

Earthkeepers' declaration of war

Since Independence in 1980 the traditional religio-cultural revival – which, through militant activity, reached a peak during the war years – has continued. In contrast to the colonial period, ancestor veneration has now assumed great prominence at public occasions, in religious instruction in schools, in church ceremonies and at ceremonies commemorating the struggle held annually at heroes' acres throughout the country. The Mwari cult has expanded its sphere of influence, becoming less secret and more easily accessible to noncultists from further afield than before 1980. It has also become more directly involved in national politics through the petitions of senior politicians. It would seem, for example, that Mwari's oracular views were solicited during the period when reconciliation was being negotiated between ZANU and ZAPU. Even business delegations from as far afield as Lusaka in the north and Johannesburg in the south were reported (in a series of research interviews conducted at the shrine, 1988–1990) to have visited the Dzilo shrine to consult the oracle about business ventures. Traditionally conservative as it still is, the cult is apparently adapting to modernisation, expanding its services to meet the needs of urban society as well.

The imposition of a socialist-Marxist model of local government in the rural areas immediately after Independence curtailed the land allocation and customary judicial powers of chiefs. Consequently the positions of both chiefs and *masvikiro*, which were always closely linked in tribal politics, were downgraded and they lost some prestige. The *masvikiro* in particular, after their rise to national eminence as *chimurenga* heroes, soon became frustrated with their relative obscurity in the postwar period. The new political system, they felt, did not accord them sufficient recognition for the key roles they had played in the liberation struggle. Neither could they exercise effective spiritual authority over modern processes of land and community development.

The rules of the game were changing and they had neither the funds nor the power of a common front to continue having a meaningful impact on national affairs.

A decade after Independence, therefore, many tribal dignitaries found themselves relatively isolated and despondent. Despite the government's gradual restoration of some of the chiefs' former judicial powers, they felt powerless to do much about the problems of their people – continuing landlessness, poverty, increasing population pressure on the already overcrowded communal lands, deterioration of the environment resulting in scarcities of fuelwood and poor crop yields, and so on. Thus they were psychologically primed for concerted action aimed at effectively addressing political and environmental issues and regaining some of their former national influence and prestige. This was how notions of regrouping in an ecological association started taking concrete shape.

By comparison, the AICs in Masvingo Province found themselves in a much more advantageous position in the postwar period. As far back as 1972 they had formed an association through which they could raise funds and engage in concerted action: an ecumenical council of Independent Churches called *Fambidzano*. (For a comprehensive description of the history and activities of *Fambidzano*, see Daneel 1989a.) Consequently they could increasingly devote their attention to development projects. Quite a number of *Fambidzano's* member churches received funds for community development and vocational training centres, small-scale industries such as carpentry and clothing factories, and agricultural and water projects.

Thus the focus of the AICs in the postwar situation shifted significantly from political to socio-economic liberation. The Holy Spirit was increasingly seen as the liberator from poverty and economic despair, hence as intimately involved, through the AICs, in nation building. In this phase development projects and even educational centres at AIC headquarters – such as the multi-million dollar college erected by Bishop Nehemiah Mutendi, son of and successor to the late Samuel Mutendi, at Zion City in the Bikita district – became signs of God's blessing on his people, his concretised salvation in black holy cities. This was not an entirely new idea. It was rather the practical extension of a pneumatological trend already manifest in earlier times, namely the Holy Spirit's

function as healer and life-giver, holistically encompassing everything that affects human wellbeing.

These post-Independence developments in both traditional religion and the AICs became apparent to me in the course of renewed empirical research in Zimbabwe from 1984 onwards. As founder of *Fambidzano*, and in the 1980s still honorary director of this movement, I was directly involved in raising funds for and implementing the Conference's first development programmes. It was soon evident, however, that development and so-called economic progress were not necessarily nature-friendly and that the prioritising of human liberation easily led to, or became an excuse for, over-exploitation of the environment. For all their holistic healing activities, the AICs apparently shared with the rest of Christianity a limited perception of the grace of God – grace which encompasses all creation as God's gift. During my discussions with AIC leaders we agreed that we had been unworthy of this gift. We had to confess, in the words of Carmody (1983:79), that 'the ruin of nature and the denial of God go hand in hand, because both over-exalt human beings'.

So the conviction grew among us Independents that we had to do something about the environment. It was felt, for example, that – while still seeing the Holy Spirit as saviour, liberator and healer against the *chimurenga* background – we had to move from a predominantly anthropocentric and therefore exploitive soteriology towards a more universal, cosmic and, by implication, altruistic approach which proclaims and promotes justice, peace and salvation for all of creation. Such a broadened soteriology would entail a perception of the Holy Spirit as Earthkeeper and translate into a church praxis of ecological reform.

Discussions with traditionalists – particularly the *masvikiro*, chiefs and ex-combatants, many of whom had played key roles in *chimurenga* – increasingly led to a reconsideration of the lost lands. My research into *chimurenga* convinced me that *chimurenga* was far from over. *The lost lands had been politically reconquered, but ecologically they were being lost all over again.* Ecological reform in the communal lands was essential to stem the process of deforestation and threatening desertification which was annually laying bare some three to four per cent of the country's total land surface. The traditionalists agreed with me that

in postwar Zimbabwe liberation of the lost lands had to take the form of *massive mobilisation of peasant communities* to join in tree planting, wildlife conservation and the protection of water resources. If we were really going to heal the earth as a form of extended *chimurenga*, what better strategy than that of channelling Africa's religious genius and philosophy into the field of ecological reform? And what better task force than *chimurenga's* mobilisers of the *povo* – who, as indicated above, were psychologically primed for constructive national action? What better ecologists than the traditionalists who were kept aware by the oracular Mwari and their ancestral guardians of the suffering and mindless exploitation of the earth? Who in the ravished land could better understand the following gut feeling?

'From the masses to the masses' the most
Revolutionary consciousness is to be found
Among the most ruthlessly exploited classes:
Animals, trees, water, air, grasses.

Gary Snyder

In 1988 our thinking on these lines crystallised into action: we declared war on deforestation and on ecological destruction generally. At our meetings the slogans '*Pamberi nehondo yemiti!*' and '*Ngatifukidze nyika!*' (Forward the war of the trees! Let us clothe the earth!) were coined and soon became the rallying cries of our struggle. *Chimurenga* resumed; the old and new forces of liberation were invoked, remobilised. At least, that is how our growing band of earthkeepers interpreted the environmental struggle in which we engaged. Only now the quest for the lost lands was no longer directed to political liberation and supremacy but to healing the wounded land.

This commitment led to the establishment of three interrelated institutions to guide and give continuity to escalating ecological activities in the rural communities of Masvingo Province. The umbrella organisation, responsible for finance, ecological policy and implementation, research and conscientisation, is ZIRRCO (Zimbabwean Institute for Religious Research and Ecological Conservation). It evolved out of my original team of field research workers, who cooperate with ecologists and senior members of two sister organisations: AZTREC (Association of Zimbabwean Traditional Ecologists) for traditionalists, and the AAEC (Association of African Earthkeeping Churches) for the AICs.

The chronology of institutional development is as follows. In 1988 I invited the traditionalists to launch a new environmental movement in collaboration with my research team. Out of this joint endeavour grew the Association of Zimbabwean Spirit Mediums (AZSM), which in due course was renamed the Association of Zimbabwean Traditional Ecologists (AZTREC). During this formative period of constitutional and administrative development the pivotal role of my research team in the establishment of the new movement, together with its ongoing research programme, called for institutional redefinition. Hence the name 'ZIRRCO' was chosen to designate an organisational entity which antedated the existence of AZSM/AZTREC, yet expanded and gained influence in tandem with the latter. Attempts at negotiating an earthkeeping commitment with *Fambidzano* delayed the full-scale participation of AICs. As a result the AAEC was only formed in 1991.

There was nothing particularly new in our attempts to develop a 'green environment' in Zimbabwe. Other environmentally concerned organisations such as ENDA, REDD BARNA and CARD were already conducting tree-planting operations in the communal lands at the time when we launched our green revolution. Besides, government institutions such as the Forestry Commission, the Natural Resources Board and Agritex have long been engaged in agricultural and environmental conservation activities. We were soon to cooperate and liaise with these agencies. We knew we would be operating in harmony with broad national policy, manifested in such moves as the institution of a national tree-planting day. Indeed, as soon as we were in a position to do so, we actively supported this annual drive, both by supplying seedlings and by mobilising grassroots communities to intensify their participation. Government ministers and senior officials repeatedly expressed public appreciation for these contributions.

What is decidedly new in our movement, however, is the conviction that the same spiritual forces which were so decisive in the *chimurenga* struggle are equally significant in the current ecological liberation/healing struggle, spurring on the masses to engage in sustained and meaningful environmental action. *Ours, therefore, is a conscious, innovative attempt to harness the traditionalist and Christian religious heritage, specifically in relation to the multifaceted concept of national liberation and the historical struggle to achieve it.* Accordingly our emphasis is on the empowerment of religious key figures – spirit mediums and church

prophets in particular – through funding, organisational structures, conscientisation and joint ecological ventures, with a view to spreading the nascent ‘greening-of-Africa’ revolution beyond elitist circles to become truly a people’s movement.

The description of institutional formation and ecological activities in the rest of this chapter focuses mainly on the inception and early development of our earthkeeping movement. An update on more recent developments will be provided in volume 2.

3.1 AZSM/AZTREC

3.1.1 The discussion which triggered the ‘war of the trees’

On a hot afternoon in 1987 I was sitting in one of the guerrilla *poshitos* (hiding places) high up the slopes of a mountain behind *svikiro* Mapfumo Pfupajena’s house. From this same spot the fighters had watched the daily convoy of civilians, travelling with armed escorts, pass along the Victoria-Umtali road. On this occasion Pfupajena, diminutive, grey-haired, clad in white overalls, was sitting on a granite ledge opposite me, looking down in the direction of Nyika Halt. He had just shown me the secret cooking places in the caves where, during the war, he had led groups of guerrillas into hiding after skirmishes with the RAR (plate 10). Sitting up there, the now distant ravages of *chimurenga* sharpened our eyes to the scars of a wounded earth. Below us the ravished communal lands stretched mile upon deforested mile into the distance (plate 11). Barren and naked in the scorching sun, it uttered a cry for liberation and healing ...

‘The elders told us towards the end of the war that after Independence we *masvikiro* should rest and ask the ancestors to rest also,’ the old man said. There was defiance in his voice.

‘Why was such an order given?’ I asked.

‘Perhaps the people just wanted peace after all the bloodshed. Perhaps the politicians were scared of the power we represent. Or maybe they found it difficult to admit exactly how much we, the *midzimu*, had contributed to creating the new Zimbabwe.’

His words revealed the frustration felt by many spirit mediums about their apparent loss of influence and prestige in the new political dispensation.

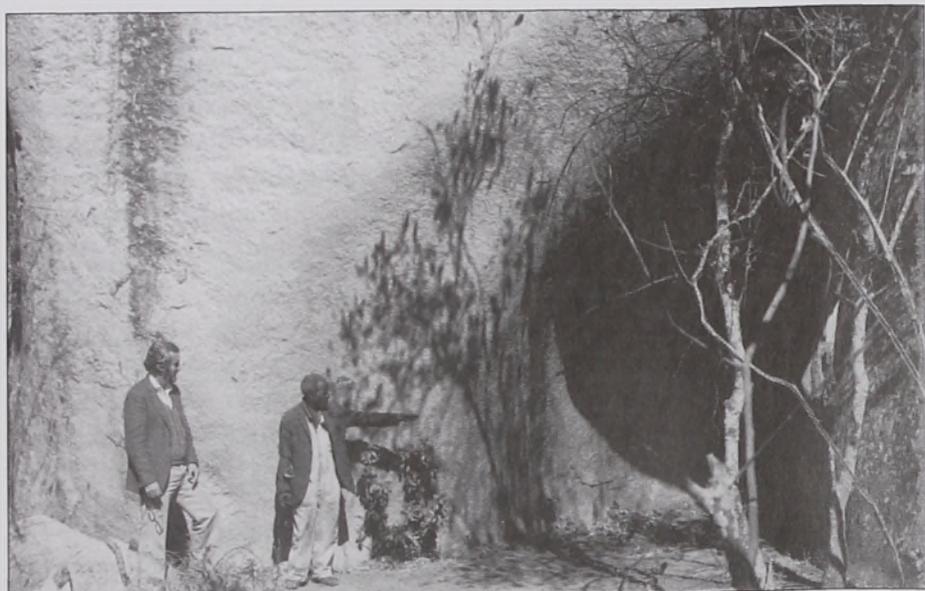


Plate 10 Spirit medium Pfupajena shows the author a guerilla hide-out (*poshito*) in the mountain behind his house

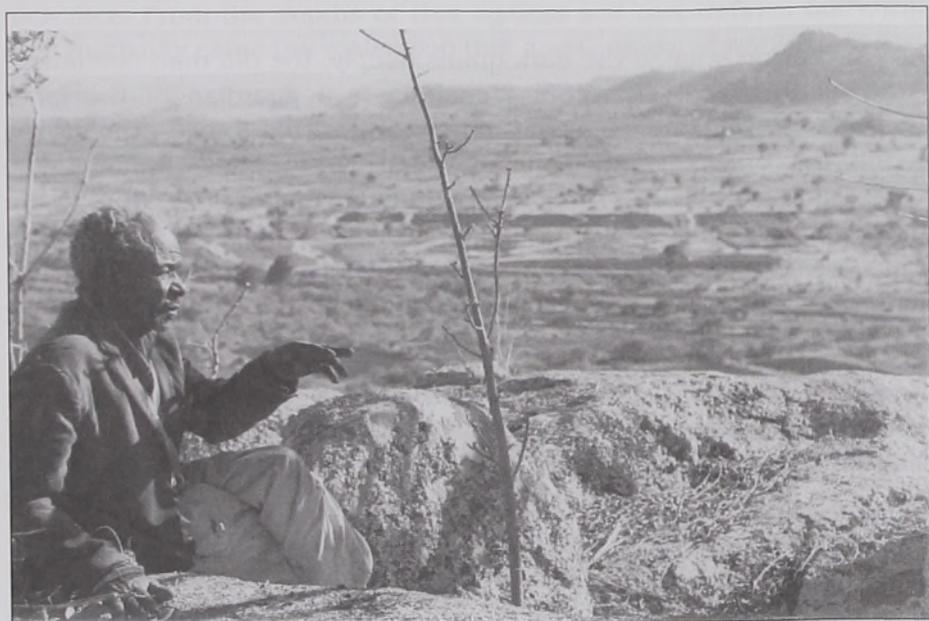


Plate 11 Pfupajena complains about the ravished communal lands seen in the distance during the discussion which triggered the war of the trees

'And are you resting?' I asked jokingly, anticipating the crotchety old medium's reply.

'Of course not!' he said indignantly. 'Our task of guarding the land is never done. These days I keep going down to the Portuguese border to help our soldiers who are fighting the MNR bandits. Pfupajena, the Duma conqueror of long back, still guides our soldiers to protect Zimbabwe, just as he guided the *chimurenga* fighters to win back the land.'

'And what does Pfupajena say about the destruction of the land, about all that land without trees we see down there?' I asked.

'Ah, you! You sound like an agricultural demonstrator,' Pfupajena laughed. Then his eyes narrowed in concentration as he measured out the dark snuff of the ancestors into his left palm. I knew the snuff ritual must precede any further discussion. So I sat gazing down on the neglected contour ridges, the shallow, grey, sandy soil where a few Shona cattle plucked listlessly at dry maize stalks. I have always wondered at the hardiness of these animals who survive on such meagre pasture.

At last, having inhaled the dark grains deeply, the old man continued: 'Like all the great ancestors Pfupajena is a guardian of the land. Because of that he urges all vaDuma to protect the forests. The groves round the graves of our ancient dead on the holy mountains – Gwindingwi, Rasa, Vinga, Mugabe – particularly need protection. In the holy groves no hunting or tree felling is allowed. But who still respects the laws of our forebears? Nowadays everybody follows their own heads. In the reserves there is nothing left, no trees, no wild animals ...'

He shrugged his old shoulders at the futility. It was the same helpless resentment I have often felt when observing the denuded slopes of Mount Mugabe.

'Why do you and the other *masvikiro* not band together as you did in *chimurenga* – this time to fight the destruction of the land?' I wondered out loud.

The old man sighed. 'We have been thinking of that,' he said. 'Some years ago we even held a few meetings at Chitungwiza where

Chaminuka used to live. But nothing came of it. We have no money. No transport. Nothing.'

I leaned forward. 'Maybe I can help. Come to my house in Masvingo next time you're in town. Then we can discuss starting an association, writing a constitution, organising things.'

The invitation was spontaneous, born of a green dream gone musty after too many years of academic rationalism and lack of practical involvement. I could not foresee all the complications then. Only when those shrewd eyes of many winters sized me up, attempting to probe the genuineness of my offer, did I realise that I might be letting myself in for more than I had bargained for. Yet excitement gripped me as the old head slowly nodded assent. Part of me registered hesitation. How was I to work with men and women of an ancient yet resilient religion whose beliefs and worldview differed so vastly from my own? Another part of me responded to the scent of adventure. This was uncharted terrain, challenging me to feel, experience and possibly help reinterpret the spirit of Africa in terms of a modern commitment to nature conservation. I shivered in the noon sun blazing down on the mountain's rock face. From the depths of that ageless self that defines our common humanity came the realisation that a new phase of my life had just begun.

Below us the expanse of abused earth seemed to mock our resolve. The cynic in me conjured up a monstrous windmill with giant rotating blades crushing the little Don Quixotes trying to stop their endless, wind-driven assault. The passage ahead, I knew, would be rough and hazardous.

3.1.2 Formation and constitutional development

Soon after our conversation on the mountainside, spirit medium Mapfumo Pfupajena indeed pitched up at our research centre in Masvingo, and discussions about the formation of a traditionalist association commenced forthwith. Reuben Marinda, who had originally established contact with Pfupajena in Bikita and had tape-recorded his *chimurenga* experiences, was put in charge of the intensive discussions with our aged friend and the preparation of a draft constitution, largely modelled on the first constitution we had written for *Fambidzano*. We promptly coined the name 'Association of Zimbabwean Spirit Mediums'

(AZSM) and set about defining rules for the new movement's activities. My own contribution at this early stage was merely to ensure that the basic ecological objectives – afforestation, wildlife and water resources, which we had already singled out during the mountainside discussion as targets for our struggle – were clearly specified. Pfulajena, in his turn, made sure that the promotion of traditional customs, beliefs and ritual were included among the main objectives of the AZSM.

Although the first draft was revised in subsequent meetings, the original AZSM constitutional objectives (Appendix I, pp 293–294) remained essentially unchanged. They were crafted by the *masvikiro* as a 'declaration of war'. Once again the mediums were laying down the rules of combat, this time for an ecological *chimurenga*! Once again the holy mountains in Masvingo Province and elsewhere – the same places where ancestral guidance for guerrilla warfare was received and arms were hidden – were to become focal points, this time claiming public recognition and protection. The traditional religious element was evident in the choice of the wild fruit trees to be protected and planted: particularly the *muchakata* (cork tree), *mushuku* (wild loquat) and *mutobge* (*azanza garkeana*) which bear the fruit the ancestors 'eat'. These trees were protected in many areas prior to the erosion of customary law through Western influence. In this respect the AZSM was resuscitating and extending traditional ecological laws and practices. The mobilisation of peasant society in afforestation projects was envisaged as the main strategy for combating deforestation.

The aim of protecting water resources included practical measures such as keeping marshlands, springs and rivers intact and unpolluted, preventing riverbank cultivation and restoring catchment areas by planting grass and trees. In traditional terms such projects would be designed to avert the departure of the *njuzu* water spirits. These spirits (which fall in the category of *shavi* – that is 'alien' as opposed to ancestral – spirits) teach traditional doctors and mediums medicinal knowledge and help to provide rain. Thus their goodwill has a direct bearing on the maintenance of ecological balance (Appendix I, pp 293–294).

The list of animal species to be protected – duiker, steenbok, rabbits and snakes – reflected the concern of the mediums. Because of the scarcity of game in the communal lands surrounding Masvingo town, the *masvikiro* have become the protectors of small game only. Big

game in this part of the world has become the preserve of commercial farmers and the government Department of Parks and Wildlife (Appendix 1, p 294).

The clause on the promotion of African religion and culture reflected the concern of the mediums, as custodians of tradition, about the processes of modernisation, change and religio-cultural alienation. Read in conjunction with the preceding clauses, it conveyed the AZSM's overall approach of *religious holism*. Respect for the elders and ancestor veneration were considered as much part of the process of environmental reform as the physical planting of trees and protection of wildlife. Crisis, whether socio-political or environmental, stimulates religious revival. Conversely, religious revival stimulates and directs socio-ecological crisis management.

In the course of 1988 meeting upon meeting of tribal elders, spirit mediums and excombatants, together with ZIRRCO's research staff, was held at my house in Masvingo. In a sense these were improvised *pungwe* meetings to work out a code of conduct and various strategies for the envisaged green revolution. Some weekends there were up to eighteen visitors. One would stumble over sleeping bodies in the lounge, the kitchen, the corridor. The smell of snuff hung heavily in the air, a constant reminder of human dependence on the spirit world.

Our differing beliefs were never an issue. Before meetings I would often read from the Bible, usually about God's concern for nature. Isaiah 41:18–20 became a favourite passage, also among tribal elders. Here Mwari speaks about rivers that will flow among barren hills and villages, about trees that he will cause to grow in dry places: cedars, acacias, myrtles, olives. Of course, in our readings we replaced these with our own *msasa*, *mitondo* (indigenous acacias; plates 12 & 13), *mikamba* (mahogany), *mikurumbira* (teak) and indigenous fruit trees so as to express God's concern for our drought-stricken land. The words 'People will see this and know that I, the Lord, have done it' made the point: all our earthkeeping endeavours are, in the final analysis, inspired and sustained by Mwari.¹⁵

After such scripture reading and prayer, the elders and spirit mediums would pass round their snuff horns. Sniffing snuff and sprinkling it on the floor prefaced the ritual of communing with senior tribal ancestors. In this way we respected and tolerated each other's religious identities.



Plate 12 A young *muvuzhe* (mountain acacia) tree



Plate 13 A *musasa* and *mutondo* forest. God's Zimbabwean acacias in dry places (Isaiah 41)

The elders and ex-fighters took the opportunity to strengthen their bonds with the *varidzi venyika* (ancestral guardians of the land), just as they had done during the war years. Only now it was happening in a postwar context of racial reconciliation, of a realignment of the Zimbabwean liberation forces in an all-out campaign against the destruction of our land.

The passion that fired us all, traditionalists and Christians alike, was trees: trees to draw the rain to a thirsty land; trees to cover an earth embarrassed by her nakedness; trees and all vegetation, to be protected in the groves on holy mountains in honour of the guardian spirits and of Mwari.

Many key figures in *chimurenga* history, whom we had befriended while doing research, attended our meetings and, together with the research team, they became the core group responsible for the formation of the AZSM. There were the mediums: from Bikita there were Pfupajena, the midget man whose warrior ancestor kept him active in the business of war, and Lydia Chabata who had assisted the guerrillas in many parts of Masvingo Province; from Zimuto there were Chinowawa and Munjakanji, two prominent mediums who had frequently sat on the council of mediums during *pungwe* meetings in their district; from Gutu we had MuDende, the guerrilla medium who had correctly predicted the air attack on the ZANLA high command camp at Chimoio in Mozambique, and Mukaro who had operated in his own spirit province; there were MuNdende, Magora and Tovera, all from Ndanga district; there was vaZarira, the Duma medium who, after the liberation struggle, had moved from Garfield Todd's ranch near Zvishavane to Mount Beza near Kyle National Park at the request of the Duma chiefs Murinye and Shumba; and a number of less well-known mediums. Together with them came the elderly comrade, Haurovi Chinovuriri, once the go-between for mediums and ZANLA high command at Chimoio camp in Mozambique – experience which qualified him admirably to act as a strategist in the new struggle. From Gutu came two influential ex-combatants, Cosmas Gonese (former guerrilla commander Weeds Chakarakata) and Mberi Subcheka, both of whom had operated extensively in the Musikavanhu war zone, which included much of Masvingo Province, during the struggle (Gumbo/Daneel 1995, chapter 2). In the post-Independence period Gonese had risen to prominence as chairman of two development committees in the Gutu district and the War

Veterans' Association in Masvingo Province; Subcheka remained his loyal friend and henchman.

The office of senior mediumship ties in closely with that of the chieftainship and this age-old link was not seriously impaired by *chimurenga*. As a result the chiefs soon followed the mediums and joined the AZSM. Strong support in the Gutu district came from Chiefs Gutu, Chitsa, Munyikwa and Chiwara. From Bikita, Ndanga and Masvingo districts we had our stalwarts: Chiefs Murinye, Shumba, Mugabe, Zimuto, Nhema, Mabika, Mukangangwi, Mazungunye, Ndanga and Negovano; and from further afield we had Chiefs Chivi, Makonese and Maranda.

To the mediums, who were supposed to 'go to rest' after *chimurenga*, the AZSM was a new awakening. To the ex-combatants it offered jobs for frustrated former fighters who had received little reward for their efforts at the war front. To the chiefs, who still enjoyed wide support in the communal lands but were fighting an uphill political battle to regain some of their former land-allocating and civil judicial powers, this was an opportunity to demonstrate publicly their authority and leadership.

The first AZSM executive was elected in mid-1988 after the constitution had been finalised. It consisted of the following dignitaries:

Patron:	Chief Murinye
President:	Haurovi Chinovuriri
Vice President:	Spirit medium MuDende
General Secretary:	Ex-combatant Tafirei Amigo
Vice Secretary:	Bishop Reuben Marinda
Treasurer:	Spirit medium Lydia Chabata
Committee members:	Ex-combatant Cosmas Gonese ZIRRCON researcher Daniel Zvanaka Co-founder of AZSM and director of ZIRRCON, Prof M L Daneel

In the course of the 1990 annual general conference substantial changes took place in the AZSM executive. The new president and vice president were respectively spirit mediums Mapfumo Pfupajena and vaZarira. Cosmas Gonese, who had meanwhile moved from Gutu to Masvingo, was appointed both assistant director of ZIRRCON and general secretary of the AZSM, a double office carrying a full-time salary. Several mediums and chiefs in the fast-growing movement were also

elected as executive councillors. The executive changed the name 'AZSM' to AZTREC (Association of Zimbabwean Traditional Ecologists), the Shona equivalent of which would be Bato *remasvikiro nemadzishe* (literally 'association of spirit mediums and chiefs'). The twofold motive for this change was that the membership had clearly spread beyond the spirit mediums; and for fund-raising purposes it was important to use a more neutral designation, since to Europeans the term 'spirit medium' certainly does not connote tribal historian and political authority, as it does in Zimbabwe. Thus the original name could easily have caused potential donor agencies abroad to misunderstand our movement.

3.1.3 Ecological action

To launch our tree-planting campaign late in 1988, we invited Christian Rasmussen, chief executive of the Lutheran World Federation in Masvingo, to address the AZSM on the development of nurseries and woodlots at suitable water points in the province. Rasmussen responded by not just addressing and advising the *masvikiro*, but also calling an LWF meeting on afforestation in Masvingo Province on 5 December 1988. It was attended by C Rasmussen (LWF); P Mushwe (Natural Resources Board); O Mugweni (Agritex); H N Mahenga (Forestry Commission); S A de Boer (EC Microprojects); and myself (AZSM and AICs). A long-term tree-planting programme for the province was discussed. I quote from the minutes:

It is agreed that afforestation must have the highest priority and time is soon running out, so that many parts of Masvingo Province will not be able to sustain habitation due to lack of firewood ... The community plays such a great role that all groups of society must be involved, from the ministries at provincial and district levels, to councillors, chiefs, WADCO, VIDCO, government extension staff, spirit mediums, traditional leaders and churches.

From these minutes it is apparent that at the very inception of the AZSM steps were taken to ensure liaison and interaction on ecological issues between religious bodies and government institutions. The interaction included explicit mutual recognition and interdependence.

In the course of December 1988 the AZSM launched its first tree-planting campaign. Some Z\$2 000 was raised in Masvingo's white business community, hence a combination of black and white initiative – albeit

on a scale that was little more than symbolic – in the cause of the environment. Chiefs and mediums who attended an AZSM meeting at my house in mid-December were sent to their home districts to arrange tree-planting ceremonies: the digging of holes, soil preparation, accommodation for the tree-planting team, food contributions, etc. Christian Rasmussen assisted us with the purchase of seedlings at Forestry's nurseries and provided LWF vehicles to transport the trees to the outlying districts.

On 12 December the 'offensive' started when the AZSM executive, spirit mediums, chiefs and well-wishers left Masvingo in a hired bus. The next day cypress trees were planted at the war heroes' reburial site at Gutu district headquarters, where a large group of Gutu chiefs, *masvikiro*, ward and village councillors, school teachers and district administration officials had congregated. The ceremony included some excellent speeches by chiefs, who linked the sacrifice of the fallen *chimurenga* heroes with the AZSM campaign to further liberate the ecologically still lost lands. On 14 December a colourful ceremony was conducted in Chief Negovano's territory in Bikita. With full TV and press coverage, the traditionalists appeared in their leopard skins, plumed headgear and a wide variety of ancestral vestments. Sacrificial beer libations, snuff rituals and traditional dances provided a festive background to conscientisation speeches and tree planting.

And so the campaign unfolded in one ceremonial tree battle after another: from Negovana the team proceeded to Chiefs Ziki and Mazungunye in Bikita, then on to Chiefs Ndanga and Zimuto and back to Masvingo. The closing ceremony took place at Don Bosco school on Saturday 17 December when a thousand eucalyptus trees were planted to complete the existing plantation at the school. Mr Masarakufa, the headmaster, an expert cultivator of indigenous trees, and a large group of teachers and students enthusiastically participated in the event. In addition to senior politicians and representatives of Natural Resources and the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, John Toft, then vice chairman of the local branch of Zimbabwe's Wildlife Society, also addressed the meeting. Toft explained his involvement in the establishment of a conscientisation centre in a 270-acre nature reserve, Shagashe Game Park, just outside Masvingo town. Because of the parallel objectives of the AZSM and this wildlife centre, the prospect of future cooperation was mentioned. Subsequently, in private conversa-



Plate 14 At the onset of the war of the trees, spirit medium Lydia Chabata instructs the chiefs about tree-planting

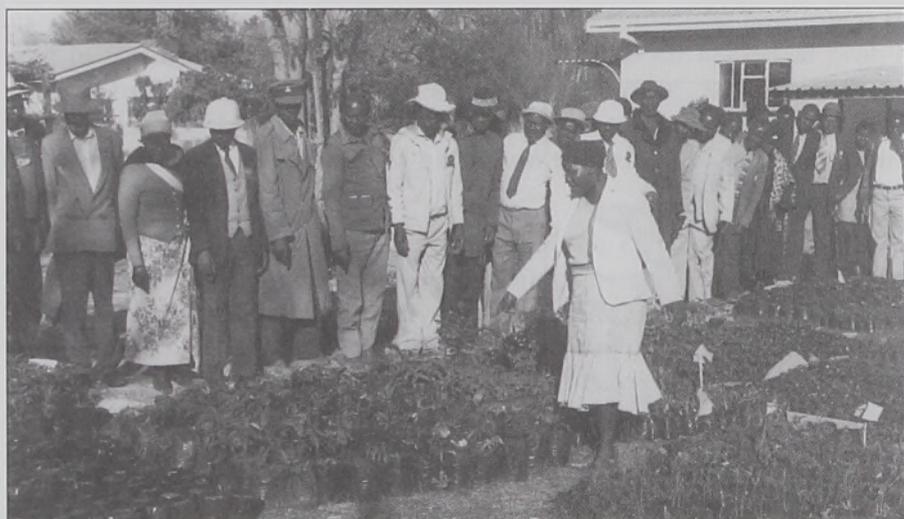


Plate 15 Lydia Chabata, the AZSM's first nursery-keeper, explains her handiwork to a delegation of earthkeeping chiefs and mediums. This first nursery of the green struggle was situated behind the author's residence where the movement was founded



Plate 16 Spirit mediums Tovera (left) and Mukaro acting out the mystical protection of tree seedlings during a tree-planting ceremony

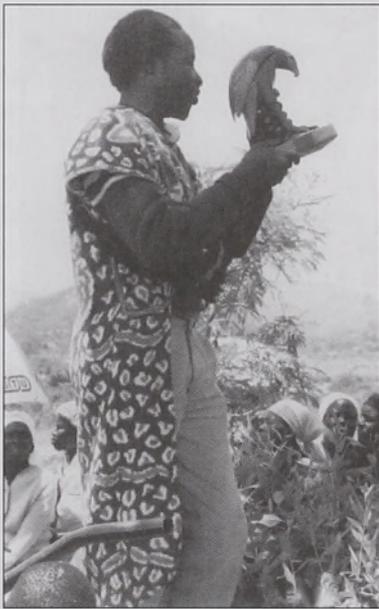


Plate 17 Spirit medium Tovera stands guard over the seedlings during ritual proceedings. The bird in his hands symbolically illustrates ancestral presence and protection of the environment

tion, Toft, a prominent conservationist in the province, observed that he had met a *svikiro* who, on behalf of the AZSM, was already mobilising councillors in his home district to ensure strict prohibition of tree felling on the holy mountains under his care. Thus the impact of our campaign was being noticed by outsiders in spheres not directly connected with our ceremonies.

The Don Bosco ceremony concluded a season that saw the planting of some 5 000 trees – perhaps not such an impressive figure, but a strategically important first strike in our ecological *chimurenga*. At any rate we had reconnoitred the future battlefields and established key functions in our ground forces.

The *chiefs, headmen and councillors* had emerged as the strategists and conscientisers who, through actual stocktaking of the ecological situation in their wards and chiefdoms, could assess fairly accurately the short- and long-term needs of the struggle.

Through spirit possession and addresses by the ancestors the mediums were invoking the spirit forces of the land. This mystical intervention in ritual activity triggered discussions about the reinstatement of customary ecological laws. Spirit medium vaZarira in particular had taken the lead in lecturing to audiences at ceremonies about ancestral prohibitions of tree felling in holy groves (*marambatemwa*), while Tovera and Mukaro, merely by miming the protection of seedlings with slow gestures, reinforced awareness of an actual presence of guardian spirits (plates 16 & 17).

Ex-combatants, through their narrations of the *chimurenga* past, transformed tree-planting ceremonies into *pungwe*-type instruction classes, in which the land-healing directives of the *varidzi venyika* carried indisputable authority. Gonese bluntly insisted on total obedience to the ancestral war council (*dare rechimurenga*) if afforestation in Zimbabwe was to succeed; and AZSM president Chinovuriri, through inspired lengthy accounts of *chimurenga* events, invoked the mystical sanction of the liberation struggle to provide unassailable legitimation for the war of the trees.

The enthusiasm of *teachers and school communities* held vast potential, either for AZSM participation in existing ecological programmes at schools or for the mobilisation of school communities as 'auxiliary forces'.

The pattern of warfare having been established, the 'green forces' returned to the rural battlefields during successive rainy seasons. After the first season's 5 000 trees, about 165 000 and 540 000 were planted respectively in the 1989/90 and 1990/91 rainy seasons. Because of severe drought the 1991/92 target of another half a million trees, as a joint effort by AZTREC and the newly formed AAEC (see below), had to be abandoned. Only about 120 000 trees were planted, mainly at schools and at church sites – although even here the normally stable water resources were drying up. At some woodlots, therefore, the survival rate of trees might have dropped from the 70 per cent frequently achieved in previous years to a mere 20 per cent. Pending rains and a fresh injection of funds, some 250 000 seedlings were kept in AZTREC and AAEC nurseries by way of a holding operation for the 1992/93 tree-planting season.

What the early history of ZIRRCON/AZTREC (and the AAEC) proved beyond any doubt was that the ecological mobilisation of rural communities on the basis of religiously inspired models (to be discussed in the ensuing chapters) was highly successful. Judging by the growing demand for trees in rural communities, the ZIRRCON movement could have planted more than a million trees each year if there were no financial and climatic constraints.

3.2 ZIRRCON

The Zimbabwean Institute of Religious Research and Ecological Conservation stems from a three-year period of empirical research (1965–1967) among Shona Independent Churches in the rural areas of Masvingo Province. This research led to many years of ecumenical engagement with the Independents, resulting in *Fambidzano's* theological training programmes and socio-economic development projects. A similar pattern of sustained practical commitments between research team and grassroots communities studied evolved from another field research programme, initiated in 1984 to investigate the role of religion in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. In this instance ecumenism assumed a different form: not just interchurch unity, but also close interaction between traditionalists and Christians, the two groups joining forces in the war of the trees.

As our research centre gradually expanded into an ecological operational base, the name 'ZIRRCON' gained currency and the institute became a recognised agency in Masvingo society. A constitution and institutionalisation proper, however, only came later when it became important to differentiate between the responsibilities and activities of ZIRRCON and its first affiliate, AZSM/AZTREC, and when the first, albeit unsuccessful, attempt was made in 1990 to register the affiliated bodies as social welfare organisations.

The main objectives of ZIRRCON were defined as follows:

- to promote empirical research into Zimbabwean religion: its history, beliefs and rituals, both traditional and Christian (including studies of *chimurenga* and religio-ecological interaction in ZIRRCON-sponsored projects)
- to initiate new ecological conservation programmes through its affiliates, AZTREC and the AAEC
- to liaise with government agencies and local government authorities involved in ecological work
- to raise and administer funds for research and ecological projects, maintaining good relations with sponsors through responsible budgeting, expenditure control and accounting
- to make available research results through the publication of a ZIRRCON series (both academic monographs and popular books), occasional and seminar papers, ecological training material and, eventually, a quarterly bulletin
- to plough back research expertise and field experience into grass-roots organisations such as AZTREC and the AAEC by running a ZIRRCON department to conduct training/conscientisation programmes in both traditionalist and Christian circles. This includes course development.

In the early 1990s ZIRRCON consisted of three departments: research, ecology and financial administration. At that time the executive consisted of myself as unsalaried director and the following salaried staff: Revd Solomon Zvanaka, assistant director and head of financial administration; Leonard Gono, ecological field operations manager; Bishop Reuben Marinda, general secretary of the AAEC; Hauruvi Chinovuriri,

general secretary of AZTREC; and Tarisai Zvokuomba, senior research worker. There was also a number of junior research assistants.

From a religious point of view the denominational composition of our 'command group' in the green revolution comprised the two *Ndaza* (Holy Cord) Zionists, the Revd Zvanaka and Bishop Marinda; and three Zimbabwe Reformed Church members (Gono, Chinovuriri and me). Among these last three, I myself had strong AIC leanings after years of participation in both Spirit-type and Ethiopian-type churches (cf Daneel 1987) and Chinovuriri still actively participated in the traditional religion. Tarisai Zvokuomba, an Apostolic prophet, having been converted to our new liberation theology of the environment, at an early stage started eliciting confessions of ecological sin from church members during our eucharistic tree-planting ceremonies.

Some of us had been friends and associates intermittently for more than twenty years. Leonard Gono was adopted into my family in 1972; and both Revd Zvanaka and Bishop Marinda actively supported me that same year in the founding of *Fambidzano*.¹ As former fellow workers in *Fambidzano* the three of us shared the exciting experience of designing structures and charting a new course in the field of religious ecumenism, training and development. We were conversant with the holistic healing theology of the AICs. But we also knew the uncertainties associated with salaries sponsored from abroad (with all due gratitude for the generous and faithful support of a number of donor agencies); the ruthless opposition of some local people who, for ulterior motives, sought to discredit the work in progress; and the resultant threat of discontinuity and wasted time and effort should funds dry up. In a sense, therefore, we were battle-hardened, fit for the inevitable stresses and strains of the war of the trees.

The first period of ZIRRCO's existence was devoted to a determined team effort in empirical research. Here Leonard Gono came into his own. His dedication, astuteness and keen powers of observation gave us perspective when the going got rough. Former senior researcher Daniel Zvanaka, through his patience and goodwill, always succeeded in building good relationships and establishing rapport with rural folk. Bishop Marinda scrutinised sections of my manuscripts against the background of a lifetime of involvement in Shona Independentism,

thus providing a necessary sounding-board. At that stage Tarisai's contribution as a transcriber of field interviews was invaluable. This team effort resulted in several publications, some of which are prescribed works at universities and theological seminaries in southern Africa and abroad.

Subsequently, as the war of the trees gained momentum, I wrote several papers on religion and ecology, which were read at academic and church conferences both in South Africa and abroad. The substance of some of these papers has been translated into Shona and adapted for use in workshops and conscientisation programmes. Bishop Marinda wrote new courses on environmental theology in AIC perspective for use in AAEC training courses. To keep the publication of ecological 'war propaganda' going, I wrote a popularised *chimurenga* history, *Guerrilla snuff* (1995).

Ecologically, ZIRRCON has been remarkably successful. First of all it founded and helped to institutionalise its two sister organisations, AZTREC and the AAEC – the two 'military arms' which inspire and mobilise the green liberation army at the rural grassroots in terms of African philosophy and Africa's diverse religions. Working in tandem with these two organisations, ZIRRCON has, in the second place, performed impressively, particularly in its nursery development and tree-planting ventures (see details below). Acting as a unifying umbrella body, ZIRRCON's executive had regular meetings with the executives of its sister organisations and participated in their annual conferences, thus retaining the initiative in policy making and in planning project implementation. Insofar as ZIRRCON interacted continually with grassroots communities, both directly and through the hierarchies of its sister organisations, ecological warfare in the field was characterised by both top-down and bottom-up modes of operation. The nursery keepers and tree planters depended on overall campaign strategies devised by ZIRRCON's triple executive body, which liaised at top level with government departments such as the Forestry Commission, the Natural Resources Board, Agritex and National Parks and Wildlife. At the same time the executive relied on the grassroots communities' ecological expertise and experience, which codetermined the struggle. In the third place, ZIRRCON's fund raising and financial accountability have been considered sufficiently successful by sponsors to warrant sustained support.

3.3 AAEC

3.3.1 Churches prepare for ecological warfare

Several Christians were involved in ZIRRCON/AZTREC's core team from the start and many church people participated in the traditionally oriented tree-planting programmes. This pattern, which stimulated inter-religious participation and interfaith dialogue, continued. It actually established a praxis of spontaneous ecumenism, revolving around mutual concern for the environment despite religious differences. Nevertheless, it was felt from the outset that the AICs should be enabled to develop their own ecological programmes. They control vast networks of congregations, composed largely of peasant families in rural communities. As indicated in chapter 2, they have rich traditions of enacted liberation theologies, also during *chimurenga*. After Independence the AICs continued the liberation struggle at a socio-economic level by fighting poverty through rural development programmes (community development, small industries, agricultural projects, water projects, family planning, etc). *Fambidzano* was instrumental in planning, fund raising and assisting its member churches with the implementation of projects. Thus the AICs were well placed at the grassroots to contribute to the ecological liberation of the lost lands.

After years of close involvement in the building of *Fambidzano*, my first thought was to invite *Fambidzano* to join in ZIRRCON's tree-planting programme. Letters were written to Revd Peter Makamba – my successor and general secretary of the Conference – and later a plea for environmental reform was directed to the administrative board. Some of the older AIC leaders on the board, co-founders of *Fambidzano* in 1972, were in favour of joining forces with ZIRRCON. Others were opposed because of ZIRRCON's close identification with traditionalists. In the end ZIRRCON's invitation to *Fambidzano*, which had remained open for a full three years (1988–1990), was spurned.²

Meanwhile the ecological performance of ZIRRCON/AZTREC had triggered the imagination of numerous AICs. Increasing numbers of AIC leaders, many of them affiliated to *Fambidzano*, approved of ZIRRCON's endeavours and sought affiliation. Entirely in accordance with the original ZIRRCON blueprint, Christian leaders started requesting assistance to enable them to conduct their own tree-planting ceremonies based on biblical principles, as AZTREC was doing in terms of traditional religion.

In the course of the 1990/91 rainy season ZIRRCON delivered seedlings to the headquarters of four AICs and the first church-directed 'green battles' took place. The churches who fired the first salvo in the new *chimurenga* were the following: Bishop Wapendama's Apostolic Church (Zimuto), Bishop Elijah Hore's Zion Sabbath Church (Masvingo district), Revd J Zvobgo's African Reformed Church (Masvingo district) and Bishop Ishmael Gavhure's First Ethiopian Church (Bikita district). It was no coincidence that the last three churches all belonged to the nuclear group which had taken the lead in launching *Fambidzano* all those years ago. Ishmael's father, the late Bishop Nheya Gavhure, was for many years a much-revered president and Revd Zvobgo had been the enterprising and fearless first vice president of *Fambidzano*.

The enthusiasm generated by these tree-planting ceremonies led to intensified discussions between ZIRRCON and AIC representatives about the formation of a church association as the Christian counterpart of AZTREC. This move was opposed by two figures who started a counter campaign: Cosmas Gonese, general secretary of AZTREC, whose position in ZIRRCON at the time was in the balance because of financial irregularities, and Peter Makamba, general secretary of *Fambidzano*. Gonese had all along tried to dissuade me from including the churches as mobilising forces in their own right, as he did not share my involvement with and commitment to the AICs. Makamba interpreted our initiative as an attempt to establish a rival movement aimed at crippling *Fambidzano*, despite repeated assurances that the envisaged association in no way proposed duplicating *Fambidzano's* work but would confine itself to earth-healing. Ironically, the traditional ecologist who resisted the official introduction of churches into ZIRRCON's programme, and the AIC 'purist' who opposed any official form of cooperation with traditional spirit mediums, now joined forces.

3.3.2 A 'green army' of bishops and their followers

Given the opposition described above, the official launching of ZIRRCON's newly recruited fighting force was certainly not easy. The formation of the AAEC (Association of African Earthkeeping Churches) in Masvingo's Mucheke township on 8–9 March 1991 took place in a virtual state of siege. Makamba had mounted a demonstration by a number of leading women of *Fambidzano's* Women's Desk at the bus depot to divert AIC leaders arriving from all over the province from attending



Plate 18 Two key figures of the first AAEC executive: Bishop R Marinda (left; general secretary) and Bishop R Machokoto (president) attend tree-planting ceremony



Plate 19 AAEC bishops attending an Apostolic tree-planting ceremony. From left: Bishops R Marinda, S Zvanaka, Moses (Daneel), R Machokoto, M Farao and E Hore

our meeting. Some of Gonese's traditionalist supporters also participated in the demonstration, the strategy of which was to persuade Independents as they arrived to return home straight away, using money which Makamba was providing (by writing cheques on the spot). There was some coercion: *Fambidzano* bishops were threatened with expulsion from the conference or withdrawal of financial support for their churches' development projects should they proceed to Mucheke's new hall to attend our meeting. Banners proclaimed that joining ZIRRCON was tantamount to destroying *Fambidzano*.

Disconcerting as all this was to me as a former *Fambidzano* director, there were some lighter moments. When I drove up to the demonstrators and started moving amongst the women, they greeted me warmly and switched to a supportive chant: 'Plant your trees! We know you do not intend ruining *Fambidzano*!' A few of them drew me aside to explain their embarrassment at what was taking place. I, in turn, shared with them my concern about the obvious misrepresentation of ZIRRCON's motives. The joke of the day, however, was when a few bishops managed to beat Makamba at his own game: they collected their cheques from him, pretending they were returning home, then made a detour to our meeting and signed up for the ecological struggle – cheques in hand, mischief in their eyes. At times we are all clowns in an unintended circus. But humour could not dispel my sadness at having to cross swords with a former ally and fellow pilgrim. The war of the trees was indeed turning into a bitter struggle on all fronts, exacting a heavier price than I had anticipated.

Our first meeting was attended by a number of AZTREC well-wishers and groups of delegates from eighteen AICs, all of whom duly decided to proceed with the formation of an earthkeeping association. Against a backdrop of mounting opposition and destructive misinformation it was heartwarming to see the participants band together. The very fact that AIC leaders immediately started paying their joining and affiliation fees – not easy in a subsistence economy familiar with deprivation – demonstrated their determination to push ahead with our new venture.

After much discussion about alternative names for the association, we decided upon 'Association of African Earthkeeping Churches' – in Shona, *Makereke okuchengetedza zvisikiwa zvaMwari* (literally, 'the churches who keep God's created things' or 'the churches who protect

God's creation'). In true African style, nearly all the churches present were represented on the first AAEC executive. This was in recognition of their role as pioneers or founders of the new movement. The executive consisted of the following members:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Church</i>
Patron	Bishop Dhliwayo Musariri	Zion Apostolic Church
President	Bishop Rabson Machokoto	Zimbabwe Zion Apostolic Church, Masvingo
Vice President	Bishop Eriah Hore	Zion Sabbath Church
Gen Secretary	Bishop Reuben Marinda	Zion Apostolic Church in Zimbabwe
Vice Secretary	Bishop John Mutikizizi	Evangelical Ministry of Christ Church
Treasurer	Bishop Kindiam Wapendama	Chiratidzo chavaPostori Church

Executive Council members

Bishop Farao Murambiwa	Zion Apostolic Church	Bikita
Bishop Makuku	Church of Christ	Bikita
Bishop Marima	Second Ethiopian Church	Bikita
Bishop Dube	Zion Reformed Church	Bikita
Bishop Job Kamudzi	Zion Apostolic Church	Bikita
Bishop Zacheo Chamutsa	Zion Apostolic Church	Gutu
Bishop Saul Kuudzerema	Zion Apostolic Church of God	Chivhu
Bishop J Chabanga	African Methodist Church	Gutu
Bishop Gondo Chiwire	Zion Apostolic Church	Bikita

The majority of affiliated churches were of the prophetic *Ndaza* Zionist type (ie the robed Zionists of the holy cords) – splinter groups of the Zion Apostolic Church and Zion Apostolic Faith Mission, respectively established in Zimbabwe by the pioneer Zionist leaders David Masuka and Andreas Shoko (Daneel 1971:302–315). Quite a number of these churches were and have remained affiliated to *Fambidzano*. Consequently the new body's relationship with *Fambidzano* was focal in the

meeting's deliberations. Recognition of the direct link of our movement with the AIC prophets' role in *chimurenga* was apparent in the choice of Bishop Musariri, the war prophet who had played such a dramatic role during the *pungwe* meetings at Vunjere (supra, pp 63–71), as patron of the AAEC. Reminiscent of the late Bishop Moses Makamba, who had always graced *Fambidzano* meetings with opening and closing prayers, Bishop Musariri provided quiet, soft-spoken inspiration during our AAEC deliberations. Together he and I laid hands on and prayed for the kneeling members of the newly chosen AAEC executive. Thus – in the name of Christ, the universal guardian of all creation, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, the guiding power in our struggle – we consecrated the 'high command' of our ecclesiastic strike force.

In probably the longest speech I have ever made in Shona, I attempted to outline our religio-ecological battle strategy. The following summary and excerpts outline the major themes.

3.3.2.1 *Divine mandate*

Some texts from Isaiah 43 were read by way of encouragement and inspiration for the envisaged task of the association:

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you (Isaiah 43:1–2).

'In response to what we have seen at the bus depot,' I said, 'I call upon you to be steadfast, because we ground our work in Mwari. He is the one who inspires and strengthens us, whatever numbers rise against us. He requires us in his Word to be fearless, just as he did of the Israelites. We don't want to see fearful people running away. *Fambidzano* started with a small number of supporters, only twelve churches, but through perseverance it has grown strong and influential over the years. Today we start here with a new association of only eighteen churches, but we want to see it grow rapidly to a membership of fifty or a hundred churches, all of whom should be planting trees.

'In Isaiah 43:18f Mwari says: "Do not ponder the old things ... *Behold I am doing a new thing* ... I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, whereby the wild beasts and my chosen people will hon-

our me!” In accordance with God’s Word I tell you, too, that this association we are creating today is a new thing God is doing in our midst. Mwari inspires and builds. It does not belong to us but to God. Therefore, if we are courageous and persevere, this new movement will perform great deeds. Let us persevere in the knowledge that we are receiving a gift from God.

‘Our mandate for our new task comes from both the Old and the New Testaments. It derives from our faith that we belong to the body of Christ. As members of that body we are not only commanded to build unity amongst ourselves as fellow believers, and amongst Christian churches, but to build new relationships with the entire creation in an attempt to avoid destruction and preserve life for all creatures. Why do I say this? Because the body of Christ is not only the church. It is much more than that. Indeed, in Colossians 1:15–21 we read that Christ’s body is the church, he is its head. But we also read that in him (through his initiative) all things hold together, in him all things are created. That makes him the true guardian of the land, the great guardian of all creation. This twofold interpretation of the body of Christ should be read together with Matthew 28:18, where Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” We take this to mean that his presence and power pervades all creation, so we as members of his body have a responsibility for creation.

‘The implication of all this is that when we as Christians partake of holy communion we express our unity in the body of Christ, that is the church. At the same time we reaffirm our responsibility for the body of Christ, in the sense of all creation. The sacrament therefore makes us earthkeepers, stewards of creation. So we are repeatedly given a mandate in Christ to plant trees, to conserve wildlife and to protect the land’s water resources. That is why you have heard me suggest that each of our member churches should conduct at least one tree-planting eucharist each year where the bread and wine are taken before planting the trees.’

3.3.2.2 *The AAEC’s attitude towards Fambidzano*

Frequent references were made to *Fambidzano* to establish in the minds of those present that the AAEC considers itself to be an autonomous movement, complementary to *Fambidzano*, with a separate set of constitutionally defined objectives – not a rival intent on

destroying its competitor. Amongst other things I said:

Our aim is not to kill *Fambidzano*, as the demonstrators at the bus depot seem to think. Everybody knows that *Fambidzano* was my 'child', which has matured and already for many years has been standing on its own feet ... I want all of you to know that I have had good relations with Peter Makamba for a long time. When he succeeded me in *Fambidzano* he led the conference successfully for years. It is only in relation to this new task of ours that we do not see eye to eye. When I invited *Fambidzano* to plant trees he refused, saying: 'You have now started with the spirit mediums. So you want to place us (the churches) and the mediums in one basket ... You have backslided as a believer.' Whereupon I told him: 'I am not a spirit medium myself, but a friend of the mediums. My contention is that the mediums should wage war against deforestation in terms of their own beliefs and the churches should do so on Christian principles. Each movement should have its own religious identity but they should recognise the value of each other's contribution.'

These matters were explained at an administrative board meeting of *Fambidzano*, where it was evident to me that Bishop Nemapare (*Fambidzano's* president) and Revd Zvobgo were in favour of churches planting trees. Makamba, however, could not be persuaded. For three years I waited in vain for *Fambidzano* to respond. Meanwhile many of you AIC bishops – some from *Fambidzano*, some not – have approached ZIRRCO with requests to participate. So we decided to form this new church movement to wage the war of the trees. Forward the battle of the trees! Let us clothe the earth afresh! Let us not kill *Fambidzano*!

There is nothing wrong with churches holding double membership. As an individual I can belong to an agricultural club, to a youth league, to a sports club, and so on, without conflict. Churches can do the same. Go, therefore, you who belong to *Fambidzano* and report to your conference what has transpired here. Be loyal to *Fambidzano*! Be loyal to the AAEC! Let your wisdom refute the rumours that Daneel is trying to break *Fambidzano*!

3.3.2.3 The AAEC's link with AZTREC

I explained the relationship and interaction between the AAEC and AZTREC as follows:

Most of you know that I have been doing research amongst both traditionalists and the black churches for many years. I have helped the spirit mediums and chiefs to form an association called AZTREC. As you see, some of its representatives are here today. AZTREC has managed to fight bravely on behalf of a spoilt environment. So I say we respect their efforts, we fight alongside them and we do not obstruct or reject them in any way. Whatever our critics say, we proceed along the route of cooperation. The final judgment of our interaction lies with Mwari, not with us ... Our support for the traditionalists as fellow fighters in a new revolution requires mutual respect and dialogue about our religious differences. Such interaction does not exclude Christian witness. Neither does it imply backsliding or compromising our Christian beliefs. In the first place we have to love, not judge! Let us also remember that many chiefs are staunch church members and that quite a few *masvikiro* regularly attend church.

The tribal elders appeal to Chaminuka, Kaguwi and other regional spirits as the *varidzi venyika*, because that is their continuing faith and the custom of the forefathers. We Christians, on the other hand, say that in Christ we ourselves are the guardians of the land. By planting trees our earthkeeping churches honour Christ, God and his creation. We shall plant trees throughout Zimbabwe and beyond, particularly in those areas where the earth lies naked. In doing so we shall learn from scratch what God's word says about his creation and we shall teach each other a new theology of the environment.

We now have three movements in one: ZIRRCO, AZTREC and the AAEC – movements with separate religious identities but with common ecological aims. We shall draft separate constitutions, without at any point forgetting to consider and redefine the nature of our interrelationships.

3.3.2.4 *The AAEC as a liberation movement*

At first our country was liberated through the struggle of *chimurenga*. The war was fought by churches, by the chiefs and mediums, many of whom supported the guerrilla fighters. Much blood flowed before the country was free. Now we want to broaden the struggle, to open up a new front of *chimurenga* – one which will liberate not only humans, but the trees, the animals, the water of our country. These

aims do not mean that we arrogantly consider ourselves capable of everything. No! We rely on Mwari and with his help we shall succeed in planting so many trees that the land can heal. Then, in liberating nature, we will once again find our own liberation. We want to clothe the barren landscape so that it may live and prosper.

We killed the land! We chopped down the trees. We enslaved and polluted the world! We, therefore, are the ones who have to heal creation. We share a common guilt: the white colonisers who caused the blacks to crowd the tribal lands, and we, the blacks, who chopped down trees indiscriminately without ever thinking of producing our own firewood in return.

Forward the war of the trees! Let us mobilise all our fellow Christians to use their hands to clothe the earth. Let us heal the earth by laying hands on the land and praying for it as we do for sick people. Let this healing anointment translate into nurseries full of seedlings and flourishing woodlots as far as the eye can see. It does not matter if we start in a small way, for our work as custodians of nature is part of the good news we proclaim: God's salvation of all creation. The growth of our trees will be reflected in the growth of our churches.

3.3.2.5 An African and a global vision

From the start the wider implications of AAEC activities were considered.

We have as our first target the churches of Masvingo Province. But we should soon move into the other provinces of Zimbabwe, to conduct training sessions there, using the lessons on environmental theology which we are already preparing. Regional tree-planting centres, owing allegiance to Masvingo headquarters, should be established in all the provinces of our country.

Eventually our struggle should extend to neighbouring countries: South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia. We can visit these countries and teach the people there about the sacredness of trees. The model of our liberating work will hold good for many countries in Africa. In South Africa I am already discussing with some university people and AIC leaders the prospects of launching similar ecological projects. You must remember that South Africa has got even

more AICs than Zimbabwe. There are more than 5 000 Independent Churches with many millions of black members. How about some of you going down there and inviting their bishops to come and see what we are doing in Zimbabwe? Once South Africa has been fully liberated politically we can move to and fro easily, witnessing about our tree-planting eucharist which is the symbol of the salvation of all creation, the coming of a new heaven and a new earth. Just imagine our green army of churches expanding throughout the south and further north in Africa, re-establishing the forests which will draw the rain and save our wildlife!

Our AAEC has a message for all the world. We shall therefore acquire membership of the national Christian Council so that we can properly inform the World Council of Churches about our work. In turn we can learn from World Council publications and conferences about the world church's struggle for the 'justice, peace and integrity of creation', known as JPIC. Our strength and our contribution to the world church in the earth-healing struggle lie not so much in publications but in actually treating the patient, the earth. Even if ours is a small beginning let us set the example by practising our earth-keeping ministry with all our hearts!

Maybe all this is just a dream of mine. Maybe some of it will only be realised after my death. Nevertheless, that is the inspiration I have received. It is a vision which from today we shall all share. We shall not be daunted by whatever enemies rise against us, for we have a just cause grounded in God's Word.

* * *

During prophetic AIC services a first sermon establishes the biblical passages and main theme on which five or six subsequent preachers will build their sermons. In this way the central theme is elaborated on from many different angles. The outcome is often not so much in-depth exegetical analysis of scriptural truth, as is customary in Western sermons in the Reformed tradition, but a thorough contextualization of biblical texts: the insight and experiences of everyday life are seen as present-day extensions of scripture, as biblically sanctioned manifestations of an ongoing divine-human encounter.

This pattern of worship characterised the founding meeting of the

AAEC. In confirmation of my words, identifying with them and amplifying them, subsequent speakers took up some of the themes I had touched upon, integrating them with the convictions and expectations of those present. The biblical mandate for the new liberation struggle was elaborated on with reference to the texts in Genesis where God first conferred ecological stewardship on human beings. The notion of assimilating the struggle into church life by, for instance, combining tree-planting with the eucharist was endorsed enthusiastically. It was soon put into practice by AAEC member churches out in the rural areas in a variety of new, experimental liturgies (to be discussed in *African Earthkeepers*, volume 2). Our proposed guidelines for interaction with *Fambidzano* and AZTREC were accepted without reservation, and the vision for an extended struggle in other African countries and abroad fired the imagination of bishops, some of whom had not even travelled to the major cities of Zimbabwe, let alone the surrounding African countries.

Thus the first battle cry of the green struggle was sounded by an ecclesiastic 'high command'. The bishops and followers then returned to their respective headquarters to recruit more churches for the earth-keeping force and to prepare their followers for action.

3.3.3 The first AGM: rapid expansion

By the time the first annual general meeting was held on 4 April 1991, less than a month after the founding of the new association, the membership had virtually doubled from 18 to 35 member churches. This rapid growth and geographical expansion were to continue. By the end of that year more than 100 churches had joined: 81 from Masvingo Province, 11 from Matabeleland, 5 from Midlands and 4 from Manicaland. Some 30 per cent of this total hold double membership (both AAEC and *Fambidzano*). By 1997 the membership had grown to 150 churches. *Fambidzano* had never shown such rapid and geographically widespread growth. Its peak membership a few years ago, some two decades after its inception, was 80, possibly 90, churches. The AAEC grew into a larger movement within one year. This comparison should not be interpreted as competition between the two movements. An element of competition is, of course, unavoidable, even healthy. But as I indicated at our first AGM, the ideal situation at which we should aim in the future should be the merging of the two movements. Such a union

would be a massive stride forward for AIC ecumenism in Zimbabwe, and would give the churches involved a broader base for joint planning of projects.

Several AAEC executive members were active in our recruitment campaign, but the most successful and tireless campaigner was Bishop Farao Murambiwa (plate 19). Decisive, determined, yet with enough humour and goodwill to prevent zealotry, this ever-optimistic bishop with his infectious laughter did more than his share in propagating our cause. He not only drew a host of new churches into our green army, but also, as will be seen below, developed one of our best nurseries in the province. The result of the remarkable growth of the AAEC is a numerically strong, geographically widespread and generally well-organised constituency from which to draw an effective ecological fighting force. If one considers that the African Apostolic Church of Johane Maranke alone has an estimated one million members throughout Zimbabwe, the northern parts of the RSA, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi and as far north as Zaire, then the overall membership of all the AAEC churches could well exceed two million. Add to this the many thousands of people (traditionalists and Christians) in Masvingo Province represented by the AZTREC chiefs, headmen, spirit mediums and other tribal elders, and the potential for building an ecological liberation force with real clout is great indeed.

The discourse at the AGM largely followed the pattern set at the founding meeting, only this time the senior members of the executive were more assertive, directing the proceedings and taking responsibility for the association's affairs in accordance with the authority conferred on them. Bishop Reuben Marinda, for example, had completed the first draft constitution and presented it clause by clause for discussion, amendment and approval. In this respect our general secretary emerged as the AAEC's constitutional expert. As the salaried, full-time representative of the AAEC in the ZIRRCON office and on the ZIRRCON executive, he was in a position to explain the nature of ZIRRCON-AAEC interrelations to new members. Long before the actual formation of the AAEC he had started developing contextualised courses on a new theology of the environment (based on AIC praxis and faith generally). Thus Bishop Marinda (plate 18) was able to play a key role in our deliberations on ecological matters (nursery development, tree planting, game conservation, etc) in relation to church rituals, human resources

and finance. A colourful figure with a chequered history of political and military involvement during *chimurenga*, Marinda, always a talented orator, helped us develop a new *chimurenga* idiom, expressive of our liberationist motives.

President Machokoto's key address reflected level-headedness and sound leadership. First he made a plea for genuine ecumenical cooperation. 'What I ask of God,' he said, 'is a true sense of unity amongst us. We have to work together and avoid all forms of confusing conflict. Our unity must rest on convincing works. It is no use us coming here to enjoy our tea and meals without engaging in development and money-generating projects which show convincing progress. The basis of our work, according to God's Word, is love, a love which reveals itself in works. Having come here to engage in development, let us show our willingness and ability to work. Therefore each of you, as you leave here, go and prepare yourselves for tree planting. ZIRRCON's main task is to inspire and advise; not to provide everything required for tree planting. We, the churches, will have to make sacrifices for the cause to which we have pledged ourselves. Therein lies our unity ...'

Machokoto (plates 18 & 19) confirmed his willingness to cooperate with AZTREC by advocating recognition of the tribal elders: 'We must be fully prepared,' he said, 'to recognise the authority of our kraalheads and chiefs. For if we show contempt for them, where will we plant our trees? A Christian attitude is required towards the rulers of the land. Let our bishops in their eagerness to fight the war of the trees not antagonise the keepers of the land. If you are a church member yet try to place yourself above the laws of the land, you are not a true convert. Let us fully support our elders in this struggle of afforestation, so that the ZIRRCON-AAEC objectives may be realised in practice.'

Machokoto verbalised quite clearly the expectations of member churches that the AAEC should at some stage also try to raise funds for development projects which would enable them to make economic progress. 'We shall not rest in our striving to obtain the means for development projects, so that all our churches can get an opportunity to make progress. We want to fight the oppressor who has blocked our opportunities for development in *Fambidzano* (reference to Makamba's alleged autocratic handling of funds), until we win and achieve justice for those who have waited endlessly for assistance. Once this objective

is achieved all the churches will flock to our association. Then we will have a genuine people's movement and not an association manipulated by an individual who has usurped power for himself and his friends. ZIRRCOON-AAEC is facing the challenge of mobilising and serving the people. We are wide awake now because we have come of age. Through genuine unity and fairness we shall avoid the pitfall of a one-man show, where *Fambidzano* now finds itself. Forward our united action!'

It should be pointed out that, although I appreciate the need for economic progress in a poverty-stricken society, I repeatedly reminded AAEC leaders that our association was not to be conceived of as a development funding agency. Aware of the predicament *Fambidzano* had faced all along because of limited funding which could never fulfil the development aspirations of all its member churches, I indicated that ZIRRCOON-AAEC would be prepared to process some well-planned and deserving development projects, provided its primary aim of ecological repair was at no point overshadowed by other concerns. My original argument to induce *Fambidzano* to join in a programme of large-scale tree planting actually rested on the conviction that its nature-exploitive projects (agricultural and water schemes) should be augmented by compensatory, altruistic, nature-friendly and nature-repairing projects. Time alone will tell whether the AAEC will be able to strike a balance between exploitive and altruistic development ventures; whether the eagerness for economic progress can be curbed sufficiently for a healing ministry of earthkeeping to take root.

As regards AAEC-*Fambidzano* relations and my suggestions of peaceful cooperation with a view to future union, the majority of spokespeople supported my views, but at the same time mentioned the virtual impossibility of good relations because of Peter Makamba's intransigence. Said Bishop Farao: 'We are in favour of ZIRRCOON-AAEC and *Fambidzano* working together. But all of us who have joined the AAEC are rejected by *Fambidzano's* committee (that is, administrative board, in which Makamba calls the tune through financial control). They don't want to recognise anyone associated with ZIRRCOON.'

Bishop Kamudzi referred to the fact that Makamba had insisted on expelling both Bishop Hore (AAEC vicepresident) and Bishop Farao Murambiwa (executive member) from *Fambidzano*: 'We asked

Makamba why Bishop Gavhure who had planted trees together with ZIR-
RCON could be pardoned, while Bishop Farao was rejected. Makamba
said Gavhure had received trees from Prof Daneel as a gift. That did not
really matter, he said. But for a *Fambidzano* member to hold office (to
be given a job) in ZIRRCON was totally unacceptable. Upon hearing this
we all said: "Well, in that case we shall all go and receive gifts (ie trees).
A gift holds no offence."

Bishop Marinda was quite emphatic: 'None of us wants *Fambidzano* to
die. But those persons in *Fambidzano* who act arbitrarily and simply
chase people away in an attempt to impose their own wills on the
Conference will find themselves removed from office.' He considered
the expulsion of bishops from *Fambidzano* by Makamba and a few sup-
porters to be unconstitutional, since such drastic measures are the pre-
rogative of the *Fambidzano* AGM, not of individuals.

President Machokoto aired his dissatisfaction with Makamba's attempt
to sabotage the first AAEC meeting as follows: 'At the bus stop
Makamba confronted me, asking me whether I knew what kind of meet-
ing I was invited to. When I said it was in connection with tree planting
he said: "That is a meeting of *mashavi* spirits (suggesting traditional rit-
uals). When you return from such a meeting you will be rejected by your
own church followers." So he gave me a cheque, telling me to return
home. But I thought to myself: "I must go and see what kind of a *shavi*
meeting is taking place over there." Consequently I came to the meet-
ing, anticipating the songs and dances which would cause the *shavi*
spirits to put in an appearance. Of course no such thing happened.
What I found, instead, was a proper description of how the traditional-
ists do their work on their side and the AAEC churches on their side.
Prof Daneel also quite clearly explained the necessity of peaceful coop-
eration between *Fambidzano* and the AAEC. We are all in agreement
with that. So I request that all jealousy and conflict cease. If someone
obstructs our union he will be like a fowl who is abandoned while
asleep (ie totally helpless, at the mercy of all comers).'

These excerpts from the minutes illustrate the AIC bishops' loyalty to
Fambidzano which has been built over many years, as well as the will
of church leaders to retain membership of both movements. At some
stage there is bound to be a confrontation between the representatives
of those churches that have been arbitrarily expelled from *Fambidzano*

and the chief perpetrator of the expulsions, Revd Makamba. One can but hope that such a confrontation will be beneficial to both the AAEC and *Fambidzano*, and that it will culminate in full cooperation or union.

3.3.4 Ecological activities

Soon after its inception the AAEC took on four nurseries, pushing the total of ZIRRCOON nurseries in the 1991/92 season up to ten. The Forestry Commission handed over three of its nurseries to the AAEC:

- Mutirikwi nursery at Chief Shumba's homestead in Masvingo district, tended by Edwin Machokoto, brother of the AAEC president, and Makara Taoneichi. This nursery cultivated 52 000 seedlings during the first season after the takeover;
- Muchibga nursery at Chief Nyajena's homestead in Masvingo district, with nursery keepers Onias Hore, son of the AAEC vice president, and Dewa (47 000 seedlings);
- Chivi Central nursery at Chivi growth point, tended by Bishop Farao Murambiwa and Pedzisai Shoko (76 000 seedlings).

The fourth nursery, called Zimuto II and tended by Bishop Kindiam Wapendama and his home congregation, had already been developed with ZIRRCOON assistance prior to the formation of the AAEC. It cultivated 16 000 seedlings in 1991.

A total of 191 000 seedlings produced by only four AAEC nurseries in their first year indicates sound organisation and ecological commitment amongst participant AICs. Characteristic features of the AAEC nurseries are:

- Executive members or their relatives are prominent as nursery keepers, indicating a close correlation between executive authority and willingness to perform arduous tasks for relatively low wages in the field. Thus there is no question of a superordinated elite dictating to a subordinate group of underprivileged workers. Grassroots egalitarianism is functioning effectively both at the apex and at the base of the association's hierarchical structure.
- The AAEC nursery keepers have decided to follow AZTREC's example. Thus they are putting just as much emphasis as their traditional

counterparts on *miti echivanhu* (literally 'trees of the people', that is, indigenous species). Whereas the Mutirikwi nursery specialises in the acacia species (*msasa* and *mutondo*) and *munjii* (*berchemia discolor*), Muchibga focuses predominantly on fruit trees (oranges, mangoes, guavas, etc). Chivi Central, under the leadership of Bishop Farao, concentrates on *mukamba* (mahogany) and *lucaena* for fodder purposes; it also for the first time germinated the seed of the *mushavhi* (*ficus burkei*, wild fig tree). Wapendama's nursery in Zimuto is becoming known not only for its indigenous seedlings, but for the successful cultivation of *mukamba* trees at the bishop's homestead.

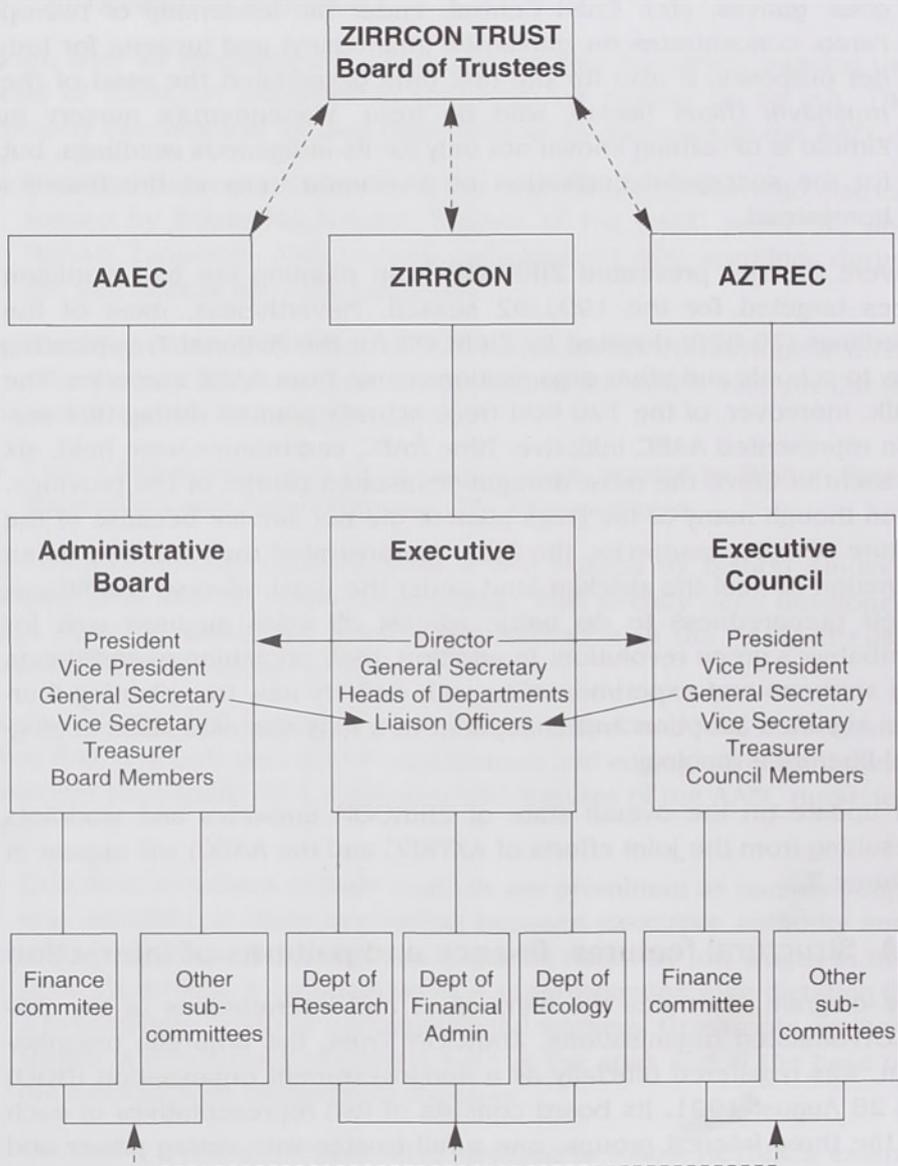
Severe drought prevented ZIRRCON from planting the half a million trees targeted for the 1991/92 season. Nevertheless, most of the seedlings (70 000) donated by ZIRRCON for the National Tree-planting Day to schools and other organisations came from AAEC nurseries. The bulk, moreover, of the 120 000 trees actually planted during that season represented AAEC initiative. Nine AAEC ceremonies were held, six of them in Chivi, the most drought-devastated district of the province. Even though many of the trees planted did not survive because of the failure of water resources, the AICs demonstrated their will and determination to heal the stricken land under the most adverse conditions. Their preparedness to do battle against all odds augured well for Zimbabwe's green revolution. In addition, their preaching of earthkeeping sermons and experimentation with entirely new tree-planting liturgies signified adoption and enactment of a fully contextualised ecological liberation theology.

An update on the overall state of ZIRRCON nurseries and woodlots (resulting from the joint efforts of AZTREC and the AAEC) will appear in volume 2.

3.4 Structural features, finance and patterns of interaction

The diagram illustrates the hierarchies and interrelations of the ZIRRCON-affiliated organisations. ZIRRCON Trust, the umbrella organisation, was registered officially as a nongovernment organisation (NGO) on 26 August 1991. Its board consists of two representatives of each of the three interest groups, one a full trustee with voting power and one an observer. ZIRRCON's director, in his capacity as principal fund

ZIRRCON TRUST DIAGRAM



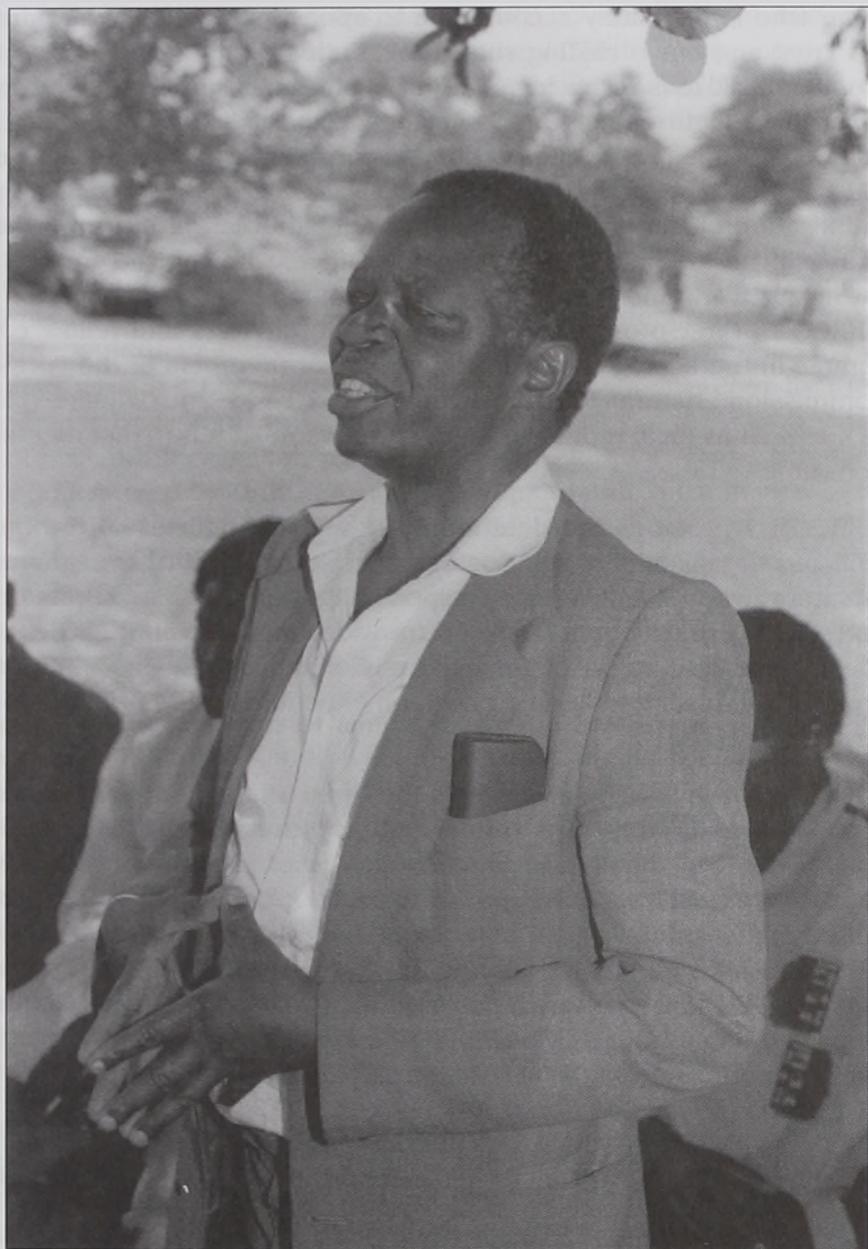


Plate 20 Former Cde Minister/now Chief Judge Simbi Mubako, patron of ZIRRCON, addresses tree-planters in Zaka district

raiser who is ultimately accountable to sponsors, acts as chairman of the Trust and has a casting vote. Constitutional provision is made for prominent citizens to be included as trustees. Dzikamai Mavhaire, ex-governor and current MP for Masvingo, was the only 'outsider' to act as trustee. His unswerving support and progressive approach to development projects generally have proved invaluable in the organisational stabilisation of our green army. Simbi Mubako (plate 20), former honorary Minister of State in the President's Office, who showed great interest in our work and frequently provided mature counsel, is patron of ZIRRCO's three-pronged structure. Outside advisers and fellow combatants in the ecological field, such as senior members of the Forestry Commission, Natural Resources Board and Parks and Wildlife (plate 21), as well as local representatives of sponsors, attend Trust meetings from time to time.

ZIRRCO Trust does not determine the internal policies of the three affiliated organisations, nor does it exercise full control over them. It monitors their finances, takes responsibility for assets, arbitrates disputes and generally provides a forum wider than the ZIRRCO executive for the discussion of financial and other issues. Thus ZIRRCO Trust is well placed to keep a check on expenditure and promote long-term stability.

ZIRRCO is the leading member of the three affiliated organisations in such areas as fund raising, administration of funds, provision of transport, and the planning and implementation of programmes. There is regular interaction at all levels, at executive, departmental and committee meetings and in the implementation of field projects. The general secretaries of AZTREC and the AAEC, for instance, are members of the ZIRRCO executive, where they act as liaison officers for their respective organisations. The ZIRRCO director reciprocates by acting as liaison officer and official representative of the Institute at the council and administrative board meetings of AZTREC and the AAEC. In practice, however, virtually all ZIRRCO staff members participate in the annual conferences and other meetings of the two sister organisations.

Members of the different departments and committees also interact regularly. Responsibility for the organisation of nurseries, tree-planting ceremonies, payment of fieldworkers out in the rural areas, arrange-

ments for training programmes, liaison with government officials, etc, is shared on a day-to-day basis. During the 1990/91 rainy season, for instance, the late Leonard Gono (then still head of ZIRRCON's research department) and Cosmas Gonese (former general secretary of AZTREC) cooperated all the time – organising tree-planting ceremonies, arranging for the transport of seedlings and fencing materials – in what turned out to be a massive combined ZIRRCON/AZTREC afforestation drive.

At the same time the three organisations are semi-autonomous, each with its own identity, constitution and code of conduct. Both AZTREC and the AAEC are entitled to raise funds on their own, in addition to the funding provided by ZIRRCON. Such funds are administered by their respective treasurers and finance committees, via their own bank accounts. All funds raised by ZIRRCON and ZIRRCON Trust, however, are administered by ZIRRCON's finance department. Thus, in view of its responsibility to sponsors, the major fund-raising agency is in a position to exercise strict control over expenditure and to play a leading role in the institutionalisation of our three-pronged religio-ecological movement. Patterns of interaction have changed somewhat in recent years. The details will be given in volume 2.

During the first two years of ZIRRCON-AZTREC operations (1988–1989) funds in excess of Z\$50 000 were provided by me personally. This was made possible by the sale of private assets. Local businessmen and the Dutch Embassy in Harare augmented this with smaller contributions which helped finance the tree-planting campaigns at the end of each year. In 1990 the project was awarded a more substantial grant of some Z\$513 000 by the European Commission (EC) and Z\$25 000 by the Zimbabwe Project for a two-year period (mid-1990 to May 1992). During this period HIVOS, a Dutch humanitarian institute for development cooperation, exercised financial supervision.

Simon Matsvai, a HIVOS consultant, ably assisted ZIRRCON with the drafting of a five-year development plan with a budget of Z\$7 million. Because of a misleading report on ZIRRCON activities by the EC's regional representative in Masvingo Province, our five-year plan was never properly discussed at the senior EC delegate's office in Harare. Consequently the question of continuing support was not given the consideration due to a highly successful and financially accountable grass-roots programme.

Fortunately the EC report was intercepted and repudiated by a senior cabinet minister. Subsequently discussions between ZIRRCON delegates and the Minister of Environment, Mmerwa, led to a formal and thorough evaluation of our programmes by members of that Ministry. The outcome was a highly positive endorsement of ZIRRCON's earthkeeping programmes by the Ministry, followed by negotiations with a view to securing financial support for our three-pronged movement. Subsequently the EZE (*Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe*, an evangelical donor agency in Bonn), became the main sponsor.

As regards broad liaison with government institutions, regular attempts are made at the provincial administrative, local government, district and other levels to find mutually beneficial modes of cooperation. Cordial supportive relations have been established with the governor and administrator of Masvingo Province, as well as with prominent figures in the Forestry Commission, the Natural Resources Board and Agritex. Appreciation of our work and support from these quarters inspire enthusiasm and resolve in our ranks.

3.5 Conflict and schism

The leadership and administrative style of Cosmas Gonese, who was promoted to a senior position in ZIRRCON in 1990, caused concern and conflict in our movement. Claims and counter-claims about financial control eventually led to Gonese's resignation in July 1991. He subsequently broke away with a number of ZIRRCON-AZTREC's prominent spirit mediums, notably vaZarira, Lydia Chabata and Pfupajena. In 1992 the breakaway faction formed AZTREC-TRUST and proceeded to conduct its own ecological programmes. By that time ZIRRCON-TRUST, with its two affiliates, AZTREC and AAEC, had already been officially registered as NGOs for some time. This meant that two AZTRECs were in fact operating in the field, a situation which at times confused visiting representatives of donor agencies and other interested parties from abroad.

For a while disaffection and rivalry between ZIRRCON and Gonese's AZTREC distracted our earthkeepers in the field. However, the environmental performance of ZIRRCON-AZTREC never really deteriorated despite the departure of a number of traditionalist stalwarts. At no point did we lose the support of chiefs and headmen in Masvingo Province.



Plate 21 Senior officials of Parks and Wildlife (left), Forestry (centre) and Natural Resources (right) lecture on conservation to ZIRRCON/AZTREC participants during a week-long seminar

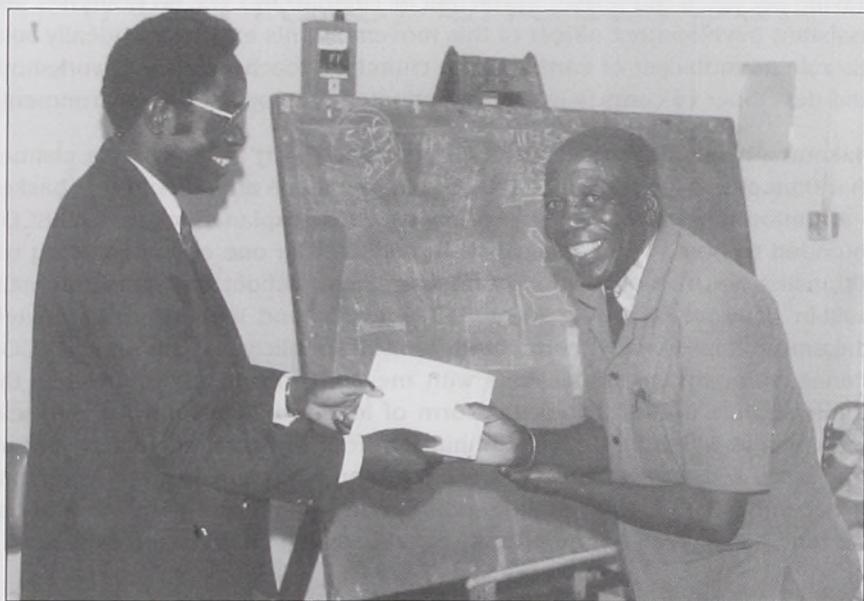


Plate 22 Former Provincial Administrator of Masvingo awards a certificate to spirit medium Magora of AZTREC for participation in ZIRRCON seminar on conservation

In all the districts where we operate the majority of them are committed fighters in ZIRRCO-AZTREC's 'green army'. In a sense the demands of the green struggle rendered lingering resentments and conflict meaningless. (For a more detailed account of the schism and its impact on ZIRRCO at the time, see Appendix III.)

NOTES

- 1 An outstanding Zionist intellectual, Revd Zvanaka holds diplomas in book-keeping, theology (Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mapumulo, RSA) and social work (University of Zimbabwe) and is studying for a bachelor's degree in theology at Unisa. Having held the positions of assistant principal of the Bible school and senior development officer in *Fambidzano*, he is admirably qualified for his present work in ZIRRCO. One also hopes that he will find time to write on the rich theology of the AICs. Bishop Marinda has a Diploma in Theology (United Theological College, Harare) and has done courses in development and project writing with the Zimbabwean Council of Churches. Having occupied the posts of principal of *Fambidzano* TEE programmes and assistant development officer of this movement, his experience ideally suits his role as mobiliser of earthkeeping churches, teacher at AAEC workshops and developer of courses in a praxis-oriented theology of the environment.
- 2 Makamba himself spearheaded the opposition to my proposals. He claimed that Daneel was attempting to 'place spirit mediums and AICs in one basket' – an unfounded charge in view of my repeated explanations that ZIRRCO intended to host two ecological organisations, the one operating along traditionalist and the other along Christian lines, without any constitutionally built-in confrontation over religious leadership and identity. Unfortunately Makamba had already committed himself publicly to an anti-ZIRRCO stance, prior to any discussions with me and prior to my address to the administrative board. It took the form of letters to *Fambidzano's* overseas sponsors, in which he dissociated himself from my latest ecological venture and expressed *Ndaza* Zionist opposition to an AZSM tree-planting ceremony in December 1988. This left little room for any modification of viewpoints by the time I was given an opportunity to address the *Fambidzano* executive.