained ministry and church ministry in general continue to struggle to solve challenges and problems from a local level, then they will become irrelevant in the global stage, where many post-modern challenges like human trafficking, global warming, religious right and political extremism are taking place. The question of relevance is thus a work up call for missional thinking. The church must begin to think in terms of *Missio-Dei* and not church programmes.

The emphasis on the missionality of the church is vitally important for the question of relevance. It can be argued that this paradigm takes the church back to the basic understanding of the church in biblical writers like Paul had. He presents to us a kind of Christological ecclesiology in Ephesians 1:22-23 where he says "*far above all principality, power, and mighty, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.*" The church which is the body of

Christ represents him in all context. By the church's actions Christ is seen to be supreme and above all things. All order and offices in the church must help serve this Christological imperative, which is an aspect of Missio-Dei.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akuul, T. Postmodernism and Its Relevance to African Development, (accessed in Continental Development 1:57-61. Accessed 2010, 03/10/18 from www.wiloludjournal.com .

Annual report on global preparedness for health emergencies Global Preparedness Monitoring Board [Internet]. [Cited 2020 Feb 7]. Available from:

https://apps.who.int/gpmb/assets/annual_report/GPMB_annualreport_2019.pdf

Atherton, R. (1996). *The Catholic Priesthood: From Trent to Vatican 11 and Beyond*, Durham Theses, Durham University.

Althaus, P. & Schultz, R. C. 1966. *The Theology of Martin Luther*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Avis, D. L. P. 2002. *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

Bagchi, D., Steinmetz, D.C. and David, B. eds. 2004. *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*. Cambridge University Press.

Bakker, w. 1992. Wat is kerkrecht? In: Van't Spijker and Van Drimmelen, 1992, 13-19.

Barkley, J. M. *The Meaning of Ordination*. Accessed 10/05/18 from www.cambridge.org.uplib.idm.oclc.org .

Barth, K. 1947. Die Botschaft von der freien Gnade Gottes, in *Theologischen Existenz heute Heft 9*, p.24-37, edited by K.G. Steck & G. Eichholz, Chr. Kaizer Verlag, München.

Baton, J. & Muddiman, J. 2001. *The oxford Bible Commentary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bergier, J. F. and Kingdon, R. F. *Registres de la Compagnie des pasteurs de Geneve au temps de Calvin*, 2 vols. (n. p., 1962-4), Registres I, pp. 1-13. Translated by G.R. Potter and M. Greengrass, under the title *Jean Calvin* (Edward Arnold; London, 1983) pp. 71-6.

Black, M. & Rowley, H. H. (edit), 1962. *Peaks Commentary on the Bible*, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Bonhoeffer, D. 1963. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: McMillan Publishing.

Bonnet, J. Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters. *Translated by D. Constable, et al*, 7, pp.1844-1858.

David Bosch's *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* Maryknoll: Orbis 1991.

Bouwman, H. 1928. *Gereformeerde Kerkrecht*. De Groot Goudriaan.

Bradshaw, P.F. 1990. *Ordination rites of the ancient churches of east and west* (p. 133). New York, NY: Pueblo Publishing Company.

Burger, C. 2013. The Church we could be – what churches can learn from Calvin's congregational theology, in NGTT No. 54. Stellenbosch University.

Busch, E. 2004. *The great passion. An introduction to Karl Barth's theology*, transl. G.W. Bromley and D.L. Guder & B. William (eds.). Grand Rapids, M: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Calvin, J. [1536]. 1849. *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans (Vol. 12)*. Translated by J, Owen. Calvin translation society.

Calvin, J. [1536] (1950). *Commentaries on the Prophet Jeremiah and Lamentations*. Translated and Edited by J. Owen, Michigan: WMB. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Calvin, J. (Tr. J Pringle). [1546]. 2009. *Commentary on Corinthians-Volume 7*. Translated by J. Pringle. *Christian Classics Ethereal Library (CCEL)*. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom40.xvi.ii.html>.

Calvin, J. [1550]. 2009. *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Hebrews*. Translated by J, Owen. Grand Rapids: Baker books

Calvin, J. 1541. *Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, September and October 1541. *Calvin; Theological Treatises*, pp.58-72.

Calvin, J. [1557]. (1845). *Commentary on the book of psalms*, Volume 1, translated by J. Anderson, and published June 2005. Grand Rapids MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Viewed from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.htm>.

Calvin, J. [1854]. 2009. *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*. By John Calvin. Translated from the original Latin by the Rev. William Pringle. [With the text in Latin and English.]. Calvin Translation Society. Baker House. Grand Rapids.

Calvin, J. [1959]. (2002), *Institutio Christianae Religionis*, translated by H. Beveridge and edited by R. J. Dunzweiler, viewed on 16 November 2019 at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/InstitutioChristianaeReligionis.titlepage.html>

Calvin, J. [1548] 1948. *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*. Translated by W, Pringle. Michigan: Grand Rapids.

Calvin J. [1585] 1949, *Commentary upon Acts of the Apostles Vol.1*. Translated and Edited by H, Beveridge. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids: Michigan.

Calvin, J. 1844. *Calvin's Tracts Relating to Reformation, Vol. 1*. Edinburgh: Translated by S. Beveridge. The Calvin Translation Society.

Calvin, J. [1855]. 1999. *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Vol. 45). Translated by J, Owen. Calvin translation society.

Calvin, J. [1847]. 1999. Commentary on Zechariah, Malachi. Translated by J, Owen. *Grand Rapids: CCEL*.

Calvin, J. [1847].1999. *Commentary on Jonah, Micah, Nahum*. Translated by J, Owen. *Grand Rapids: CCEL*.

Calvin, J. 1954. *Theological treatises* (Vol. 22). Translated by K. S. Reid. Westminster John Knox Press.

Calvin, J. ([Sa]). *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Translated by W, Pringle. *Calvin's Commentaries, 21*.

Calvin, J., Torrance, D.W. and Torrance, T.F. 1994. *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Vol. 1). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Carroll, W, H.1985. *A History of Christendom, 4 Volumes*. Front Royal: Christendom Press.

Carvalhoes, C. 2019. Being church as we live with COVID-19(1) accessed 31/03/2020 in https://reimaginingworship.com/being-church-as-we-live-with-covid19-challenges-and-demands-claudio-carvalhoes/?fbclid=IwAR1idzNaKIHg3qANQP3sw-tWY1Du_ptKYhxueCF3aljbrBZR4te56ASP7Hc .

Chennells, A.J. 1980. Essay review: The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe. *Zambezia*, 8(2), pp.195-212.

Chipunza O. T. (Bishop) at the ordination of Pastor Masawi, in a sermon entitled 'Season of Unparalleled Favour. Accessed 22 April 2015 in Sunday Mail accessed from www.sundaymail.co.zw .

Chitando, E., Gunda, M.R. and K ugler, J. eds. 2014. *Multiplying in the Spirit: African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe* (Vol. 15). University of Bamberg Press.

Clinton, I., 1959. *These Vessels. The Story of Inyathi 1859-1959*. Bulawayo: Stuart Manning.

Coertzen, P. 2004. 'Decently and in Order' A Theological Reflection on the Order for, and Order, in the Church. Leuven Dudley, MA: Uitgeverij Peeters.

Cottret, B. 2000. *Calvin, a biography*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing.

Dachs, J. A. 1973. *Christianity South of Zambezi*. Gweru: Mambo Press

Daneel, M. 1988. *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches vol.3: Leadership and Fission Dynamics*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

David Gordon, T. 1994. "Equipping" Ministry in Ephesians 4? *Jets* 37/1. P.69-78, accessed on 07/06/18 in www.wls.wels.net.

Davison, A. 2013. *Why Sacraments*, SPCK, London.

Decree for the Armenians, 11 Council of Florence, 1439.

Dillon-Malone, C.M., 1978. *The Korsten Basketmakers*, Lusaka: The Institute for African Studies.

Dolan, J. P. 1964. *History of Reformation: A Conciliatory Assessment of opposite views*, New York: Descke.

Dozeman, T. B. 2008. *Holiness and Ministry. A Biblical Theology of Ordination*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dreyer, W.A. 2010. Calvin on church and government. *In die Skriflig*, 44(Supplement 3), pp.167-179.

Dreyer, W. A. 2011. “Praktiese ekklesiologie en bedieningspraktyk” PHD Thesis, aan die Fakulteit Teologie, Universiteit van Pretoria.

Dreyer, W.A. 2010. Calvin on church and government. *In die Skriflig*, 44(Supplement 3), pp.167-179.

Dreyer, W. 2013. Missional Ecclesiology as basis for New Church Order: A case Study, HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 69(1), Art #1368, 5pages.

Dreyer, W. 2014. *New Context, New Church Order*. In Koffeman J. L. ed. *Protestant Church Polity in Changing Context 11*. Zurich: Lit verlag Gmbh & Co. KG Wien.

Dunagan, M. 1999-2004. Commentary on 1Timothy 4:14. *Mark Dunagan Commentaries on the Bible*, www.studylight.org .

Eduard, B. 1897. *Cyprian, His Life, His Times, His Works*. London: MacMillan.

Ellingsen, M. 1981. *Luther's Concept of the Ministry: The Creative Tension*. *Word & World*, 1, pp.338-46.

Epidemics, infodemics, and the 'bioinformational' paradigm, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2020.1744226

Ewing, K. 2014. *Post Modernism and Africa* (H Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online).

Faith and Order no.111. 1982. *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*, Geneva: WCC.

Fanning, D. 2009. *Roman Catholic Church Era Medieval Period*. *Medieval Catholic Era 1000-1500*. Liberty University, http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgm_hist/4.

Ferguson, E. 1960. *Ordination in the Ancient Church (1)*. *Restoration Quarterly* Vol. 4. No.3 accessed on 26-05-18 in www.digitalcommons.ac.edu.

Fitzgerald, A. D. 1999. *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopaedia*, Eerdmanns, Grand Rapids- Michigan.

Gassmann, G. 1993. *Documentary History of Faith and Order 1963*. Geneva: WCC.

Hinson, E.G. 1981. *Ordination in the Christian Church*, <http://doi.org/10.1177/003463738107800403> .

Gonzalez, E. 2012. *Deconstructing Ordination: Biblical Theology or Post Biblical Tradition?* Macquarie University. *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 15.2. P.221-244.

Guder, D. L. *The Nicaean Marks in a Post Christendome Church*. Accessed on 05-05-2010, in www.pcusa.org/re-formingministry/about/whyecclesiology.html .

Gundani, P. H. 2001. *Changing Patterns of Authority and Leadership: Developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe after Vatican 11 1965-1985*. Harare: UZ Publications.

Gwaravanda E. T, Masitera E. & Muzambi, T. 2011. *Religious Studies and Globalisation: A Critique of Zimbabwe's current Religious Studies Ordinary Level Syllabus*. Accessed on 03/10/18 from [alternation www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za) .

Hartley, B. 2014. *What's in a Word? Diakonia and Deacons in the Bible and Today*. Accessed on 07/05/2020 in www.digitalcommons.georgefox.edu .

Hartley, B.L. 2016. *Diakonia and Mission: Charting the Ambiguity*. place.asburyseminary.edu DOI:10.7252/Paper-000050.

Heitink, G. 2007. *Een kerk Met karakter* – Kampen, Uitgeverij kok, Tijd voor hororientatie .

Hill, M. 2016. 'The Regulation of Christian Churches: Ecclesiology, Law and Polity', HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 72(1), a3382. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i1.3382> .

Himes, M.J. 2002. *Reading the Signs of the Times: Theological Reflections. Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America.* CTSA Proceedings 57 (2002): 1-17 •

Johns, D. W. M. 1985. *The Counter Reformation: Religion and Society in Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, R.M. 1918. *The Anabaptists and Minor Sects in the Reformation.* Harvard Theological Review, 11(3), pp.223-246.

Jules-Rosette, B. 1987. 'New Religious Consciousness and the State in Africa. Selected Case Studies.' Archives (1) de Sciences Sociales des Religions 32 e (641) 15-25.

Kalu, O.U., 1998. The third response: Pentecostalism and the reconstruction of Christian experience in Africa, 1970–1995. Journal of African Christian Thought, 1(2), pp.3-16.

Kealotswe, O., 2014. The nature and character of the African Independent Churches (AICs) in the 21st century: Their theological and social agenda. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 40(2), pp.227-242.

Knoll, B. R & Bolin, C. J. 2018. *She preached the word. Women's ordination in America.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Koffeman, L. J. 2014. *In order to Serve. An Ecumenical Introduction to Church Polity,* Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG. Wien.

Koffeman, L.J. 2012. *Het goed recht van die kerk: Een theologische inleiding op het kerkrecht*, Leo J Koffeman (herdruk).

Küng, H. 1968. *The church*. London: Search.

Labuschagne, J. P. 2000. 'Calvinism and Mission', HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 65(1), Art. #310,8pages. DOI:10.4102/hts.v65i1.310.

Laveter, H. R. (Trans. J. D. Roth), 2014. *Calvin, Farel, And The Anabaptists: On the Origins of the Brief Instruction of 1544; MQR 88*. Accessed on 20. 07.2019 In www.academia.edu .

Long, E.L.R. 2001. *Patterns of polity: Varieties of church governance*. Cleveland, O H: Pilgrim Press.

Lopes, A. 1997. S Teologico, Presbyteriano Rev Josemanoelda Conceicao. Sao Paulo.

Lotter, G. and Van Aarde, T. 2017. *A rediscovery of the priesthood of believers in Ephesians 4: 1-16 and its relevance for the Missio Dei and a biblical missional ecumenism*. In *die Skriflig*, 51(2), pp.1-10.

Luter, A. B. 1980. "Discipleship and the Church." *Faculty Publications and Presentations* 251. http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lts_fac_pubs/251 .

Luther, A. M. *Calvin and unity. Its Meaning for churches in Indonesia*. PHD Thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 7 December 2010.

Macy, G. 2008. *The hidden History of Women's Ordination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mangena, F. & Mizha, S. 2013. *The Rise of White Collar Prophecy in Zimbabwe. A Psycho-Ethical Statement*. In Chitando, E., Gunda, M. R., and Kugler, J. eds. *Prophets, Profits, and the Bible in Zimbabwe*. Festschrift for Aynos Masotcha Moyo. (Vol. 12). Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press.

Matthews, A. G. (edit.), 1658. *The savoy declaration of Faith and Order*. Chap.xxviii.1.

McGarvey J. W. 1870. *A Treatise on the Eldership*, Apostolic Times. Accessed 26/05/2018 from www.allencoc.org .

McNeill, J. T. (ed. Donald K. Mckim). 1992. "The Church in the Sixteenth Century Reformed Theology," Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition. Grand Rapids, M: Eerdmans.

McNeill, J.T. 1967. *The history and character of Calvinism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meeter, H. H. (trans.Dr. P. Prins. Kampen: JH Kok N.V. Plomp, J 1969). 1957. *De kerklijke tucht bij Calvin*. Kampen: J.H. Kok NV.

Meiring A. 2015. Discovering and exploring Ubuntu – language in the dialogue between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36(2), art. #1439, 8pages: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i2.1439> .

Michael, A., Peters, P. J. & Peter, M. (2020): Viral modernity?

Milner, B. C. 1970. *Calvin's doctrine of the church*. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill.

Moffat, J.S. 1886. *The Lives of Robert & Mary Moffat*. TF Unwin.

Moltmann, J. 1993. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Mpofu, S. 2014. *The 'Third Wave' Religious Right Movement and the growth of Zimbabwean Christianity: faith or economic response?* (Doctoral thesis, University of Pretoria).

Mugumbate, J. and Nyanguru, A. 2013. *Exploring African philosophy: The value of ubuntu in social work*. Accessed on 05-03-2019, in *African Journal of Social Work*, 3(1), pp.82-100.

Mukanya, S., 1999. *Dynamics of History*. Harare: College Press.

Mutangi, T. 2008. *Religion, law and human rights in Zimbabwe*. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 8(2), pp.526-545.

Mwangi, J. K. & De Klerk, B. J. 2011. 'An Integrated Competency – Based Training Model for Theological Training'; *HTS Teologiese/Theological Studies* 67(20), Art. # 1036, 10pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/htsv67;2.1036>.

Niemandt, C.J.P. 2015. 'Together towards life and mission: A basis for good governance in church and society today', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36(1), Art. #1361, 10 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i1.1361>.

Nyathi, P. 2000. *Alvord Mabena: the man and his roots*. Harare: Priority Projects Publishing.

Osborne, K. B. 2003. *Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church Church*. Oregon: WPF and Stock Publishers.

Osmer, R. R. 2008. *Practical theology: An introduction*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Padfield, D. 2017. *Jewish Sects of the Second Temple*. Accessed 24-05-2018 in www.padfield.com.

Packull, W. O. 2004. 'An Introduction to Anabaptist Theology' in D. Bagchi, & D. C. Steinmetz, (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*. Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press.

Plomp, J. 1969. *De Kerkelijke Tucht Bij Calvin*. Kampen: J H kok N.V.

Pont, A.D. 1989. Die priesterskap van die gelowiges soos Calvyn dit gesien het, *HTS Theological Studies* 45/2 (1989), p. 451 – 460.

Randolph, R. H. 1985. *DAWN IN Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Reid, C. J. Jnr. & Witten J. Jnr. 1999. *Emory Law Journal: In the steps of Gratien: Writing the History of Canon Law in the 1990s*, from *Emory Law Journal* Vol.48, No.2, Spring.

Robertson, A.T. 1932. *Word pictures in the New Testament* (Vol. 1). CCEL.

Rotaru, I., Nitulescu, L. & Rudolf, C. 2010. *The post-modern paradigm – a framework of today's media impact in cultural space. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 5 (2010) 301–305. Available online at www.sciencedirect.com .

Roth, J.D. 2014. *Calvin, Farel, and the Anabaptists: on the origins of the Brieve instruction of 1544. Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 88(3), pp.323-350. www.academia.edu.

Roy Briggs, D. & Wing J. 1970. *The Harvest and Hope. The Story of Congregationalism in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg: UCCSA.

Ruzivo, M. 2017. *Ecumenical Initiatives in Southern Rhodesia: A History of Southern Rhoseia Missionary Conference 1903-1945. Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* pp. 1-17.

Ryken, P. G. 2007. *1 Timothy*. New Jersey: P&R Publishing.

Sakenfeld, K. D. 2009. *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible Me-R* Vol. 4. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Schmidt, A.M. 1960. *John Calvin and the Calvinistic Tradition* (Vol. 10). New York: Harper.

Shoko, T. & Chiwara, A. 2013. *The prophetic figure in Zimbabwean Religion*. In Chitando, E., Gunda, M. R., and Kugler, J. eds). *Prophets, Profits, and*

the Bible in Zimbabwe: Festschrift for Aynos Masotcha Moyo. (Vol.12).
Bamberg: Unibersity of Banberg Press.

Stowe, D.M. 1996. My pilgrimage in mission. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 20(3), pp.118-121.

Strauch, A. 1997. *Restoring The Biblical Eldership Booklet Eldership to its Rightful Place in the Church.* Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth Publishers.

Strauss, S.A. 1993. John Calvin and the Belgic Confession. *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi*, 27(4), pp.501-518.

Strohm, C., 2014, On the Historical Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism, published in *Acta Theologica* 2014 Suppl 20:16-34.

The Lockman Foundation. 1981. *Naus Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible in Hebrew – Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries*, accessed on 05/05/2018 in Lockman.org

Thompson J. L. *The Good, the Bad, and indifferent: Myths, realities and Ambiguities in Calvin’s teachings about Women”* in John Calvin, Myth and Reality: Images and Impact of Geneva’s Reformer. A Nelson Burnett, Ed. (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books 2009), 44.

Togarasei, L. 2016. *Historicising Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe*, *Studia Historiae Ecclesisticae* vol 40; no.2./2016/pp1-13, published by the Church History Society of Southern Africa and UNISA Press.

UCCSA, 2006. *Tell me the old story. A missional plan for the local church.* Brixton: UCCSA Publications.

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. 2007. *The manual of faith and order of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.*

van Aarde, T. 2016. The relation of God's mission and the mission of the church in Ephesians. *Missionalia*, 44(3), pp.284-300.
www.missionalia.journals.ac.za | <http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/44-2-117>

Van Alten, H.H. 2017. *The Beginning of a Spirit-filled Church: A Study of the Implications of the Pneumatology for the Ecclesiology in John Calvin's Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Vol. 45). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Van der Merwe, B.J. 1962. *The laying on of the hands in the Old Testament*. OTWSA, 5(1), pp.34-43.

Van der Water, D. 2001. *The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA)-A case study of a united and ecumenical church*. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 22(1), pp.149-157. Accessed on 24/05.2018. In www.journals.co.za

Van Wyk, B. J. 1991. *Die Presbiteriale – Sinodale Kerkbegrip*, Pretoria: Kital.

Vestraelen, F. J. 1995. Patterns of Missionary and Ecumenical relationship in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical research*, 24 (3), P. 189-221.

Vine, W. E. 1981. *Vines Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament*. Iowa: World Bible Publishers.

Volts C. A. 1997. *The Medieval Church*, Abingdon Press, Nashville.

Vorster, N. & Van der Walt, S. 2017. *Reformed Theology Today: Biblical and Systematic – Theological Perspectives*. Durbanville: Aosis (Pty) Ltd.

Walker R. S. M. 1992. *Articles on Calvin and Calvinism. Calvin's Ecclesiology: sacraments and Deacons*. Edited by R. C. Gamble. GARLAND Publishing, INC., New York and London

Waltner, E. 1951. *The Anabaptist conception of the church*. The Mennonite Quarterly Review, 25(1), p.5-16.

Westphal, C. 1960. *The marks of the Church: A Protestant viewpoint*. Anglican theological Review 42. P. 91-100.

Willumon, W. H. 2016. Pastor. *The theology and practice of ordained ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Unpublished Sources.

Booth I. 2017, *UCCSA/UPCSA Union*, unpublished paper.

Nkala, S. *Ndebele Kingship circus new twist* in www.newsday.co.zw 2017/11 accessed 31/03/2020.

Pipim S. K., ([Sa]). *The Meaning and Purpose of Ordination*, Director of Public Campus Ministries, Michigan Conference (unpublished paper).

Internet Sources

[Ndanga, J. 2016. In www.chronicle.co.zw/bond-note-split-church](http://www.chronicle.co.zw/bond-note-split-church) accessed [23-02-2018](#) (accessed in a Chronicle Newspaper of 7 August 2016).

www.oikoumene.org/en/member_churches/evangelical_Lutheran_church_in_zimbabwe accessed 17-09-2019

www.rhodesianstudycircle.org.uk/church_of_Sweden_Mnene_Mission/ accessed 17-09-2019

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR XOLANI MASEKO

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

STUDENT NUMBER: 13402677

FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS ONLY

RESEARCH QUESTION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE **ORDAINED MINISTRY WITH REFERENCE TO THE REFORMED CHURCHES.**

1. PSEUDO NAME:
 2. AGE(OPTIONAL):
 3. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:
 4. YEARS IN MINISTRY AS ORDAINED MINISTER:
 5. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONAL):
-
- A. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY?

 - B. IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF ORDINATION THE SAME WITH THAT OF YOUR CHURCH DENOMINATION? IF SO/NOT HOW ARE THEY SIMILAR/DIFFERENT?

 - C. DO YOU THINK ORDAINED MINISTRY MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH AND SOCIETY? ANSWER (i) FOR CHURCH AND (ii) FOR SOCIETY.

 - D. WHAT PART OF THE PRACTICE OF ORDINATION IN YOUR CHURCH WOULD YOU WANT CHANGED AND WHY?

APPENDIX B

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR XOLANI MASEKO

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

STUDENT NUMBER: 13402677

FOR LAITY IN THE CHURCH

RESEARCH QUESTION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY WITH REFERENCE TO REFORMED CHURCHES.

1. PSEUDO NAME:
 2. AGE(OPTIONAL)
 3. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:
 4. POSITION IN CHURCH IF ANY:
 5. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONAL):
-
- A. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY?

 - B. DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORDAINED MINISTERS AND THOSE WHO DO MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH BUT ARE NOT ORDAINED (LAY LEADERSHIP)?

 - C. BASED ON WHAT YOU SEE AND HEAR IN THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY AROUND US WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE FUTURE OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH.

APPENDIX C

XOLANI MASEKO
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
STUDENT NUMBER: 13402677
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

RESEARCH QUESTION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY WITH REFERENCE TO REFORMED CHURCHES.

1. PSEUDO NAME:
 2. AGE(OPTIONAL):
 3. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP(DENOMINATION):
 4. EDUCATIONALQUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONAL):
-
- A. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY?
 - B. DO YOU THINK PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH STILL HAVE HIGH REGARD OF ORDINATION?
 - C. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHURCHES WERE THERE IS NO FORMAL STRUCTURE?
 - D. IS THERE ANY THING RELATED TO THE SUBJECT OF ORDINATION THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO TELL ME?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH.

Appendix D

ORDER FOR A MINISTER'S ORDINATION AND INDUCTION OR APPOINTMENT TO A CHARGE

GOD'S CALL

Call to Worship: Psalms 100 or 106

THE PEOPLE'S APPROACH

Processional Hymn

The Presbytery Clerk says, Let us worship God, and announces a hymn of praise. During its singing he/she leads the procession into the church.

Greeting and Welcome

The congregation is seated.

The Moderator of Presbytery, standing behind the Holy Table, greets them:

We greet you all in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
and welcome you to this service.

Statement of Intent

We are here to worship God
and to ordain [full name] to the ministry of Word and sacrament
in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ
and induct/appoint him/her to minister in the congregation of

The Moderator then leads the devotions that follow or invites the person appointed to lead them to do so.

Prayer of Praise

Prayer of Confession

Assurance of Grace

(Hymn/Song)

The congregation may sing a hymn or join in a time of praise and song.

GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Readings

Charges

The Moderator delivers the charges or else invites the preacher Presbytery has appointed to deliver them.

The ordinand stands or sits facing the preacher during the charge to him/her.

The charges may begin,

In the Name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

If the ordinand stands for the charge to him/her, the preacher then invites him/her to sit for the charge to the congregation.

THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

Confession of Faith

The Nicaean Creed is recited.

Offering and Hymn

Prayer of Dedication and Thanks

A prayer of thanksgiving may in any case be offered.

ORDINATION

Preamble to the Ordination

The congregation is seated.

The Moderator stands at the Holy Table with the ordinand facing him/her and says:

The Lord Jesus Christ, having ascended on high,
has given people different gifts.
To some his gift was that they should be apostles, to some, prophets,
to some, evangelists, to some, pastors and teachers,
to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ
until we all attain to the unity of faith
and of the knowledge of the Son of God. *Eph 4:11-13*

Brother/Sister [*name*],
Presbytery will now proceed, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
to ordain you to the ministry of Word and sacrament,
and induct/appoint you to this charge
that you may pastor and teach its people.
Let us hear then hear the record of procedure.

The Clerk reads the appropriate Narrative of Procedure.

Declaration of Standards

The Clerk reads the UPCSA's Declaration of Standards:

Listen also to the Church's Declaration of its Standards.

The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa shares the faith
that the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church has always held.

It believes and trusts in Jesus Christ
as the Lord and Redeemer of the world
in whom God saves us by grace through faith.

In line with what God has revealed in Jesus Christ
it worships one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This Church accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as inspired by the Holy Spirit
to be the uniquely authoritative witness to Jesus Christ
and as such the Word of God and the final rule of faith and life.

It accepts the ecumenical creeds
commonly called the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds
as subordinate standards that witness to, and safeguard,

the faith that was committed to the disciples of our Lord.

It recognizes as witnessing to the Reformed faith
the Westminster Confession of Faith and
the Twenty-four Articles of the Faith, with their Appendix,
and affirms as its own confessions of faith and subordinate standards
the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA
and the Declaration of Faith for the Church in Southern Africa

The Uniting Presbyterian Church affirms its right to formulate, adopt,
modify and interpret its doctrinal statements,
always subject to the Word of God,
under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit
and in accord with the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.
Of this accord this Church itself shall be the sole judge.

This Church recognizes liberty of opinion
on all points of doctrine not fundamental to the faith.
But it retains the right in every case
to judge what falls within this description
and to guard against any abuse of this liberty
that may injure its witness, unity or peace.

Vow

The Moderator takes a copy of the Vow and says:

In response to the Church's Declaration of Standards
will you now make the prescribed Vow in the face of this congregation.

The Moderator hands the copy to the ordinand.

The ordinand faces the congregation and declares:

**I, [full name], own and confess God as my Father,
Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord,
and the Holy Spirit as my Helper.**

**As far as I know my own heart,
I am moved to enter this ministry
by zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
the call of the Holy Spirit,
the commission to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom on earth
and a desire for the salvation of all people.**

**I accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as inspired by the Holy Spirit
to be the uniquely authoritative and sufficient witness to Jesus Christ
and as such the Word of God and the final rule of faith and life.**

**I accept as subordinate standards of the faith the Apostles'
and Nicene Creeds.**

**I affirm the substance of the faith expressed
in the Confession of Faith of the UPCSA
and the Declaration of Faith for the Church in Southern Africa.**

**I acknowledge the doctrine and form of government
of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
to accord with Scripture.**

**I recognize that in ordaining me
the Uniting Presbyterian Church authorizes and commissions me
to serve as a Minister of Christ's Church.**

**My ordination thus establishes a covenant
between the Uniting Presbyterian Church and me
that binds me to be faithful to it and its ministry.
I promise to honour this covenant and be loyal to this Church,
to accept its authority,
to abide by its laws and discipline,
and to encourage other members to do the same.
I will take my place in its ruling councils
and seek its unity and peace.**

**With God's help I commit myself
to study the Scriptures faithfully,
to give myself to daily prayer,
to live a holy life,
to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
to be diligent in pastoral care,
and to respect the confidentiality
of all personal confessions and confidences shared with me,
so that God may use me to spread the gospel
and build up the Body of Christ.**

The Moderator requests the ordinand to sign the copy of the Vow on the Holy Table.

Amen.

Hymn

Act of Ordination

The Moderator requests the congregation to stand, the ordinand to kneel facing him/her, and the other Ministers to gather around the ordinand.

The Moderator says to the congregation:

In silence let us each pray for God to bless his servant, [name].

After a suitably long pause the Moderator says to the congregation:

To symbolize that Christ ordains through his Church
I invite you all to stretch out your hands toward the ordinand,
while we, as Ministers, lay hands on him/her
and we pray the Ordination Prayer.

The Moderator and the other Ministers lay hands on the ordinand, and the Moderator leads the Ordination Prayer:

Almighty God, we thank you that in every generation
you give abundant gifts to your people
with which to build up the body of Christ and serve you in the world.
We thank you for the men and women you call
to the ministry of the Word and sacraments.

We thank you now for your servant, [name],
for the grace you have shown him/her,
for the way you have led him/her,
for what you have taught him/her
and for the particular gifts you have given him/her.

We pray that you will pour out your Spirit upon him/her
and ordain him/her now to that ministry.

Moderator: That he/she may keep the holy vows he/she has made this day,
that true instruction may be in his/her mouth
and no wrong be found on his/her lips,

Ministers: **anoint him/her with your Spirit, Lord.**

Moderator: That he/she may be endued with a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,

Ministers: **anoint him/her with your Spirit, Lord.**

Moderator: That he/she may faithfully preach the gospel of Jesus Christ,
in the power of the Spirit make many disciples
and shepherd your people with love and patience,

Ministers: **anoint him/her with your Spirit, Lord.**

Moderator: That in the face of praise and blame, success and failure,
he/she may have the mind that is in Christ Jesus
and persevere in his/her ministry in humility and obedience.

Ministers: **anoint him/her with your Spirit, Lord.**

Moderator: That he/she may be earnest and unselfish in service,
pure in heart and lowly in personal claim,
and work in peace
with all who lead and minister with him/her,

Ministers: **anoint him/her with your Spirit, Lord.**

Moderator: That, when his/her work is finished,
he/she may stand before his/her Master,
hear him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!'
and so enter into the joy of his/her Lord,

Ministers: **anoint him/her with your Spirit, Lord.**

Moderator: All this we pray for Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen.

The congregation sings the Aaronic blessing.

Num.6:24-26

Commissioning to the Word and Sacraments

Robing and Gifts

The Moderator calls for the new Minister to be robed.

The Moderator gives the new Minister the bands of office.

The Moderator or Clerk may present a gift to the new Minister from the Presbytery.

If the gift is a Bible, it is suitably inscribed and given with the words:

Receive this Bible from the Presbytery as a memento of this day
on which God has given you authority to proclaim the gospel
and administer the sacraments.

If the congregation or any group within it is to present the new Minister with any gifts, the Moderator calls for these to be presented.

NB. Order for Ordination in the UPCSA edited to make it short without leaving out all key aspects in the original version.